

Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent Health and Nutrition (RMNCAH+N) Activities, and Key Achievements

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Organization	Aisha Buhari Foundation
Project Title	Partnership for advocacy on reproductive maternal newborn, child, and adolescent health and nutrition (RMNCAH + N)
Project Duration	36 months
Implementation site	36 states and F.C.T

Abstract: *This article presents a comprehensive overview of the Partnership for Advocacy on Reproductive Maternal Newborn, child, and Adolescent Health and Nutrition RMNCAH N project in Nigeria. Spanning 36 months and implemented across 36 states and the F.C.T., the project aimed to enhance the capacity of the Aisha Buhari Foundation. This endeavor focused on amplifying RMNCAH N advocacy to policymakers and influential groups, thereby contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals SDGs related to women's and children's health and nutrition. Significant accomplishments include strengthening the Foundation's institutional capacity, developing advocacy toolkits for governors' wives, establishing the Future Assured Governors Wives Coalition, and sensitizing stakeholders on RMNCAH N issues. The project facilitated the integration of HIV services, established state emergency response teams for maternal and child health, and influenced legislative changes. These outcomes signify a major stride in advocating for women and girls' empowerment and in improving health and nutrition outcomes in Nigeria.*

Keywords: Aisha Buhari Foundation, RMNCAH N Advocacy, Women Health and Empowerment, Sustainable Development Goals, Nigeria Health Initiatives

1. Summary of the Project

The investment was to build the capacity of the Aisha Buhari Foundation as an institution that will support the scale-up of RMNCH+N advocacy to decision-makers and influential groups in Nigeria while accelerating progress in achieving improvement in the Health and Nutrition of Women and Children and consequently contributing towards meeting the targets set in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This investment was also to support advocacy for Women and Girls empowerment for development in Nigeria through the collective advocacy of

the Aisha Buhari, the wives of the governors, and other influential stakeholders in Nigeria.

At the end of the investment, the Aisha Buhari Foundation would have been established as a strong nonprofit, that has technical and advocacy skills to not only support Mrs. Aisha Buhari as the wife of the President of Nigeria also advocate in RMNCH +N issues but also continue as an advocacy organization in its own right. The investment will also support the development of a strong communication plan for the organization that would use Mrs. Aisha Buhari's voice as one of its advocacy voices.

Objective 1	Activities	Achievements
To Strengthen the Institutional capacity of the Aisha Buhari Foundation as a strong advocacy platform	<p>A needs assessment was done based on the gaps identified and a capacity-building workshop was conducted for staff</p> <p>Training was provided in the following areas</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project management 2. Financial control 	<p>A. -Organizational policies and staff manuals have been developed -Human Resources as well as organizational administrative and financial systems were strengthened <input type="checkbox"/> The organization is now well-structured and functioning effectively</p> <p>B. Aisha Buhari Foundation is now recognized as a platform for RMNCAH+N. key government agencies and other NGOs now approach us for example When the National Agency for the Control of AIDS(NACA) set out to integrate HIV testing and counseling with the MNCH weeks, ABF was approached to lead this advocacy The advocacy efforts were in states with high pediatric HIV burden of ABF led the efforts by engaging with wives of governors in those states, with successful outcomes. HIV services are now part of the MNCH weeks in some of these states.</p> <p>ABF is working with the National Primary Health Care Agency to establish and implement state emergency response teams for maternal and child health, in collaboration with wives of governors</p> <p>The Nutrition Department of the Federal Ministry of Health now</p>

