



NIGERIA  
HEALTH  
WATCH

# 20 20 ANNUAL REPORT





## **Nigeria Health Watch Annual Report 2020**

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# BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Dr. ZAINAB IMAM** obtained her medical degree from the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. This was followed by training at the University College Hospital in Ibadan. Dr Imam retrained as a General Adult Psychiatrist in the Ukiah endorsement in Rehabilitation and Subspecialty interests in Early Intervention in Psychosis and Perinatal Psychiatry. She has worked in Psychiatry for over 10 years and is currently a Consultant in Women's Mental Health at Sidra Medicine in Qatar. She is member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and she holds one year Intermediate Certificate from the University of Plymouth in Psychodynamic Psychotherapy. Prior to moving to Qatar, Dr Imam was an Honorary University Fellow at Plymouth University Peninsula Schools of Medicine and Dentistry. She was also a Trustee and Director of Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity. Dr Imam is a member of the Public Education Engagement Board of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, and is a Partner in Psychiatry-UK LLP, the only NHS and CQC approved provider of Tete-psychiatry services in the UK. She is a faculty member of a United Nation's Population Fund (UNFPA) supported joint MANSAG and IDP Diaspora Support Group, Trauma Counselling Training Program in Nigeria. She is married to Ibrahim and they are blessed with four children.



**Dr. CHIKWE IHEKWEAZU** is the Director General of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), as well as Acting Director of the Regional Centre for Disease Control for West Africa. Dr Ihekweazu trained as an infectious disease epidemiologist and has over 20 years' experience working in senior public health and leadership positions at the South African National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), the UK's Health Protection Agency, and Germany's Robert Koch Institute (RKI). Dr Ihekweazu has led several short-term engagements for WHO, mainly in response to major infectious disease outbreaks around the world. He is a graduate of the College of Medicine, University of Nigeria and has a Masters in Public Health (MPH) from the Heinrich-Heine University, Dusseldorf, Germany. In 2003, he was awarded a Fellowship for the European Programme for Intervention Epidemiology Training (EPIET), completing his Public Health specialisation in the UK. He is widely published in medical peer review journals and is on the board of the NGOs: Public Health Foundation of Nigeria, Health Watch Foundation, Society for Family Health (SFH), Education as a Vaccine (EVA). He is on the Africa Policy Advisory Board of ONE and a TED Fellow, and co-founder of TEDxEuston. In between public service, he was a Managing Partner of EpiAFRIC- a health consultancy firm in Abuja.



**DR. IKE ANYA** is a Partner at EpiAFRIC and manages all engagements in Western Europe. He was until recently a Consultant in Public Health Medicine, and Deputy Director of Public Health with the UK National Health Service in London and an honorary lecturer in Public Health at Imperial College. A Fellow of the Faculty of Public Health, he has taught at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), Imperial College, University College London, the University of the West of England and Bristol University. A lead partner for the General Medical Council, he is a member of the Black & Ethnic Minority Health and Epidemiology & Public Health Section Council's at the Royal Society of Medicine and member of the Advisory Committee for Medecins Du Monde's Project: London. He is a cofounder of the Abuja Literary Society, the Nigerian Public Health Foundation, and the Nigeria Health Watch. He is a TED Global Fellow and cofounder of TEDxEuston.



**Dr. OLUSOLA ARUNA** is a Fellow of the United Kingdom Faculty of Public Health (FPH). Dr Aruna qualified as a doctor in 1984 from the University of Ife, Nigeria. She gained her Masters in Public Health (MPH) with distinction from the University of Leeds in 1996 as a British Chevening Scholar, and holds a Diploma in Child Health (DCH) from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow. Dr Aruna was appointed Consultant in Public Health Medicine in the UK National Health Service (NHS) in 2007, and has worked on the identification, assessment, analysis and use of data and other information for decision making, including the control of communicable diseases. Her work has also involved providing expert evidence-based advice to politicians, donor agencies and Board Executives at different levels. Dr. Aruna supported the design, implementation and evaluation of surveillance systems in Nigeria as a Senior Technical Advisor on Surveillance to the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, under the USAID funded MEASURE Evaluation Project. She is currently the country lead for Public Health England's (PHE) International Health Regulations (IHR) Strengthening Programme in Nigeria.

# OVERVIEW

Looking back at 2020, it is hard to begin this annual report without reflecting on how globally, everyone has been deeply affected by the combined health and economic challenges brought on by the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Just like many other organisations, Nigeria Health Watch started off in 2020 with plans for an exciting and impactful year ahead. A few weeks into February, it became apparent that the global focus was moving, events were escalating at an unprecedented pace, and little did we know that COVID-19 would cause such an untold disruption in our lives.

In February 2020, Nigeria Health Watch held a multi-stakeholder meeting in Kebbi State as part of the final stakeholder engagements for the MSD for Mothers #GivingBirthInNigeria project. Soon after, on the 27th of February 2020, the first case of COVID-19 was reported in Nigeria. Then came the first reported case of COVID-19 in Abuja, prompting the shutting of schools and 'non-essential' businesses.

We immediately set up measures to mitigate the effects of the lockdown on our work with a move to remote working and web-based meetings. Given our existing track record using digital tools for communications, we were able to quickly adapt to what became 'the new normal'. A large focus of our work transitioned to COVID-19 crisis communications response propelled by supporting the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), with strategic communications. Examples of activities carried out included, rumour management, producing editorial in line with COVID-19 strategic messaging priorities for major newspapers, as well as the development of health advisories and guidelines.

We were also able to launch innovative social media campaigns, such as #MyCOVID19NaijaStory which shared the stories and experiences of COVID-19 survivors. We were able to gain new business through grants focused on media advocacy and communication for the COVID-19 response in Nigeria. The grants included a sub-grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation documenting the COVID-19 response, the state-level response to COVID-19 supported by the Ford Foundation as well as projects countering and debunking misinformation supported by Meedan and Christian Aid. Through these grants, we fact checked and debunked misinformation and disinformation.

We successfully organised webinars focused on 'Innovations in the COVID-19 Response', Maternal Newborn and Child health, and Nutrition. The Nigeria Health Watch's Twitter handle was verified at the onset of the pandemic and over a 3-month period from March 2020, the followership on

the platform increased by about 130%. This solidified our position as a trusted source for health information, as well as thought leaders in public health helping to demystify COVID-19 misinformation.

In November 2020, together with Africare and EpiAFRIC, we closed out the first phase of the MSD for Mothers-supported #GivingBirthInNigeria project with the global launch of the 'Why are Women Dying While Giving Birth in Nigeria?' report. Dr. Zainab Shinkafi-Bagudu was a keynote speaker at the landmark virtual event. The launch saw the release of findings from the year-long community-informed maternal death review.

