



MSH Nigeria

Saving lives and improving the health of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people by closing the gap between knowledge and action in public health

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Orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) returning to school in Nigeria

The CaTSS OVC Service Support program worked with community leaders and caregivers to re-enroll children in school who have been orphaned or affected by HIV and AIDS.



Cross-section of children under the program in a class room

Only 58% of school age children orphaned or impacted by HIV and AIDS (36% boys and 22% girls) were enrolled in school in the Magami and Wanke communities of Gusau local government area in Zamfara state, Nigeria at the beginning of 2017.

These two communities are about 80km and 60km away from the state capital of Gusau, in areas where there are not local organizations or partners addressing this issue.

Through the USAID funded Care and Treatment for Sustained Support (CaTSS) project, MSH is implementing an innovative Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Direct Service Support program aimed at providing free education to vulnerable children in Magami and Wanke communities. Some of children who benefitted from this program had never been registered in school, or dropped out of school within the past year. During the four-month intervention (September- December 2017), the CaTSS project team worked with community leaders to form community quality improvement teams (CQITs) with 7-10 members in each focus community.

These teams worked to create awareness about the importance of education, and encouraged guardians and parents to enroll their children back in school. MSH also mobilized and deployed 24 volunteers (4 volunteer coordinators and 20 community volunteers) to provide door-to-door

Management Sciences for Health (MSH) is currently implementing the two-year USAID-funded project, Care and Treatment for Sustained Support (CaTSS). CaTSS commenced on November 15, 2016 to allow for a smooth transition from the USAID-funded Prevention Organization Systems—AIDS Care and Treatment (Pro-ACT) project. CaTSS supports the maintenance and uninterrupted delivery of quality HIV/AIDS and TB services into Nigeria's health system



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counseling for caregivers and household heads on the importance of education for every child.

As a result of these efforts, more household heads and caregivers have embraced the importance of education in their communities. Special arrangements were made with three schools in the two communities to offer scholarships to vulnerable children. 89% of school age orphans and vulnerable children (48% boys and 41% girls) are now enrolled in school, up from 58% before the program began.

One of the beneficiaries, Sakina Aliyu, a caregiver whose two children dropped out of school but re-enrolled under this program, was full of appreciation for MSH. *"I appreciate MSH for this opportunity and I will ensure my children go to school and study up to the university level,"* said Sakina

From Our Country Representative



Dear Readers,

I welcome you to another edition of the MSH Nigeria Newsletter. In this edition, you will read about MSH's work in ensuring that Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) return to school in Nigeria, HIV Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) laboratory transitioned to the Global Fund and FHI360.

You will also read about MSH Nigeria's celebration of the International Women's Day and participation in a Healthcare Financing Forum put together by a leading Nigerian Newspaper, ThisDay.

We sincerely thank PEPFAR, USAID and the Global Fund for their technical and financial support.

We also thank the Government of Nigeria for making project implementation possible, and our numerous partners for their cooperation.

I especially thank all MSH Nigeria staff for their great work and contribution toward the achievement of MSH's vision of saving lives.

Enjoy your read,

Olumide Elegbe, Country Representative, MSH Nigeria



HIV Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) Laboratory transitioned to the Global Fund and FHI360

The USAID-funded Care and Treatment for Sustained Support (CaTSS) project transitioned a PCR laboratory to the Global Fund and FHI360 on behalf of the Government of Nigeria in March.

15th March 2018 was another milestone for the USAID-funded Care and Treatment for Sustained Support (CaTSS) project in Nigeria. MSH provided technical and management support to the HIV Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) Laboratory in Usman Danfodiyo University Teaching Hospital (UDUTH) in Sokoto, Northwest Nigeria. It was with a sense of nostalgia that we transitioned this PCR facility to the Global Fund and FHI360, on behalf of the Government of Nigeria (GoN). Nigeria has 27 donor-supported PCR laboratories involved in the HIV programme. Due to funding constraints, PEPFAR Nigeria is scaling down to supporting only eleven PCR laboratories, and the rest are being transitioned to GoN.



UDUTH management board and the teams of MSH and Global fund IFHI360 after the handing over event

A formal sign-off ceremony was conducted at UDUTH. In attendance was the senior management team (SMT) of UDUTH, led by the acting Chief Medical Director Dr. Anas, the Global Fund/FHI 360 team, led by Christy Laniyan, the MSH team, led by the CaTSS Deputy Project Director, Dr. Ndulue Nwokedi, Head of the PCR lab suite, Sa'adatu Haruna Shinkafi, the facility ART coordinator, Dr. Liman, and Mrs. Joy Obu, a Deputy Director of Laboratory Services from the Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH)'s National AIDS and STI Control Programme (NASCP) representing the Government of Nigeria, and other administrative and clinical staffers. The Director for Legal Services, Barrister Abdullahi Kabiru, witnessed the sign-off proceedings.

