



Facilitating the reduction of infant and maternal mortality through Katsina partner's forum

Efforts to build solidarity are no easy task!

But building solidarity and partnership of purpose is paramount especially by partners and stakeholders working in the health sector of Katsina state; considering the fact that in the absence of such solidarity and partnership, there are chances of duplicity of tasks and lack of harmony in confronting the scourge of maternal and infant mortality in the state.

Like the Hausa's will say 'Hannu daya baya daukar jinka' or 'a hand cannot thatch a roof', no stakeholder can succeed by going it alone.

Besides 'tsintsiya dake da madauri daya kawai ke iya sharar kirki', meaning, 'only a broom in one piece can make a good implement for sweeping and not a single strand'.

A group of development partners operating in Katsina State are in the frontline of a battle to bring down the high incidence of maternal and infant mortality in communities across the state.

These groups are hitherto in this war as lone soldiers. Thanks to a new push by PRRINN-MNCH, a once passive 'Partners Forum' was reactivated and is up and running.

Today the ably experienced partners are beginning to work towards that goal in a more systematic and harmonic manner. No small feat, given that although they almost have the same goals, they pursue them through different modus operandi.

Tremendous effort is needed to ensure sustainability of projects, collaboration and partnerships towards integrating partner's key

thematic areas with the sole objective of achieving the desired goal of saving more lives.

The month of March 2011 witnessed the rebirth of the 'Partner's Forum' supported by PRRINN-MNCH. A meeting was arranged for the identified partners where answers to the following questions are scouted for;

- Who are the partners?
- What do they do in Katsina state?
- How to partner with government
- Why is there the need for the partnership?
And much more

'Partners Forum' was proposed as a name and adapted by the forum at the inaugural meeting. It was suggested at the meeting that other line MDAs should be included in the forum. A sub-committee was also constituted at the meeting and tasked with the responsibility of drafting the Forum's objectives.

"Aims and objectives of this committee should be highlighted and experience be shared (on a continuous basis by) by members that have been in similar forums in other states," said Mr. Maxwell Ramnaps the State Team Leader of Save the Children UK (Katsina Office).

Already this Forum has started yielding positive fruits.

At the inaugural meeting pertinent issues getting in the way of effective realization of partners' set goals were discussed and possible solutions proffered. Issues like strengthening Integrated Supported Supervision were also discussed.



Partnership for Reviving Routine Immunization in Northern Nigeria; Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Initiative

And it was advised that a Basket Fund of the nature introduced by Zamfara state be adapted in Katsina taking into good cognizance the success the fund recorded in Zamfara state.

The State Ministry of Health was selected as the Secretariat of the Forum.

“The initiative is a laudable one and was welcomed by all. And I commend the State Ministry of Health and PRRINN-MNCH for spearheading its reactivation,” adds Mr. Maxwell.

The next step is profiling each agency taken by the secretariat. Malam Umar Tsauri, the Assistant Director PHC of Katsina State Primary Health Care Development Agency commended the efforts of PRRINN-MNCH and expounded by saying *“the Forum is important in that it has the capacity of curtailing the running of parallel programs by partners. And that it will encourage improved fund management which can come through participatory monitoring and evaluation by the Forum.”*

Tsauri added that *‘the forum will allow us to harmonize our activities in a cost effective manner. Before the advent of the forum we used to have different facilitators in the same LGA and representing different partners but doing the same thing.’*

Information is shared on a continuous basis through the Forum.

“While we believe in the efficacy of this initiative as providing equitable distribution of resources and programs by ensuring that duplication of issues are tackled (as a key and major success), it is noteworthy to confirm that it was marred by lack of strong prioritization by some partners, primarily due to other competing priorities. We believe that we have started on the right footing but the attribution of success shall require strong commitment and participation of all partners. While assertive coordination and strong determination shall be required on the part of the secretariat with more

support from PRRINN-MNCH,” Mr. Maxwell concluded.