In December 2020, Nigeria Health Watch hosted the flagship Future of Health Conference to a virtual audience. Sub-themes during this meeting focused on innovations in maternal health, primary health care and epidemic preparedness. In 2021, we will continue with our project focused priorities on maternal health advocacy and communications, with an increased focus on quality as a critical component in health access, as well as our advocacy for nutrition, routine immunisation, sexual reproductive health and rights, as well as Universal Health Coverage. We are looking forward to kicking off the Solutions Journalism Africa Initiative in 2021, supported by the Solutions Journalism Network with a view to embedding the practice of solutions oriented reporting in newsrooms in Nigeria.

We are grateful to our partners for their continued confidence in Nigeria Health Watch and to the team for all the great work. We look forward to continuing our advocacy and health communication and be relentless in our pursuit for a healthier Nigeria.

Stay safe.

*Wianne Ihekweazu*  
**VIVIANNE IHEKWEAZU**

MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
NIGERIA HEALTH WATCH

**"GIVEN OUR EXISTING  
TRACK RECORD USING  
DIGITAL TOOLS FOR  
COMMUNICATIONS, WE  
WERE ABLE TO QUICKLY  
ADAPT TO WHAT  
BECAME 'THE  
NEW NORMAL'."**



# WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO



- a. **YEAR FOUNDED:** 2009
- b. **LOCATION:** Abuja, Nigeria
- c. **EMPLOYEES:** 26



## d. **WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE?**

At the inception of Nigeria Health Watch, the founders sought to ensure that health was given a greater priority in Nigeria. The poor state of healthcare in Nigeria has remained a challenge, with minimal improvement in health outcomes. The goal was to communicate to Nigerians the challenges and opportunities in the Nigerian health sector, empowering them with evidence-based information to enable them to advocate for better access to quality healthcare. It was also important to hold duty bearers accountable to deliver on the health promises and policies that would lead to positive change in the Nigerian health sector.

## e. **WHAT GUIDES US?**

We are guided by the belief that health is a right and all Nigerians should have access to affordable quality healthcare.

## Mission



Our mission is to ensure that Nigerians have the tools and knowledge to make informed decisions about their health. We seek to advocate for improved access to health services at the federal and state level, promoting transparency and health reform where needed. Nigeria Health Watch aims to achieve this mission through informed commentary, effective advocacy, education, health information dissemination and policy recommendation.

## Vision



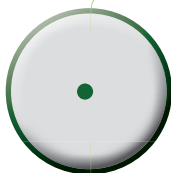
Nigeria Health Watch is committed to working with stakeholders, through advocacy to realise its vision of a Nigeria where all people, irrespective of income, have access to improved and affordable quality health care.

## Values



Our values are excellence, partnership, collaboration, commitment and open-mindedness, as we work collectively to advocate for better access to health care for all Nigerians.

## Core Beliefs



**Excellence**



**Partnership**



**Commitment**



**Open-minded**



# 2020 AT A GLANCE

**FUTURE OF HEALTH CONFERENCE**

**INNOVATION: Improving Health & Scaling Up Healthcare Access**

Thursday, 3rd December 2020 Time: 2pm (WAT)

#Innovate4HealthNaija

NIGERIA HEALTH WATCH

**Christian aid** **The Community, Health Insurance and Advocacy**

11th August, 2020

LOCATION: PLATEAU AND NASARAWA

#Health4AllNaija

NIGERIA HEALTH WATCH

**Launching the WHY ARE WOMEN DYING WHILE GIVING BIRTH IN NIGERIA? Report**

A Community-Informed Maternal Death Review

Monday 30th November 2020 2:00 p.m. WAT

**Speakers:**

- Dr. Jemima O. Ogunniyi, Executive Director, Africare
- Dr. Daniel Oluwalanle, Executive Director, NPHW
- Dr. Mohammed Mustapha, Executive Director, NPHW
- Dr. Hassan Aliyu, Executive Director, NPHW
- Dr. Samuel Ogunniyi, Executive Director, NPHW
- Dr. Victoria Oluwalanle, Executive Director, NPHW
- Dr. Francis Adeniji, Executive Director, NPHW
- Dr. Ayo Ogunniyi, Executive Director, NPHW

NIGERIA HEALTH WATCH

**#GivingBirthInNigeria Webinar**

CATALYSING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR MATERNAL DEATHS IN LAGOS STATE

Date: Friday 29th May 2020 Time: 12:00 - 1:00pm WAT

NIGERIA HEALTH WATCH

**Virtual Conference on Nutrition**

Theme: "Harnessing innovative Financing options for Nutrition-unravelling the bottlenecks"

Date: Tuesday 18th Aug, 2020 Time: 11am - 2pm WAT

**Key Note Speaker:** H.E. Prof. Yemi Odehinde, Vice President of Nigeria, Chairman, National Council on Nutrition

**Speakers:**

- Dr. Ayo Ogunniyi, Executive Director, NPHW
- Dr. Victoria Oluwalanle, Executive Director, NPHW
- Dr. Francis Adeniji, Executive Director, NPHW
- Dr. Ayo Ogunniyi, Executive Director, NPHW
- Dr. Samuel Ogunniyi, Executive Director, NPHW
- Dr. Victoria Oluwalanle, Executive Director, NPHW
- Dr. Francis Adeniji, Executive Director, NPHW
- Dr. Ayo Ogunniyi, Executive Director, NPHW

AISHA BUHARI FOUNDATION

**FUNDING THE COVID-19 RESPONSE IN NIGERIA**

COVERING COVID-19: A MEDIA SERIES POWERED BY #PREVENTEPIDEMICSNAIJA

11th.MAY.2020 12.PM

**SPEAKERS:** OLUSEUN ONIGBINDE, CEO, Budget; DR OLA BROWN, Founder, Flying Doctors Nigeria

**MODERATOR:** ADAOBI EZEKOLI, Editor in Chief, Nigeria Health Watch

**INNOVATION IN THE GLOBAL FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19**

MAY 7th 2020 2:00PM (WAT)

#Innovate4COVID19

**Speakers:**

- Dr. Ayo Ogunniyi, Executive Director, NPHW
- Dr. Victoria Oluwalanle, Executive Director, NPHW
- Dr. Francis Adeniji, Executive Director, NPHW
- Dr. Ayo Ogunniyi, Executive Director, NPHW
- Dr. Samuel Ogunniyi, Executive Director, NPHW
- Dr. Victoria Oluwalanle, Executive Director, NPHW
- Dr. Francis Adeniji, Executive Director, NPHW
- Dr. Ayo Ogunniyi, Executive Director, NPHW