This meeting provided the platform for implementing partners and key stakeholders to share ideas on how to continue providing uninterrupted support and services to the UDUTH management team. This facility provides HIV molecular diagnostic services to the CaTSS project states of Sokoto, Kebbi, and Zamfara, all within the North West region of the country.

Dr. Ndulue expressed appreciation to the UDUTH management team for the cordial relationship that has so far existed, and stated that he was glad that two international implementing partners will be collaborating to ensure the laboratory services in the hospital continue at an optimal level. *"This tripartite partnership is the first of its kind and will be judged by the level of ownership displayed by UDUTH at the end of the 18 months, when the current Global Fund grant for the country would have elapsed."* said the CEO of the Global Fund/FHI 360 project, Christy Laniyan.

The Head of the PCR suite, Sa'adatu Shinkafi, made a presentation on the overall achievements of the laboratory since MSH started its support to the facility. She mentioned challenges that needed to be resolved by the facility management. She commended the significant role MSH played in ensuring the smooth running of the lab. *"I want to thank MSH for their continuous support to this lab. Under MSH watch, we never experienced a commodity stock out,"* she said. The ART coordinator for UDUTH, Dr. Liman, thanked MSH for the work they have done over the years and stated that UDUTH was lucky that MSH established a base in Sokoto state, which has made it easier to reach her focal person whenever assistance is needed.



In his closing remarks, the Acting Chief Medical Director of UDUTH, Dr. Anas, stated that the management had never enjoyed as excellent a partnership as they had with MSH. *“Management Sciences for Health trained our staff to world class standards and brought the electronic medical records (EMR) to our doorstep. It is with mixed feelings that I received the news of the transitioning of the Laboratory to GF/FHI 360,”* he said. He thanked all the partners for their continuous support.

MSH is known for its drive for sustainability and ownership of programmes, and carries the states’ leadership and structures along in its implementation of projects. A debrief meeting was held with the honorable Commissioner for Health, Dr. Shehu Balarabe Kakale. Dr. Ndulue informed the Health Commissioner that the team had called to officially inform him of the transitioning of the PCR laboratory at UDUTH to the Global Fund and FHI360. Each of the directors had only words of commendation for MSH, which prompted the CEO of the Global Fund and FHI 360 to remark that *“MSH has set such a high standard that I am afraid whether in the next 18 months, we will match it.”*

The Commissioner commended MSH for the good work it has done over the years in the state providing reagents, commodities, and capacity building for UDUTH staff. *“We want to thank USAID and MSH for the technical support we got, especially for the internship programme initiated by MSH which has already graduated well over 200 persons. We call on the Global Fund/FHI 360 to key into this internship programme.”*

MSH Nigeria celebrates International Women’s Day

Every year since 1909, International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated on March 8, and is a focal point for the recognition and advancement of women's rights. As part of global activities to mark this day, the USAID-funded Care and Treatment for Sustained Support (CaTSS) project in Nigeria launched a count-down on its official online platforms from the 3rd to the 8th of March, profiling its female staff with photos to celebrate their continuous contributions to MSH and to society at large.

On March 8th, MSH Nigeria staff came together in the Ron O’Connor meeting room to view two short films: Katherine Switzer’s story, the first woman to run the Boston Marathon in 1967, and Kechi Okwuchi’s story, a survivor of the 2005 Sosoliso plane crash. The viewing was followed by a roundtable dialogue on the challenges currently faced by women in Nigerian society and the work place, with [Adaeze Umolu](#) (Senior Technical Advisor in Business Development), [Eberechi Ndulewe-Anyanwu](#) (community volunteer), [Chika Aboh](#) (Monitoring and Evaluation Senior Associate), [Mariam Dennis](#) (Senior Project Associate), and [Kelechi Onyealisi](#) (Monitoring and Evaluation Senior Technical Advisor) as panelists, with [Comfort Ogar](#) (Principal Technical Advisor of SIAPS) serving as the moderator.



During the roundtable discussion, the roles of women and men in the home and work place were explored and panelists provided suggestions on how to maintain a healthy, gender-sensitive working environment. Maternity leave policies and conditions in Nigeria, including corresponding reductions in salaries and inconsistency in the provision of benefits, were also key topics of discussion.

MSH Country Representative [Olumide Elegbe](#) noted that organizations have different policies for maternity leave and reiterated that MSH Nigeria, being a US- based organization, has to comply with both American and local Nigerian policies. He stated that staff should continue to have open discussions so that where possible, we can review policies and benefits, and propose changes, as appropriate.



