



Improving the Quality and Sustainability of Private Sector Family Planning and Maternal and Child Health Services in Nigeria

Nigeria, with 150 million people and a population growth rate of 2.8 percent, is Africa's most populous country. The health status of Nigerian women and children is extremely poor, and the country is far from achieving the health-related Millennium Development Goals. With an estimated 545 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, Nigeria has one of the highest maternal mortality ratios in the world, as well as a high under-five mortality rate of 157 per 1,000 live births.

One contributing factor to Nigeria's poor maternal and child health status is the country's relatively high fertility rate, which stood at 5.7 in 2008. The national contraceptive prevalence rate, though increasing, is relatively low at 15 percent. Some regions are well below the national average, such as the northwest zone, with a 2.5 percent contraceptive prevalence rate. Unmet need appears high, with 21 percent of non-users reporting that they intend to use contraception in the future.

Diarrhea is a contributing factor to poor child health; it is one of the three most common childhood diseases in Nigeria. Dehydration caused by diarrhea is a major cause of morbidity and mortality, and effective treatments are not reaching the children who need them. While caregivers seek advice or treatment from a health facility or provider for 42 percent of children with diarrhea, only 26 percent of children receive oral rehydration salts, and less than one percent receive zinc supplements—the two recommended treatments.

The private sector provides 60 percent of family planning services in Nigeria, making it a key entry point for addressing those health needs. Additionally, the International Finance Corporation reports that over 50 percent of rural Nigerians routinely turn to private for-profit health facilities to meet their basic health needs.



A contraceptive technology update training session.

SHOPS Nigeria Activities

SHOPS Nigeria works with private providers in the following ways:

- Family planning and maternal and child health service trainings
- New and strengthened partnerships with private provider associations
- Demand creation through community health promoters
- Business and financial management trainings
- Increased funding through Development Credit Authority loans

Strengthening Services and Association Partnerships

SHOPS Nigeria strengthens private clinic-based family planning and reproductive health services, and maternal and child health services. This service strengthening is accomplished by working with private providers to increase the quality of and access to family planning counseling and services, increasing provider access to finance, and delivering business and management support. Prevention of malaria in pregnancy with intermittent preventive treatment and treatment of diarrhea with zinc and oral rehydration salts will be offered during training to strengthen the skills of providers in these areas.

SHOPS Nigeria also builds and strengthens partnerships with private provider associations. The project works to strengthen the capacity and viability of these key associations to help them become more sustainable in the long-term, especially in continuing provider education and member advocacy. The associations are already a key partner in training providers, but SHOPS Nigeria taps into new networks of private clinic-based providers, including those at workplace clinics and in faith-based health facilities.



An instructor shows a training participant how to prepare an IUD for insertion.

Family Planning and Maternal and Child Health Trainings

Trainings are one of the core activities used to improve the quality of family planning counseling and service provision in the private sector, since there are limited training opportunities for private providers on effective and current family planning knowledge.

Family Wellness: Covers family planning counseling, infant nutrition, prevention of malaria in pregnancy and malaria treatment, and diarrhea treatment. It attracts largely community pharmacists, as they are often the first point of contact for women. This course has a strong emphasis on interpersonal communication skills.

Family Planning Counseling: Builds provider family planning counseling skills with hands-on practice.

Contraceptive Technology Update: Focuses on updating contraceptive knowledge, especially on long-acting reversible methods. It includes a practical session on IUD and implant insertion and removal using models.

Clinical Skills for Long-Acting Methods: Helps providers improve their clinical skills by administering services to actual clients under the observation of instructors. For practicum sessions, SHOPS Nigeria works with public sector facilities and large private clinics to identify clients who desire IUD or implant insertion or removal. SHOPS Nigeria developed a certification for providers that requires them to conduct five IUD and implant insertions and five removals under observation.

Infection Prevention and Control: Conducted in the providers' facilities to minimize time away from clients and to reach a greater number of staff. Improves the capacity of participants to reduce the transmission of infection, which can deter clients from accessing family planning or other services. The course is open to all health facility staff—from doctors to cleaners—since all have a valuable role to play in infection prevention.

Maternal and Child Health: Comprises modules on malaria prevention during pregnancy and diarrhea treatment with zinc and oral rehydration salts. The objective of the training is to improve client management skills.

Family Planning Commodities

SHOPS Nigeria supplies participants who successfully complete the Contraceptive Technology Update and Clinical Skills for Long-Acting Methods courses with a starter stock of family planning products for their facility. After completing Contraceptive Technology Update, they receive Depo-Provera and Combi-3 oral contraceptives. Following Long-Acting Methods project certification, participants receive a supply of IUDs and implants. SHOPS Nigeria links participants in all courses to the Society for Family Health in Nigeria to increase their access to quality commodities and prevent stockouts.

Demand Creation for Family Planning Services

Experience has shown that it is not enough to train providers in family planning skills. Clients must be aware of new methods and know that their local private provider is capable of delivering quality services. To increase demand for family planning, SHOPS Nigeria, in collaboration with participating providers, identifies and trains community volunteers as health promoters. These community health promoters mobilize and educate their communities and refer clients to trained private facilities in their catchment area.



SHOPS Nigeria supplies participants who complete the Contraceptive Technology Update course with a starter stock of family planning products, including Depo-Provera.

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Family Planning Outreach and Hands-On Experience

SHOPS Nigeria collaborated with the United Nations Development Program-led Millennium Villages Project to increase family planning service demand and offer private provider training opportunities through an outreach event at Millennium Villages Project sites in Kaduna State. The campaign led to a large turnout of women requesting family planning methods. Many husbands even left farm work to attend the event with their wives. The outreach served as a practicum session for training participants, who were supervised by SHOPS Nigeria technical staff and instructors. The participants inserted a total of 159 Jadelle implants and four IUDs during this two-day event. Clients who selected a method other than an implant or an IUD after counseling were referred for services.



SHOPS Nigeria and the Millennium Villages Project held an outreach event in Kaduna State that raised awareness of family planning services and offered training opportunities to private providers.

Aisha Abubakar

Access to Finance

To strengthen family planning and reproductive health, and maternal and child health services in Nigeria, SHOPS Nigeria offers training on managing and financing a healthy business, and on individualized business counseling to providers of these services. Training topics include stock management, customer service, and bookkeeping, among others.

SHOPS Nigeria facilitated the creation of a Development Credit Authority loan guarantee with two banks, Diamond Bank and Accion Microfinance Bank. The guarantees are intended to aid these banks in entering the health lending market with more security, knowing that the loans are guaranteed through the USAID Office of Development Credit. The lending officers at these banks receive training on how to better market the loans and work with health loan applicants and beneficiaries. The loans are for providers of family planning and reproductive health, and maternal and child health services, and are largely used for equipment purchases and improvement or expansion of health facilities.

As a sign of the success of this program, Accion Microfinance Bank reached the limit of its Development Credit Authority guarantee before the scheduled time and continues to lend to the health sector. The success is generating a market demonstration effect among other banks that have entered the health lending sector, including Fidelity Bank.



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A SHOPS Nigeria-led business training course for private providers.

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For more information about the SHOPS project, visit: www.shopsproject.org



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