NIGERIA HEALTH WATCH

**NUTRITION POLICY DIALOGUE**

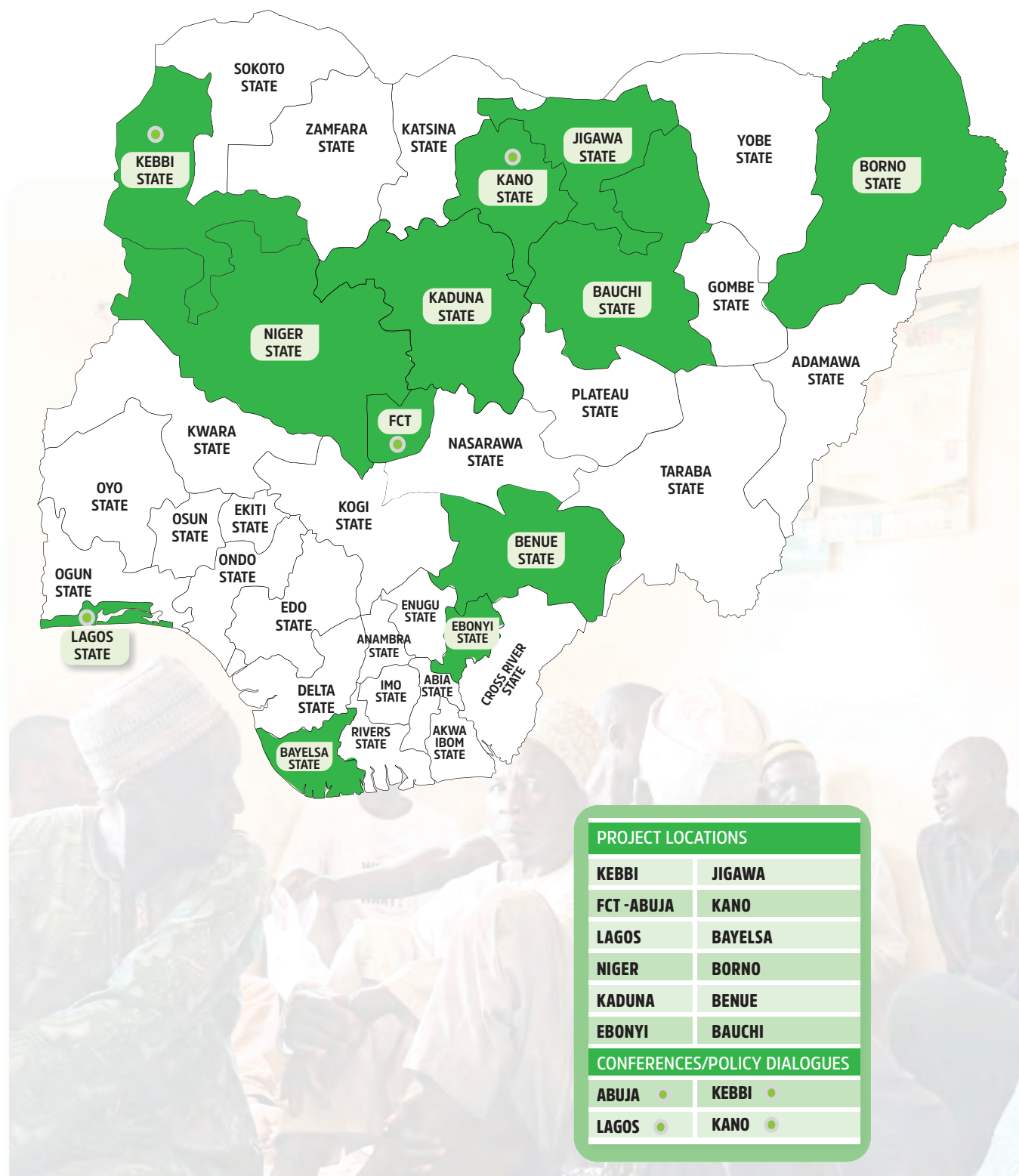
THEME: REVIEWING THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION FOR NUTRITION (2014 - 2019)

Tuesday, 16th June 2020 12 Noon (WAT)

NIGERIA HEALTH WATCH

# LOCATION OF PROJECTS

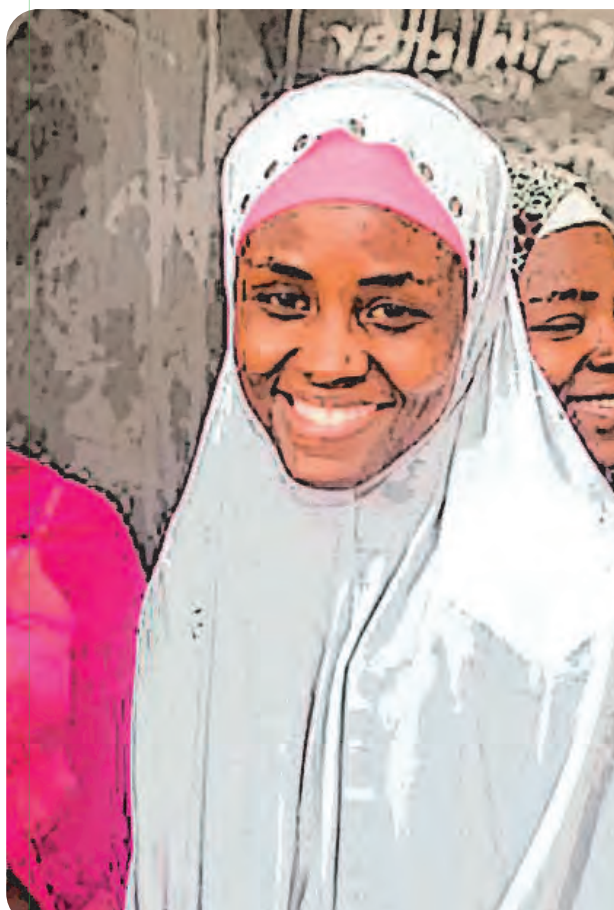
## PROJECT MAP SHOWING WHERE WE WORKED





# PROJECTS

## WHAT WE ACHIEVED IN 2020



### THE GLOBAL POLICY ADVOCACY PROJECT

Increasing awareness, knowledge and engagement among Nigerians on health issues



### PREVENT EPIDEMICS PROJECT

Preventing epidemics through public awareness and advocacy for sustained funding to improve epidemic preparedness in Nigeria



### CATALYSING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR MATERNAL DEATHS IN NIGERIA

#GivingBirthInNigeria



### THE CHAIN PROJECT

Closing the gap to sustainable health access in Nigeria



## The Global Policy Advocacy Project

FUNDED BY BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

In 2020, the Global Policy and Advocacy programme focused its advocacy efforts on raising awareness, knowledge, and engagement among Nigerians on key health issues in Nigeria, with emphasis on primary health care, maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH), polio, routine immunisation, nutrition and sexual and reproductive health rights and epidemic preparedness.