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In his closing remarks, [Andrew Etsetowaghan](#), Associate Director of Technical Services, expressed appreciation for the wonderful panelists and to MSH Country Representative [Olumide Elegbe](#), CaTSS Project Director [Med Makumbi](#), Director of Country Operations [Gordon Kihuguru](#), and CaTSS Gender Lead [Amaechi Okafor](#) for supporting the successful implementation of IWD activities. He acknowledged the richness of the day's discussions and noted the need to continue having open discussions on gender inequalities in Nigeria, while MSH continues to provide leadership in challenging harmful norms and promoting gender equality.



[Jennifer Iqberaese](#) displaying a placard on IWD 2018



[Chinyere Oigbo](#) demonstrates "Push for progress" - IWD 2018

Healthcare Financing Policy Dialogue in Nigeria

The "ThisDay Healthcare Financing Policy Dialogue" event provided a forum to address the absence of healthcare financing for achieving universal health coverage in Nigeria, and particularly to address the absence of the Basic Healthcare Provision Fund from Nigeria's current budget.

ThisDay, one of the nation's foremost newspapers, as part of its social corporate responsibility efforts to help Nigeria focus on the challenges of financing its health sector and finding sustainable solutions, held a policy dialogue on Tuesday the 5th of March, 2018. The event was put together by ThisDay Media Group and was supported by USAID's Health Finance and Governance Project and the World Bank. Participants included the Honorable Minister of Health, Professor Isaac Adewole; Chairman Senate Committee on Health, Senator Olanrewaju Tejuoso; senior government officials, the private health sector, domestic and international public health institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). MSH's Nigeria country team, led by Country Representative Olumide Elegbe, along with Dr. Ndulue Nwokedi, CaTSS Deputy Project Director, and Ms. Adaeze Umolu, Business Development Specialist, participated in the dialogue.

MSH understands the critical role that financing plays in a sustainable health system, and in achieving universal health coverage. Some of our experience in health care financing in Nigeria includes supporting the development of community based health insurance in Akwa Ibom state under the concluded USAID PLAN- Health project, and resource mobilization for HIV programming in Kwara, Sokoto, Niger, Kebbi, and Zamfara states under the concluded USAID-Pro-ACT project.



The "ThisDay Healthcare Financing Policy Dialogue" event provided a forum to address the absence of healthcare financing for achieving universal health coverage in Nigeria, and particularly to address the absence of the Basic Healthcare Provision Fund from the Nigeria 2014-2017 budget. Another talking point at the dialogue was how to get both the executive and legislative arms of the Nigerian government to commit to and ensure that the Basic Healthcare Provision Fund is included in the nation's 2018 budget.

Delivering the policy dialogue keynote address; the Director of Health, Nutrition, and Population at the World Bank Group, Dr. Olusoji Adeyi; expressed concern that public health spending as a share of total health spending in Nigeria was low at 22%, compared to 36% for Lower-Middle-Income Countries and 57% for Upper-Middle-Income Countries. He also mentioned that Nigeria had made significant progress in Polio, malaria control, and tackling the Ebola outbreak.

"The fight against out-of-pocket expenditure...is experienced by most Nigerians in accessing basic healthcare. The National Health Act has the capacity to be of benefit to eight million Nigerians by the end of 2018, if captured and implemented in the 2018 budget of the federal government. Now is the time to unleash the National Health Act, as it would lift Nigerians out of poverty and misery, judging from the fact that Nigeria spends less on healthcare compared to any country in the world", said Dr. Adeyi.

Lending his voice to the discussion, Chairman Senate Committee on Health, Senator Tejuoso, stated that if the Basic Healthcare Provision Fund did not make it to into the 2018 budget, he would have to change his portfolio at the Senate. "The Senate Committee on Health is proposing to amend the Health Insurance Scheme. The private sector will take responsibility for funding the private sector. With N200 per 100 million Nigerians, which will translate to N20 billion per month, the health challenges in Nigeria will be a bygone issue," he said.

In his remarks, the honorable Minister of Health, Professor Isaac Adewole noted that without an educated, healthy workforce, the nation would not be able to build the necessary infrastructure. He described the ThisDay policy dialogue as unique, and commended ThisDay management for the initiative, promising that the federal government would ensure that the outcomes of the dialogue were promoted.



Our Work in Nigeria

MSH is a non-profit global health organization that works to save lives and improve health by strengthening health systems in over 74 countries, including Nigeria, since 1970. For over 20 years, MSH has had presence in Nigeria, and 10 years ago, it established an operational office. MSH has provided assistance in maternal and child health, reproductive health, TB, and HIV/AIDS through strengthening health systems and building synergies for better health outcomes, across the northern and southern part of the country. MSH has built the capacity of over 100 civil society organizations (CSOs) in Nigeria, and has assisted over 23 states to strengthen their health systems and improve access to quality health services through its projects.

With the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Global Fund, MSH is currently in 16 states implementing one USAID funded project, Care and Treatment for Sustained Support (CaTSS), and one Global Fund sponsored Malaria Grant.