



UKaid programme working with national Nigerian midwife scheme

Ndubisi is a midwife working in Northern Nigeria. *“I have been enjoying working as saving lives gives some kind of relief. Putting a smile on the faces of the rural people is really fulfilling for me. The major motivation is the impact I am making on healthcare delivery in the community. And it is also impressive that women in the village are now aware of the importance of antenatal care as the turnout has improved.”*

The Midwife Service Scheme (MSS) is a national programme in Nigeria aimed at distributing midwives from the south where they are more plentiful to the north, where there is a midwife shortage. The UKaid-funded PRRINN-MNCH programme is supporting these transplanted midwives with additional refresher training courses and ensuring that essential drugs and supplies are available in their facilities.

Obaraeze, another MSS midwife working in Yobe says, *“PRRINN-MNCH has been doing workshops for us on maternal and child health. The training I have received really influenced my work by refreshing our memory on the things we learnt at school and even learnt more. They gave us an orientation on how to cope with the community we are working in that that has really helped me. The people here basically speak Hausa and Kanuri languages and thank God I now understand Hausa and am learning Kanuri as well.”*

Skilled birth attendance is crucial to bringing down Northern Nigeria’s high maternal mortality rate where Nigeria has 2% of the world’s

population but 10% of the world’s maternal mortality. PRRINN-MNCH, funded by the UK and Norwegian governments, is working closely with the Nigerian Government to support its efforts to bring down maternal mortality. PRRINN-MNCH is a comprehensive programme working on maternal and child health in four states in Northern Nigeria.

The lack of midwives and female health providers kept Nigerian women away from the facilities as cultural taboos on unknown males seeing their wives meant that husbands insisted that women stayed at home to give birth—even to die giving birth. Trained female midwives in the facilities, especially in the rural areas, are now changing this as numbers of births in facilities are increasing across the northern states.

Hajiya Fatima, another midwife says *“the major source of motivation is the outcome of my stay here, the effort is really not wasted and that keeps me going. There has been a great difference on women attendance at the facility. Hitherto, the women don’t come to the facility and even after we came, we had to follow them to their houses on so many occasions to conduct deliveries but now they come by themselves and I think that is one of the greatest achievements. Interestingly, the women now keep to their antenatal dates and also come over for delivery once they notice they are in labour.”*