### PROJECT OBJECTIVES

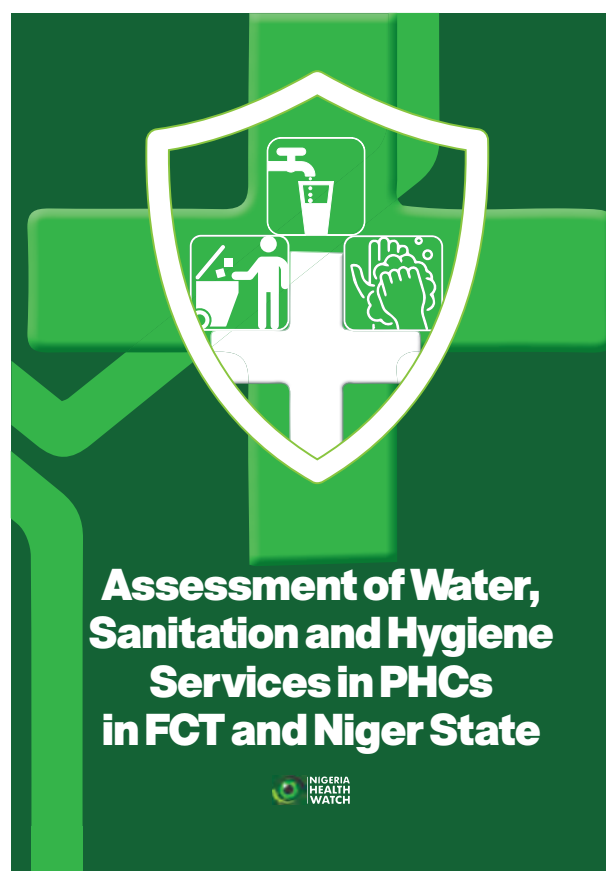
- **To increase knowledge and awareness** of the following issues in Nigeria: Polio, MNCH, routine immunization, nutrition and reproductive health and family planning
- **To increase engagement** around the following issues in Nigeria: Polio, MNCH, routine immunisation, nutrition and family planning and reproductive health
- **To increase accountability** in Nigeria's primary health sector by policymakers
- **To increase the use of evidence** and policy analysis by decision makers in the Nigerian public health sector when it comes to policy making and implementation.

### PROJECT OUTPUTS

- Convened **4** health events (policy forums and policy dialogues)
- Published **61** articles on focus areas
- **26** appearances on radio stations across Nigeria
- **1** Focus Group Discussion
- **6** appearances on TV stations advocating on health issues
- Produced **56** videos
- Produced audio-visuals and infographics

## KEY PROJECT OUTPUTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

- Published **56** Thought Leadership articles
- Published **42** Torchlight Series (including Torchlight Africa) articles
- Convened **4** health events focused on nutrition, innovation in the COVID-19 response, maternal health and epidemic preparedness
- Launched a report on primary healthcare and service delivery in Kano State
- Launched an assessment of WASH services in PHCs in Niger State and the FCT
- Launched Torchlight Africa – an expansion of Nigeria Health Watch's solutions-oriented Torchlight Series, to report on how individuals and organisations are solving health challenges in other African countries
- Provided communication support to organisations such as The Federal Ministry of Health, Ministry of Budget and National Planning, World Bank, Aisha Buhari Foundation, ICRC and Water Aid Nigeria
- Partnered with Future Assured to organise the virtual conference on Nutrition bringing together critical stakeholders. At the virtual conference, His Excellency Vice President Yemi Osinbajo was a keynote speaker, and he acknowledged the efforts of Nigeria Health Watch in advocating for funding for nutrition interventions in Nigeria
- The Nigeria Health Watch website was listed by 9mobile as one of its COVID-19 resource websites where users could access for free, information about COVID-19
- Provided strategic emergency risk communication support to the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in response to the COVID-19 outbreak
- Awarded Excellence in Health Promotion Journalism by IASPharma Excellence Awards
- Republication of articles and appearances in several media outlets including, *Guardian UK*, *CNBC Africa*, *Times Radio (UK)*, *Linda Ikeji Blog*, *News Agency of Nigeria*, *Arise TV* and *Radio Nigeria* etc.
- Six articles were republished on the *gavi.org* website in 2020



