



Encouraging health workers to work in rural areas

Amina is a registered nurse/midwife who isn't sure she wants to be deployed to rural Yobe state.

"Ordinarily, one is supposed to be willing to work anywhere within the state as a professional but still, as a human being, people need to be motivated and....there is the need for accessibility to the rural areas. There will be less problem if one is sure of his safety and health on travelling..."

Yobe State in Northern Nigeria shares a border with Niger and has some difficult terrain and remote communities. Yobe's 2.5 million population are spread across the state, making the provision of good healthcare in rural areas crucial to the long term health of the Yobe people.

What might convince Amina to make the difficult trip?

Falmata is also a nurse/midwife in the capital city of Yobe State.

"Why not? I believe the work I am going to do in the village is the same as what I am used to doing here in the city. I am working in the hospital and attending to patients here and it is the same thing so I don't have any problem with that."

When asked about her motivation to work in remote areas, she says,

"I am aware of the challenges in rural areas which are quite different from that of urban areas. For instance, the rural facilities are in most cases not well equipped and therefore health workers find it difficult to work efficiently. My advice to government is that health workers be paid their allowances even before resuming duty, hospitals should be well equipped with

basic medical facilities including electricity and [there should be] decent accommodation for the staff"

Falmata is full of ideas to maintain the motivation of the worker in rural areas:

"Again, the rural dwellers should be enlightened on the need to access the hospital as well as the importance for that. The hospitals should also be provided with power to aid our work. We also need constant training and retraining as there are innovations coming up every day and mostly, staff of the rural facility are always left out."

Rural allowances paid on time, safe transport, and good accommodation were cited as necessary by many midwives in a survey carried out by the PRRINN-MNCH programme, a maternal and child health programme funded by DFID and the Government of Norway.

As skilled birth attendance has been proven to be key in the reduction of the high maternal mortality rate in Northern Nigeria, the motivations of midwives are key to understanding how to bring the maternal mortality rate down.

UKaid is working to understand this problem better and will be soon funding a new programme designed to unlock some of the many problems in the supply of midwives in Yobe and other states in Northern Nigeria.

Hauwa, another Yobe-based midwife says,

"One of the most important things is that health professionals should be trained on the need to be committed to work where they are needed right from their school days. With this, I think people will certainly be willing to be posted and work anywhere they find themselves."