

# UNFPA IN NIGERIA

Quarterly e-Newsletter

Volume 1: Issue 1 | January 2016



## EDITORIAL

Dear Partners,

Happy New Year!

It is a pleasure to present to you our maiden newsletter "UNFPA in Nigeria".

As we know, development is not independent of the people and good health is central to human happiness and wellbeing.

However, every year in Nigeria 33,000 women could be saved from pregnancy related deaths, 800,000 children could be saved from dying within the first five years of life and 260,000 could be saved from dying within the first 28 days of life; but sadly, they are not saved.

Access to reproductive health care remains a challenge and UNFPA, is committed to work closely with the Government of Nigeria to ensure this changes.

In this quarterly newsletter and in the subsequent ones to follow, you will read about our interventions in the area of Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Adolescent Health care; population development strategies; response to gender based violence; gender equality and humanitarian response in Nigeria.

We are confident that together we will strengthen the national health system in Nigeria and improve the lives of women and girls and help every young person to fulfill potential.

*For comments, questions or inquiries about our activities, do not hesitate to call 0905 3779 641.*

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UNFPA Representative

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# A LOOK BACK AT UNFPA IN 2015:

JANUARY



## SCALE UP OF HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION IN NIGERIA'S NORTH EAST

In 2015, UNFPA further scaled up its humanitarian response in the North East, targeting 4.5million beneficiaries of the 14.8million people affected by insurgency in the region. The scale up was necessary because in 2014, the humanitarian crisis in the North East escalated with an upsurge of violence against civilians, the mass abductions of women and children, the destruction of communities and means of livelihoods.

The insurgency started about seven (7) years ago and the crisis led to an increase in sexual and gender-based violence as well as weak economic, health and education systems.

UNFPA together with the Government of Japan, US-AID, the UN-CERF and the Presidential Committee on Flood Relief and Rehabilitation provided support to restore access to sexual and reproductive health services that include clean and safe child birth, management of survivors of sexual violence, HIV prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Psychosocial counseling and support was also provided to survivors.

*The reproductive health needs of survivors of insurgency cannot be over emphasized. For some of us, having access to reproductive health care services is a clinic away but for a survivor in an IDP camp, who is in her third trimester, a delivery kit is extremely valuable to her because it contains the basic tools needed to ensure safe, clean and dignified delivery for both the mother and the newborn.*

APRIL

## RESPONSE TO THE "RESCUED GIRLS"



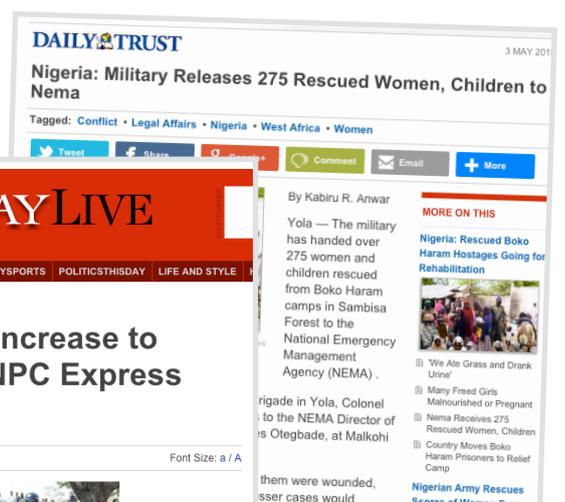
The Boko Haram conflict in the North East is the biggest human security threat in the country. In April, remarkable progress was made in the fight against insurgency as the Government of Nigeria took over territories that were once strongholds of the Boko Haram Group.

One of such territories was the Sambisa Forest in Borno State. The victory led to the rescue of hundreds of women and children held captive for an average period of 12 months.

Upon their release, the country witnessed the deplorable health and mental status of some of the survivors who were either traumatized, pregnant or had child birth experiences in the forest without any medical aid; while some others were sexually abused or forcefully married to insurgents. The urgent need for health services and psychosocial support was immerse.

It is to these survivors and a lot more others affected by the insurgency, that UNFPA had prepositioned immediate response capacities in Borno and Adamawa states.

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MAY

**STOP  
VIOLENCE  
AGAINST  
WOMEN**



## **NIGERIA TAKES A STAND AGAINST SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

UNFPA, through its targeted interventions and years of advocacy with other partners, successfully witnessed Nigeria pass into law, its first "Violence against person's prohibition" bill (VAPP). The VAPP law provides a legislative and legal framework for the prevention of all forms of violence against vulnerable persons, especially women and girls.