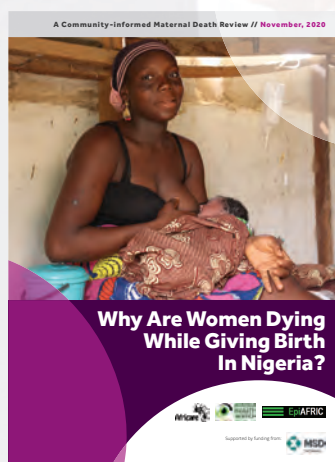
## THE CONFERENCE REPORT





## Giving Birth in Nigeria 2020: Catalysing Accountability for Maternal Deaths in Nigeria

FUNDED BY MSD FOR MOTHERS

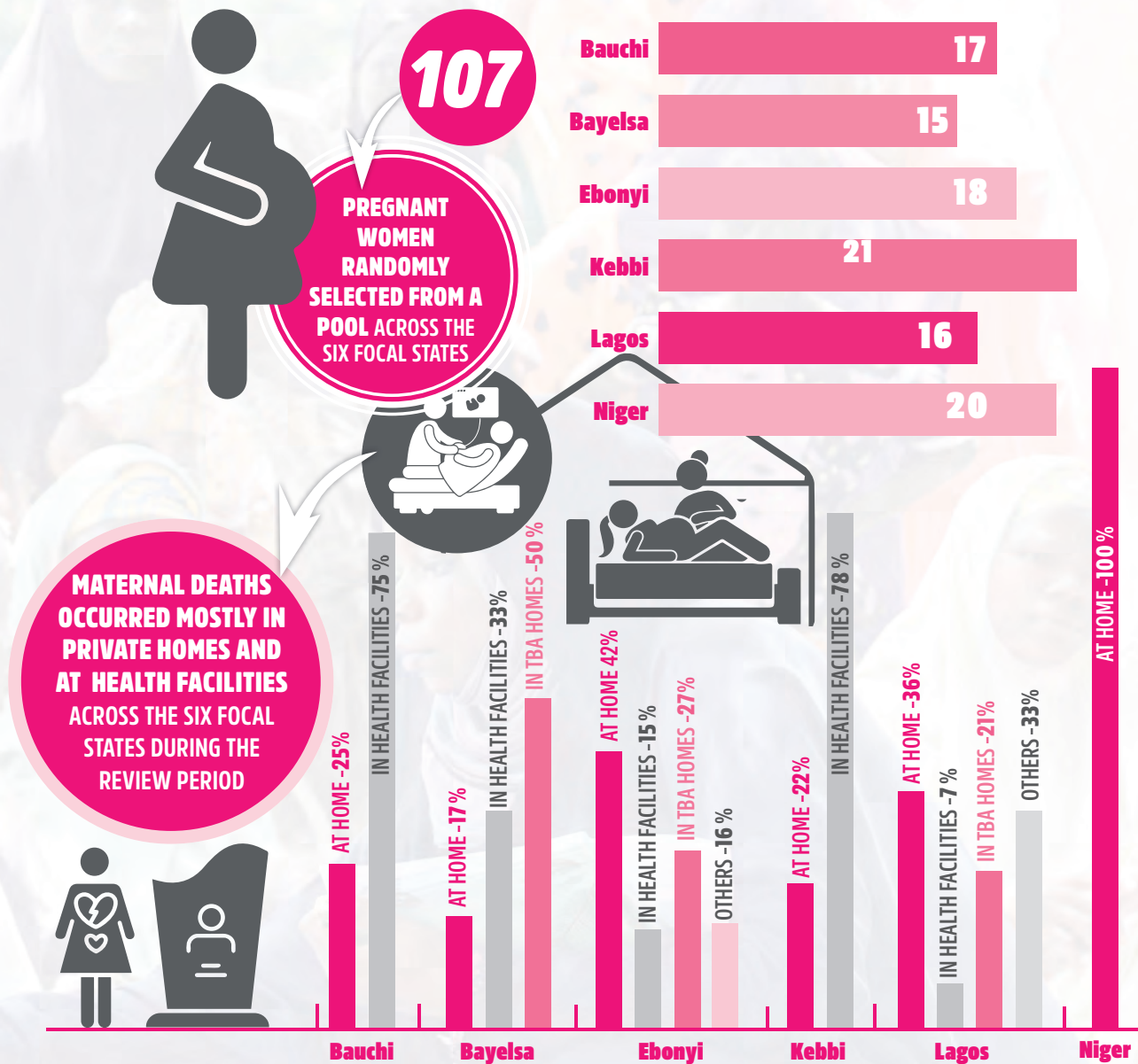


In January 2019, Africare, EpiAFRIC and Nigeria Health Watch formed a consortium to implement the Giving Birth in Nigeria project to develop and implement an innovative community reporting mechanism to capture maternal deaths in select communities across six states in all six geopolitical zones of Nigeria: Bayelsa, Bauchi, Ebonyi, Kebbi, Lagos and Niger States. From May 2019 – May 2020, the consortium worked in these communities, gathering data and stories of maternal deaths in these States, whilst simultaneously advocating for increased multi stakeholder collaboration and accountability in maternal health outcomes.

All project activities culminated on 30 November, 2020, where we launched the 'Why Are Women Dying While Giving Birth in Nigeria?' report, a community-informed maternal death review, which provided a snapshot of the maternal mortality burden being borne by women in Nigeria, and by extension, their homes and communities.

The 'Why Are Women Dying While Giving Birth in Nigeria?' report raised awareness of the high maternal mortality burden in Nigeria, particularly the high prevalence of maternal deaths in communities, where there has been no previous systematic attempt to ensure that deaths that did not occur in a health facility were incorporated into any routine review or Maternal and Perinatal Death Review and Response (MPDSR). The aim of this report, through data collection efforts, is to drive multi-stakeholder awareness, accountability and action for maternal deaths in Nigeria, particularly in communities. The goal is to inform advocacy for the establishment of systems at all levels of government from national, state to local that will ensure accountability for maternal deaths and collaboration for solutions. While the outcomes are adverse, every maternal death, wherever it occurs, must be counted and investigated, and lessons learnt to drive improvements in maternal health care.





## HOW DID SHE DIE?

Suspected causes of death





## Preventing Epidemics Through Public Awareness and Advocacy for Sustained Funding to Improve Epidemic Preparedness in Nigeria

FUNDED BY RESOLVE TO SAVE LIVES

### PROJECT GOAL

The overall goal and objective of this project is to build and demonstrate public and policymaker awareness and demand for epidemic preparedness funding increases at the federal and possibly priority state levels, through earned and digital media coverage as well as leveraging stakeholder events.



### PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- **Increase circulation of stories on funding for epidemics preparedness in the media** leading to increased pressure on policy makers for policy change by the public.
- **Increase the capacity of journalists** to identify and accurately report on key issues to promote awareness and national support for epidemics preparedness
- **Encourage rounded circulation of stories** on funding for epidemics.
- **Improve understanding of and public support for NCDC's efforts in preventing disease outbreaks** and the need for sustained funding for epidemics prevention.
- **Increase advocacy for more and sustained funding** for the NCDC.



**PROJECT OUTPUTS**

- Delivered a workshop with NAPHS MDAs aimed at increasing the knowledge of NCDC's 2020 focus and the role each MDA involve with the NAPHS must play, identifying ways to mobilise resources locally, and securing commitments from each MDA to work with and support NCDC to deliver NAPHS 2020 focus.
- Organised a Field trip with Federal Legislators and other relevant policy makers to Abuja International Airport to assess the airport authority's preparedness level as they resume flight duties and highlight gaps in epidemic preparedness and encourage lawmakers to be actively involved in advocating for more money for epidemic preparedness.
- Organised 3-part journalism webinar series
- Delivered a health journalism masterclass with 20 journalists, editors and social media influencers in attendance.
- Sponsored a 3-month Journalism fellowship and mentorship program for journalists to build the capacity of selected journalists to develop in-depth solutions journalism projects on Epidemic Preparedness and the need for sustained funding.
- Engaged journalists to write and publish articles on epidemic preparedness in mainstream media, to increase reportage and push forward our project objective.
- Arranged Media Interviews with lawmakers, policy makers and relevant stakeholders.
- Produced and disseminated targeted multimedia interviews and testimonials.
- Engaged with social media influencers to deliver digital campaigns.

**PROJECT OUTCOMES**

- Improved knowledge of journalists on the need for increased reportage around PE as an economic, political and social issue.
- Increased capacity of journalists to identify and accurately report on key issues to promote awareness and national support for epidemics preparedness.
- Improved accuracy, content and frequency of stories outlining the importance of sustained funding for epidemics preparedness, leading to improved public awareness and support for epidemic prevention.
- Increased circulation of stories on funding for epidemics preparedness in the media leading to increased pressure on policy makers for policy change by public.
- Improved understanding and public support for PE.
- Improved understanding of the role of the NCDC in preventing epidemics, the gaps and limitations and why it is important to advocate for more funding for NCDC.
- Increased engagement and awareness of environmental health issues, the importance of preparing for epidemics, the economic, political and social effect of epidemics.
- Increased knowledge and awareness of community people on the need to fund efforts for epidemics preparedness.
- Increased advocacy for more and sustained funding for the NCDC.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- 75% increase in budget allocation to the NCDC in the 2021 budget
- Leveraged on the COVID-19 pandemic to increase public awareness on the importance of epidemic preparedness
- Delivered on over 90% of the activities planned for 2020 despite COVID-19 pandemic restrictions
- Successfully engaged with journalists and increased reporting skills through the organised masterclass
- Actively assisted NCDC in the COVID -19 response which provided an opportunity to publicise the Prevent Epidemics project