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		engages ABF routinely for the planning and implementation of the Breastfeeding weeks. Key messages during the week are amplified using the voice of the First Lady
Objective 2	Activities	Achievements
Hiring of strong RMNCAH+N Advocacy Officer and a Communication Officer full time on the project	Other relevant staff including an advocacy and communication technical officer as well as an RMNCAH+N officer were recruited	The Foundation now has competent persons to implement RMNCAH+N interventions
Objective 3	Activities	Achievements
To develop State and geo-political-zone-specific RMNCH+N advocacy tool kits:	<p>Tool kits have been developed and specific RMNCAH+N advocacy plans have been developed for the Wives of Governors based on issues identified from the factsheets.</p> <p>Fact sheets were developed for each state. It showed the situation of maternal and child health in each state</p>	<p>Wives of governors are now equipped with the tools needed for effective RMNCAH+N advocacy.</p> <p>Wives of governors are now using evidence to drive their advocacy efforts. Working with their technical teams they developed an advocacy workplan based on the gaps identified from the fact sheet</p>
Objective 4	Activities	Achievements
To establish and sensitize 'Future Assured Governor's Wives Coalition':	The First Lady Dr Mrs. Aisha Buhari convened a stakeholders meeting for RMNCAH+N. During the meeting, she charge wines of governors to commit to championing RMNCAH+N in their states. They committed and the Governors Wives Advocacy Coalition (GWAC) for RMNCAH+N was established	<p>At the meeting, 28 states were present at the meeting and committed to championing RMNCAH+N in their respective states. ABF reached out to state were not present on that and has engaged them in her advocacy efforts</p> <p>Before this intervention majority of the governor's wives had poor knowledge of the high rates of preventable maternal and child deaths as well as what advocacy is and how to conduct it. But after the governor's wives advocacy coalition was established, a platform through which the capacities of the governor's wives were built through advocacy training, the governor's wives are now familiar with the terms and principals of advocacy and are more enlightened about the RMNCAH+N issues and the need for advocacy.</p> <p>Wives of governors are now aware of the need to advocate for the prioritization of RMNCAH+N in their states. More wives of governors are speaking about RMNCAH+N now.</p> <p>Specific examples of Key achievements of the Governors' wives advocacy coalition network (GWAC)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A law banning Female Genital Mutilation was passed in some states as a result of the efforts of the wives of the governors 2. Some wives of governors were instrumental to the domestication of the Child Rights Act as well as the revitalization of six Primary Health care centers in their state. While others were instrumental in the domestication of the VAPP Act to end gender-based violence 3. In the north, some wives of the governor are championing the advocacy for improved childhood malnutrition and their efforts led to the establishment of nutrition agencies in their states 4. Revitalization of Primary Health Care services and provision of an emergency transport system for pregnant women were influenced and facilitated by some wives of governors 5. Some of them have contributed in the integration of HIV testing and counseling services to the MNCH weeks to increase HIV-positive mothers who know their status and receive treatment, to reduce pediatric HIV 6. More governors' wives are now involved in the Flag-off and support of the Maternal, newborn, and Child Health (MNCH) weeks, which has led to timely implementation of the weeks. During the week, in addition to other services, live-saving commodities are provided for women and children in hard-to-reach and underserved communities 7. ABF efforts contributed to the increase in the Federal Government budgetary allocation from 400million in 2019, to 800million in 2020 for procurement of Ready-To-Use Therapeutic food (SAM) a remedy for managing severe acute malnutrition

Objective 5	Activities	Achievements
Conduct a 2-day training workshop on advocacy on RMNCH+N	Training was conducted across the six geopolitical zones for wives of governors and their technical team	The capacity of wives of governors has been built for effective strategic advocacy on RMNCAH+N and they are actively conducting advocacy on RMNCAH+N in their states
Objective 6	Activities	Achievements
To advocate to the Private sector to complement Government efforts in health care delivery	ABF has successfully engaged the Private Sector and charged them to complement government efforts in reducing deaths	Some private (Pharmaceutical) organizations provide thousands of mama kits to women as in-kind incentives to increase facility delivery. The mama kits contain items women need during childbirth. Some women cannot afford to buy these items and so prefer to deliver at home with or without skilled birth attendants. Some supply nutrient-rich food for children with Moderate Acute Malnutrition In addition, some of the governors' wives have reached out to the private sector and were able to gain some support including supports for free surgery for the repair of vesicovaginal fistulae, in women.
Objective 1	Activities	Achievements
Hold Mid Term 1-Day Peer Review Retreat of the 'Future Assured Governor's Wives Coalition'	The Mid-Term Peer Review will held	It was an experience sharing discussion between the governors' wives regarding their efforts in RMNCAH+N advocacy. It was also an avenue where outgoing governors were handed over to incoming wives and the new governor's wives were introduced to join the GWAC for continuity.
Objective 1	Activities	Achievements
To develop RMNCH+N Strategic Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) messages for community sensitization and mobilization for access to RMNCH+N services	SBCC messages were developed and disseminated	SBCC messages that were disseminated through radio jingles, TV programs, docudramas, and through social media have gone a long way in shaping people's lives. People are now more informed about their health and those of their family members.

2. Conclusion

The Partnership for Advocacy on Reproductive Maternal Newborn, child, and Adolescent Health and Nutrition RMNCAH N project in Nigeria, has charged wives of elected government officials to lend their voices in health advocacy, the project was one of its kind and it has gone a long way in improving the wellbeing of women and children in Nigeria.