



## Reality radio reinforces listeners' knowledge on child health and survival in Jigawa state

Routine Immunization (RI) is an essential preventive measure against childhood killer diseases, but people in communities like Kwaimawa on the outskirts of the Jigawa state capital (Dutse) welcomed it with undue suspicion.

In the past, incentives like soap, diapers and flasks are given to mothers to encourage them to immunize their children with little results. Considering the cost implication of making available the incentives for every exercise, the regime is not sustainable.

Another problem hampering acceptance of routine immunization amongst community members is the fact that, they prefer surrendering their children to caregivers for oral vaccines than DPT which is mainly administered to the child through injection. They mistake the sore around the area of skin injected, the pains and fever that accompanies DPT as side effects and this further fueled their fears.

Reality Radio Program, a new social mobilization and awareness creation push by PRRINN-MNCH is gradually dwarfing the incidences of preventable infant and child mortality by reinforcing listener's knowledge on routine immunization, child health and child survival. The radio program is achieving the goal of strengthening routine immunization and reinforcing vaccination schedules through a ten episodes radio program of 30 minutes duration each.

The program was produced by a team of radio producers and a practicing nurse with technical support from the PRRINN-MNCH's Communication Consultant. It was produced in

Hausa, the local language to increase coverage, visibility and assimilation.

Aired from the first week of October to the last week of December 2010, the program episodes address issues like dangers posed by childhood killer diseases, importance of routine immunization, ways to prevent the transmission of polio via water bodies, and the management of vaccine reactions.

Malam Mustapha Yakubu, a village head of Kwaimawa alluded to the fact that *'before the start of the Reality Radio program, vaccinators usually came in and left as they came without vaccinating a child. But to show how aware our people are today about the importance of routine immunization, just recently the vaccinators came and immunized our children with little hitches. We also receive reports that the same success replicated itself in Kude, Madobi, Baranda and Chama communities'*.

The reality radio program was designed to be heartfelt, informative and an informal way of talking to the listeners.

The presenter, a popular and comic radio anchor usually interspersed the informative elements with amusing commentary related to the content, which encourages listener loyalty. This also promotes the program and created a platform for community involvement through knowledge-sharing with precarious listeners.

A mini survey that ascertained the impact of the program was conducted in the month of July, 2011. The survey targeted respondents that listened to the program at least four times in five randomly selected communities.



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

The communities visited for the survey are Zago Kura community in Kafin Hausa Gunduma, Marke community in Hadejia Gunduma, Chai Chai and Suntilmawa in Ringim Gunduma and Kwaimawa community in Dutse Gunduma councils of Jigawa State.

A total of 100 questionnaires administered randomly in the 5 selected communities revealed a resounding success of the reality radio program. 62 percent of the respondents are women and 38% formed the male respondents.

The survey revealed that most of the respondents learnt about routine immunization, antenatal care and other routine immunization related issues from the programme. Majority of listeners admitted sharing knowledge learnt in the program with their relatives, spouses, neighbors and friends.

Malam Garba, another community leader from Kwaimawa community expounded on the level of awareness created by the radio program saying *'our people are now better informed about the importance of vaccines and routine immunization so much so that they are now afraid that one day they would be asked to pay for the service'*.

Although there is a growing awareness around routine and supplemental immunization, the community leaders in Kwaimawa lament some of the problems road-blocking the smooth uptake of immunization as poor remuneration for the vaccinators during supplemental immunization (which is around N2000 to N3000 per vaccinator), poorly trained vaccinators whom often erroneously administer DPT to children older than 23 months and that the immunization team number hardly proportionately matches the number of children that are brought for immunization with Malam Garba alluding that:

*'In an karo ma'aikata sannan aka karfafa musu gwiwa, za su yi aiki sosai. Kuma kwana hudu da aka debawa masu yin alluran rigakafin gida-gida yayi kadan'*, meaning *'if the number of staff that*

*makes the vaccination team are reasonably increased with their wages/incentives equally increased, they will do a better job. And 4 days is not enough for house-to-house vaccination considering the large size of our communities.'*

The community leaders plead to the Gunduma Council and PRRINN-MNCH to do more in the area of convincing their people to immunize their children while urging the government to make the right adjustments to its immunization plans and schedules.