## Closing the Gap to Sustainable Health Care Access in Nigeria through Health Insurance

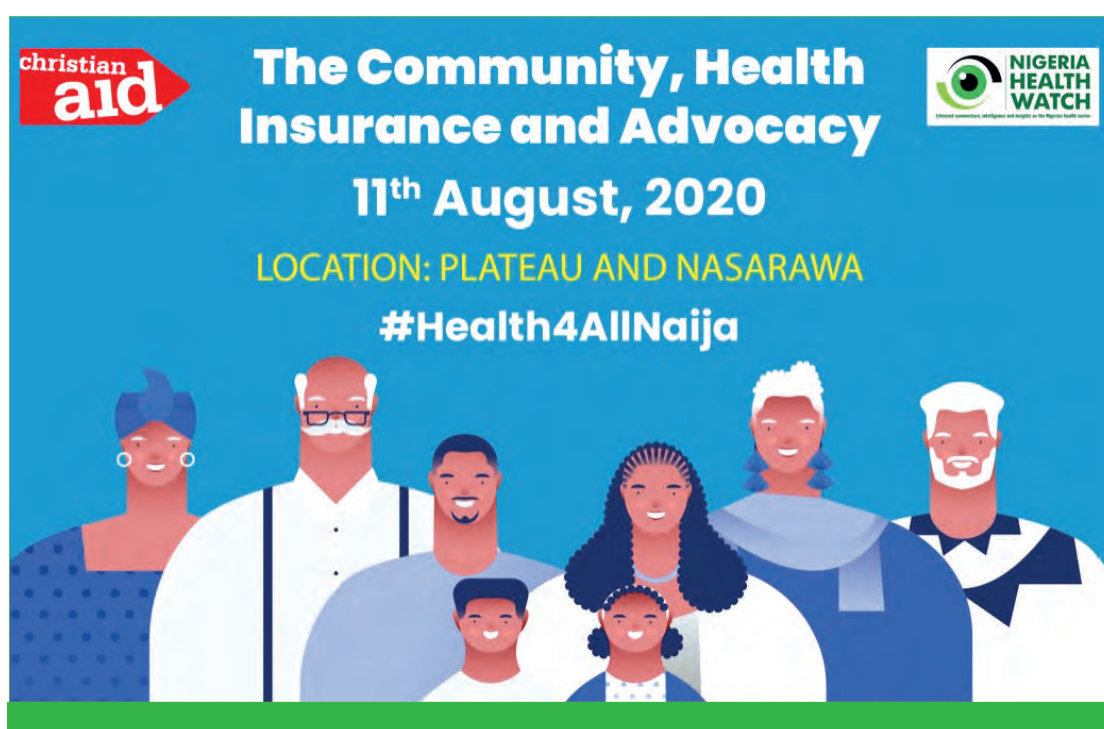
FUNDED BY CHRISTIAN AID

### PROJECT RATIONALE

As a scale up to two other states – Plateau and Nasarawa States; in similar phases of their health insurance journey, this project's primary goal was to support, strengthen and complement current health interventions in health financing via the state schemes by creating linkages between Community-Based Health Insurance Schemes (CBHISs) especially and the informal sector.

Learnings from this project's work show that one innovative strategy to closing the gap to sustainable health access is to create effective and efficient linkages between the state schemes and the community schemes, while strengthening the capacity of the CBHIS in the states.

The project also worked to strengthen existing schemes by identifying capacity gaps and where necessary, strengthen or create linkages between the members of target community, CBHIS and third-party support.



### PROJECT GOAL

- To improve access to health care of vulnerable people in project communities while reducing out of pocket expenditure for health care through a robust health insurance system.

### PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- To increase uptake of community-based health insurance in target communities. community level with the CBHIS
- To reduce the effect of out of pocket payment for vulnerable people in target communities through uptake of community-based health insurance
- To create effective linkages between community-based health insurance and state-based health insurance agencies

## PROJECT STRATEGIC APPROACH

- Create awareness about health insurance at the community levels to increase uptake of health insurance at the community level with the CBHIS and build sustainability.
- Create linkages between community-based health insurance schemes and state schemes; and between CBHIS and target population
- Encourage uptake of health insurance in target locations

## KEY PROJECT OUTPUTS PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Commissioned production of radio jingles promoting understanding and demand for health insurance in the informal sector.
- Aired radio jingles across 6 stations in 3 project states over 4 weeks.
- Developed and placed IEC materials for project states.
- Strengthened capacity of community-based organisation to conduct advocacy and sensitisation on health insurance with hands-on class practical sessions - Selected and trained 40 CBOs in Plateau and Nasarawa
- Participants identified practical ways to keep various levels of government accountable to providing sustainable health insurance systems.
- The state agencies; NASHIA and PLASCHEMA initiated plan to integrate the trained CBOs in their community advocacy programs for health insurance activities.
- The trained CBOs identified developed working stakeholder map in advancing the advocacy on health insurance in their various communities.


## KEY PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Widespread understanding of and uptake of health insurance through the state and community schemes in project states as a better alternative for funding health care





# EVENTS




**TRAINING FOR  
COMMUNITY-BASED  
MONITORS**

16TH JANUARY 2020



**ASSESSMENT OF  
PHCs IN KANO STATE  
- REPORT LAUNCH**

21ST JANUARY, 2020




**LEGISLATING  
EPIDEMICS:  
BREAKFAST  
MEETING WITH  
SEN. UTAZI AND  
SEN. OLORIEGBE**

5TH FEBRUARY, 2020




**ACCELERATING  
ACCOUNTABILITY  
FOR MATERNAL  
DEATHS AT THE  
COMMUNITY LEVEL  
- KEBBI STATE**

20TH FEBRUARY, 2020



**INNOVATION IN  
THE GLOBAL FIGHT  
AGAINST COVID-19**

7TH MAY, 2020




**FUNDING THE  
COVID-19 RESPONSE  
IN NIGERIA**

11TH MAY 2020



**ACCOUNTABILITY  
FOR MATERNAL  
DEATHS IN LAGOS  
STATE ( MULTI-  
STAKEHOLDER  
MEETING)**

29TH MAY, 2020



**REVIEW OF THE  
NATIONAL STRATEGIC  
PLAN OF ACTION FOR  
NUTRITION  
(2014 - 2018)**

16TH JUNE, 2020




**FIELD TRIP  
WITH FEDERAL  
LEGISLATORS AND  
POLICY MAKERS TO  
NNAMDI AZIKIWE  
INTERNATIONAL  
AIRPORT, ABUJA**

13TH JULY, 2020



**REVIEW OF NAPHS  
AS AN EFFECTIVE  
BUDGETING TOOL  
FOR EPIDEMIC  
PREPAREDNESS  
IN NIGERIA**

23RD JULY, 2020



**HEALTH JOURNALISM  
MASTERCLASS  
ON EPIDEMIC  
PREPAREDNESS**

6TH AUGUST, 2020



**CROSS-LEARNING/  
TRAINING SESSIONS  
WITH LEADERS OF  
COMMUNITY-BASED  
ORGANISATIONS  
(CBOs) - NASARAWA  
AND PLATEAU STATE**