UNFPA provided technical and financial support to LACVAW (Legislative advocacy coalition on violence against women), a coalition that worked on and pushed for the passing of the VAPP bill.

Undeniably, women and girls are often disproportionately affected by sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). One such violence is the harmful practice of female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C) done at various scales in many communities in the country (NDHS, 2008).

UNFPA together with UNICEF is actively advocating for the abandonment of this practice and the VAPP law is a bridge to achieve this.

JUNE



## **5,622 FISTULA REPAIRS**

We met Zainab Baubau a 32 year old fistula patient twenty years after her failed marriage to Mohammed and 19 years after the death of her son, an infant she lost during childbirth. At the age of 12, she developed obstetric fistula and has lived with it for many years until today. Zainab Baubau is one of the 5,622 repaired fistula cases in Nigeria.

She is a beneficiary of the free surgical repairs funded by UNFPA as part of its global campaign to end fistula in Nigeria. In addition to being repaired, Zainab is one of over 350 beneficiaries who have been economically rehabilitated and reintegrated into the society. She went through a 4 weeks skills acquisition training session and received a business start-up kit.

Obstetric fistula is a condition that affects millions of women worldwide. It is a childbirth complication caused by obstructed labor. It is estimated that about 800,000 women live with Obstetric fistula in Nigeria and approximately 20,000 new cases occur each year.

UNFPA is committed to end obstetric fistula in Nigeria. The Fund is working closely with the Government and other stakeholders to ensure that this is achieved.

JULY



## DONATION OF TRAINING ARM MODELS WORTH \$1 MILLION

One of the major causes of infant and maternal mortality in Nigeria is limited access to reproductive health services such as the use of contraceptives and family planning services.

UNFPA partnered with a private company called Merck Sharp and Dohme to receive and donate training arm models worth \$1 million to the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria (NMWCN). The donation which was presented to NMCM through the global ambassador for midwives, Mrs. Toyin Saraki, will help Nigerian Midwives to competently administer long acting and reversible contraceptives (LARC) to women of reproductive age in the country. The training models have been distributed to all the 98 nursing and midwifery schools in Nigeria.



youths are effective drivers of change.

In July, the UNFPA youth participatory forum was convened as a platform for meaningful engagement with young people to promote dialogue, participation and ownership of UNFPA programming for adolescent and sexual reproductive health issues. It serves as an interface between UNFPA and young people to ensure that they become advocates for family life health education for adolescents and the vulnerable young people.

## INAUGURATION OF THE YOUTH PARTICIPATORY PLATFORM

Our mandate is to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled. At the core of this mandate is the active participation of youth in youth centered activities because

Some of the issues being advocated include, end to unintended pregnancy through the access to contraceptives or family planning services, and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STI) including HIV/AIDS and keeping girls in school to delay the consequences of early child bearing such as maternal mortality and morbidities..

AUGUST

## THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY GENERAL MR. BAN KI-MOON VISITS NIGERIA



“I am proud to be a girl.” These were the bold closing words of a drama performed by 15 girls for the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) Mr. Ban Ki-moon and UNFPA’s Executive Director Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, in Nigeria’s capital, Abuja.

Mr. Ban Ki-moon and Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, were visibly impacted by the dramatization of “Zainab’s story” – a retelling of the reality of too many girls in the North who do not attend or complete school, who are married too young and become mothers before they are able to reach their full potential. The UNSG, in his direct response to the girls, reiterated the UN’s commitment to adolescents’ health as framed in the updated Global Strategy “Every Women, Every Child”.

He said “the United Nations is committed to ensuring that every girl, regardless of her age, culture or background has access to equitable and quality education and importantly expresses her right to be a girl and not a child bride.

SEPTEMBER



## OFFICE OF THE WIFE OF THE PRESIDENT SEEKS TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN INCLUDING ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN NIGERIA

Her Excellency (H.E), Mrs. Aisha Muhammadu Buhari articulated her vision to complement the efforts of the Government of Nigeria to reduce the rate of maternal and child mortality in the Country.

She made this presentation at a side event organized by the Office of the Wife of the President on the side lines of the 70th United Nations General Assembly in New York. The event was funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). UNFPA also provided technical support, together with the World Bank Group and the society of Family Health.

The Wife of the President, Mrs. Aisha Muhammadu Buhari, who was represented by H.E Dolapo Osibanjo (wife of the Vice president) used the occasion to pledge her continued commitment to serve as a voice of accountability for the health of women and children. She pledged to use her position to contribute to the acceleration of efforts to end preventable maternal, newborn and child deaths.