11TH AUGUST, 2020




**HARNESSING  
INNOVATIVE  
FINANCING FOR  
NUTRITION IN  
NIGERIA -  
UNRAVELING THE  
BOTTLENECKS**

18TH AUGUST, 2020



**GIVING BIRTH IN  
NIGERIA: 'WHY ARE  
WOMEN DYING WHILE  
GIVING BIRTH  
IN NIGERIA?'  
- REPORT LAUNCH**

30TH NOVEMBER, 2020



**INNOVATION:  
IMPROVING HEALTH  
AND SCALING UP  
HEALTHCARE ACCESS**

3RD DECEMBER, 2020



## TRAINING FOR COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORS

16TH JANUARY 2020

The 2nd cohort training for community-based monitors held in January 2020, to increase visibility of universal health coverage through increased sensitisation of both the formal and the informal sector in Benue state. For the first time ever in the state, representatives from all parastatals (civil servants) in the state had the opportunity to sit down with the State Health Insurance Scheme (SHIS) and community-based organisations (CSOs) to dialogue.

Some of the notable achievements made were:

- Town hall meeting with the informal sector which brought together representatives from different associations that includes the BEMOA, traders and farmers association increasing literacy for health insurance, debunking myths and how they can get it.
- First Community health insurance awareness rally ever conducted in Kwande LGA, Adikpo community marking the UHC day, gaining public buy-in from the town's traditional ruler.
- Two Radio and two TV shows held at the state media houses with increasing engagement from the public.



- Innovative 'Each one Bring one' strategy employed in the requirement of community-based monitors for expanded CBM training.
- Needs assessment visit to Nasarawa conducted.





## ASSESSMENT OF PHCs IN KANO STATE - REPORT LAUNCH

21ST JANUARY, 2020

At the end of the project to monitor service delivery in primary health centres in Kano State - an initiative of Nigeria Health Watch in collaboration with Connected Development (CODE) - a report launch of the findings from the Assessment of PHCs in Kano State held to highlight the results.

The project was designed to monitor progress in the implementation of primary healthcare services particularly maternal, newborn and child health services (MNCH), aimed at promoting accountability in Nigeria's primary health sector by advancing the use of evidence in health reporting, policy analysis and informed commentary towards creating a change.

The project activities included:

- Training of CODE community volunteers on interviews, questions and metrics to be used in assessing the PHCs
- Deployment of volunteers to assess PHCs
- Submission of findings from assessments by volunteers to NHW/CODE
- Collation of findings and drafting of



a report on service delivery in PHCs in Kano State

- Production of final report
- Official dissemination of report and press briefing

### OUTCOMES OF PROJECT

- Increased awareness of the state of primary healthcare in Kano State and Nigeria as a whole
- Increased accountability of healthcare officials in the delivery of services in primary healthcare in Nigeria.

At the report launch, the importance of providing quality and affordable healthcare services at the grassroots was highlighted. While participants noted that achieving the health-related sustainable development goals (SDGs), including universal health coverage, will not be possible without a stronger primary healthcare system.





## LEGISLATING EPIDEMICS: BREAKFAST MEETING WITH SEN. UTAZI AND SEN. OLORIEGBE

5TH FEBRUARY, 2020

Nigeria Health Watch organised a breakfast meeting with Distinguished Senator Utazi Chukwuka (Chairman Senate Committee on Health) and Distinguished Senator Dr. Ibrahim Yahaya Oloriegbe to discuss, with other stakeholders, the role of the legislature in funding epidemic preparedness in Nigeria.

The world had been on high alert since January 7, 2020 when the Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) was confirmed in the Chinese city of Wuhan. The virus has spread to other countries and by January 28, 2020, Ethiopia, Kenya and Ivory Coast were the first African countries to identify suspected cases.

While on the home front, Nigeria was currently dealing with a Lassa Fever outbreak. The increase in cases at this time of the year is not unusual due to ecological factors and NCDC is supporting states in responding to this outbreak.

Nigeria has shown great commitment to finding, stopping and preventing outbreaks, however, there is still a lot to do to ensure that every Nigerian – no matter where there are – is safe from an infectious disease



outbreak, whether local or global.

Some of the key takeaways from the breakfast meeting were:

- “Epidemics cannot be prepared for using our current funding mechanism. We need to think outside the box. Can we create a special type of fund for epidemic preparedness?” - *Distinguished Senator Yahaya Oloriegbe*
- “Some Nigerians want to come back from China but the fear is, when they come back, where do we keep them? We need a strategic plan and it must be robust. State and local govts must also be involved.” - *Distinguished Senator Yahaya Oloriegbe*
- “I am already proposing the amendment of the National Health Act. We want to ensure that the money going to the NCDC is legal and not left to the goodness of whoever is heading the agency.” - *Distinguished Senator Utazi Chukwuka*
- “We need to ask what the states are doing in their own locality. We all have to work in sync. This is what the 9th Assembly is about to, ensuring synergy. It is not just about more funding. Are we using the little we have efficiently?” - *Senator Utazi Chukwuka*

### MAJOR OUTPUT

The formation of a multi-sectoral group to advocate for epidemic preparedness.





## ACCELERATING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR MATERNAL DEATHS AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL - KEBBI STATE

20TH FEBRUARY, 2020

In January 2019, Africare, Nigeria Health Watch and EpiAFRIC formed a consortium to use research and advocacy to catalyse accountability for maternal deaths in Nigeria. Termed the *#GivingBirthInNigeria* project, this 18-month programme, was sponsored and funded by MSD for Mothers. In Kebbi State, three LGAs were selected to carry out the project's activities: Argungu, Koko-Besse and Danko-Wasagu.

In Nigeria, a whopping 57% of deliveries occur in communities, outside the proficiency of medical professionals in a health facility. At the stakeholders meeting, the Managing Director, Nigeria Health Watch, Vivianne Ihekweazu iterated that the *#GivingBirthInNigeria* project aims to increase engagement among media users on maternal health stories and also establish state-level dialogue among relevant stakeholders in maternal care from the community level and policy influencer and regulation levels, hence the visit.

His Excellency Sen. Abubakar Atiku Bagudu, Executive Governor of Kebbi State said that there is a need to re-examine cultural practices that influence pregnancy, delivery and maternal care.