## A LOOK BACK AT UNFPA IN 2015:

OCTOBER



Young people require access to sexual and reproductive health information and services. This is considerably important in Nigeria where one third of its population is aged 10-24 years and an estimated 196,488 adolescents live with HIV.

The No Hoodie, No Honey ('no condom no sex') campaign is driven by a five minutes 3D animation video designed to stimulate discussions among young people on sexual health issues such as abstinence, condom use, unintended pregnancy and common risk factors on HIV including early sexual debut, multiple sexual partners and low condom use.

As part of efforts to expand the reach of the campaign, UNFPA provided technical assistance to implementing partners to train 145 people from eight states on the #NOHOODIENOHONEY model. Similarly, 2,091 young people were sensitized on #NOHOODIENOHONEY through community outreaches.

Till date two videos have been seen by over 8,000 viewers on YouTube including over 500,000 twitter accounts reached with sexual and reproductive health information through the hashtag #NOHOODIENOHONEY. Partners involved in the campaign include EVA, AHI, Youth-Hub Africa and SFH.

NOVEMBER

## LAUNCH OF THE ADOLESCENT GIRL INITIATIVE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA



Amarie, was 13 years old when she saw her first menstrual cycle. She remembers having cramps in her abdomen but that was overshadowed by her mother's joy, "you are now a woman", her mother said, shouting and dancing for Joy.

When her father returned that night, his goal was to find her a suitor and he did. A few days later Amarie was ceremoniously married to her husband and given bags of clothes, a chest of drawers and a big bed. "I loved the gifts" she said, "but I miss being in school".

Northern Nigeria, has the highest rates of female illiteracy in the country and account for negative health outcomes which include, the highest maternal mortality ratio (MMR) and infant mortality. It also accounts for the highest rate of early marriage. The national median age for first marriage in the North is 16.9 .

The Adolescent Girls Initiative in Northern Nigeria, is a UNFPA-supported programme that teaches vulnerable girls about their rights, their bodies and health. The goal of the Initiative is to improve the social, economic and health wellbeing of rural and low-income urban adolescent girls and secure their future through increased access to education (make them stay in school), sexual reproductive health information/services and life-skills that will positively impact on health choices. The pilot programme in Kaduna State began in September 2014, and currently reaches 400 girls. In 2016, it will be expanded to cover two more states – Kebbi and Sokoto – with plans to reach 131,000 girls.

DECEMBER

## NATIONAL FAMILY PLANNING CONFERENCE CONVENED

A 2 day national consultative conference on family planning programming in Nigeria was held in December. The conference was hosted by the Nigeria Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and other partners to review the family planning outlook in Nigeria, and to develop strategies to meet the targeted 36% Contraceptive Prevalence Rate set by the FMOH, by 2018.

The Honorable Minister of Health, Prof. Isaac Adewole Folorunsho said the Federal Government is committed to the provision of unhindered access to family planning commodities and supplies. While the wife of the presi-



dent, H.E Mrs. Aisha Muhammadu Buhari (represented by H.E Mrs. Toyin Saraki, wife of the Senate President) said stakeholders present must work together to fill the 22% gap in unmet need for family planning services and develop new ways to encourage behavior change in child-birth spacing.

The forum was attended by key stakeholders including State Commissioners of Health, State Permanent Secretaries, the State Directors of Public Health and FP Coordinators from the 36 States of the federation. The participation was broad based and also had in attendance, religious leaders, NGOs, CSOs and Foreign Missions.



A Dance Concert was organized to commemorate the 2015 World AIDS Day. The concert provided a creative and entertaining platform to educate young people on HIV/AIDS. "Zero is the Goal" was the theme of the event, to promote the campaign on Zero new HIV infections, Zero discrimination and Zero AIDS deaths in Nigeria.

## HIV DANCE CONCERT

The concert brought together adolescents and young people who are in-school, out-of-school, artisans, including people living with HIV/AIDS. It featured an HIV testing and counselling booth, a youth interactive corner (for inquiries on sexual and reproductive health) and No Hoodie No Honey booth (to distribute and sensitize people on condom use).

The event was organized by UNFPA together with Tru Dance Art (TDA), Education as a Vaccine and Youth Hub Africa. Other partners were the MTV Staying Alive Foundation (SAF), OROL Youth Empowerment Initiative and NYNETHA.



Delivering a world where  
every pregnancy is wanted,  
every childbirth is safe  
and every young person's  
potential is fulfilled.

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