Kebbi State along with the rest of the North-West recorded some of the poorest maternal health indices in the just published 2018 Nigeria Demographic Health Survey. Her Excellency Dr. Zainab Shinkafi-Bagudu, First Lady of Kebbi State, in her keynote address, echoed the commitment of the Kebbi State Government to take active steps to improving maternal healthcare delivery in the state. Dr. Bagudu stated that a solution to maternal healthcare challenges is education, adding that maternal deaths will be reduced by up to 70% when all women complete primary education at the very least. "Quality maternal health should be seen as the right of every woman and not a privilege. Now is time to act!"

From the meeting, it is clear that there are gaps in maternal healthcare service delivery in Kebbi State and each stakeholder has a role to play in ensure the safe delivery of a woman.







## INNOVATION IN THE GLOBAL FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

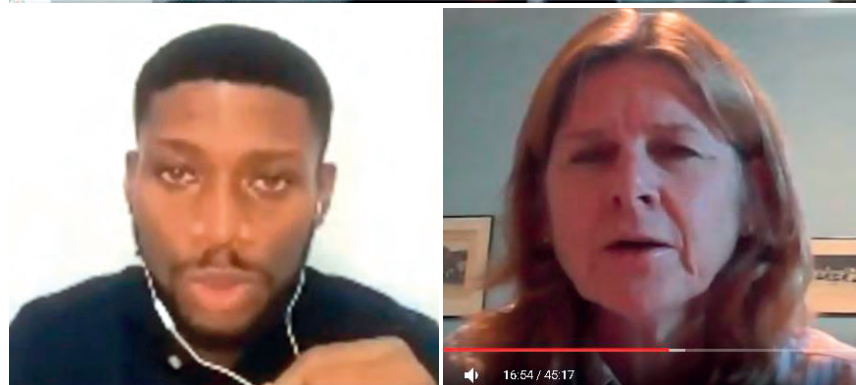
7TH MAY, 2020

In the face of the daunting challenges faced by global health systems as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals and organisations responded with initiatives and interventions to mitigate the impact and spread of the pandemic.

These challenges ranged from increased demand for hospital beds and personal protective equipment (PPE) for health workers, and continuous increase in confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Against this backdrop, in partnership with EpiAFRIC, the 'Innovations in the Global Fight Against COVID-19' webinar, was hosted to highlight the deployment of dynamic innovations to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic in public, private and community spheres.

To achieve a robust discussion, three areas of innovation were highlighted: Behavioural innovation, clinical and pharmaceutical innovation, and innovation in public health institutes (PHIs). Speakers urged Africans to increase their manufacturing capacity and to find cheaper and better ways of doing things.







## FUNDING THE COVID-19 RESPONSE IN NIGERIA

11TH MAY 2020

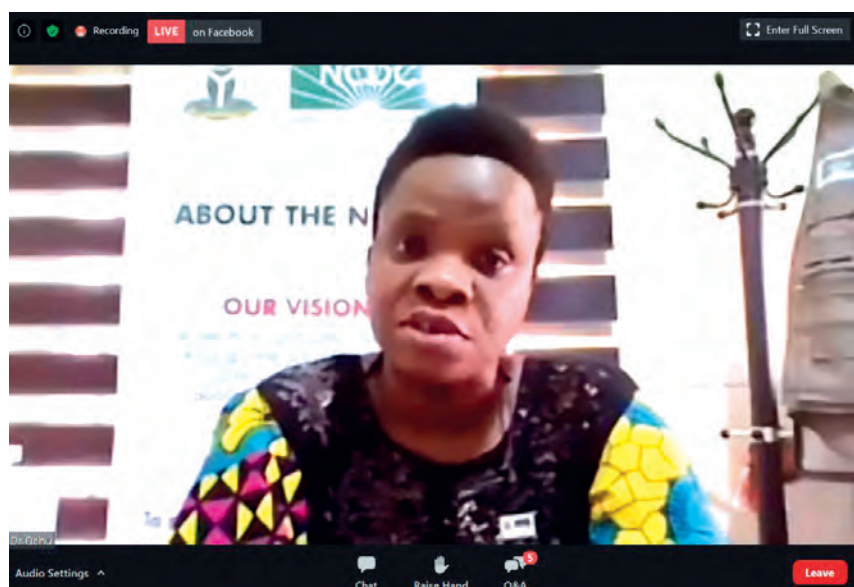
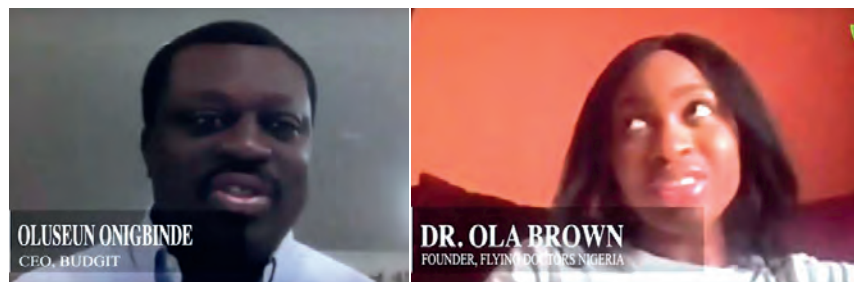
Nigeria Health Watch organised a 3-part journalism masterclass webinar series that targeted journalists as participants.

The first journalism masterclass was themed; Funding the COVID 19 Response in Nigeria. The aim was to share priority messages with journalists to generate and frame trustworthy news coverage and connect journalists with credible experts covering public health.

On June 3, 2020, the second journalism masterclass centred on 'COVID-19 Funding Stream' as its subject. As a media organisation, we understand that inaccurate reporting can produce counterproductive results. Recognising the media's special responsibility as channels of accurate and wholesome information. We hosted this webinar to bring together journalists and experts to discuss important aspects of the COVID-19 response in Nigeria to ensure that they are reported accurately.

The final series held on June 26th 2020, with the theme; Promoting Behavioural Change that Improves Public Health and Social Measures

through Risk Communication (PHSMs). The aim of the webinar was to bring together high-level representatives from the public and private sector to discuss how risk communication can be used to promote adherence to PHSMs, to present and review Nigeria-specific PHSMs data collected by the Partnership for Evidence-Based Response to COVID-19 (PERC). It discussed barriers and solutions when it comes to adopting PHSM in Nigeria, how journalists can cover PHSM clearly without misleading the public and why additional investments in COVID-19 crisis communication and epidemic preparedness are needed at the federal, state, and local levels.



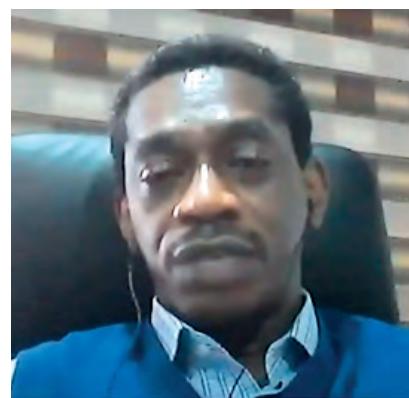
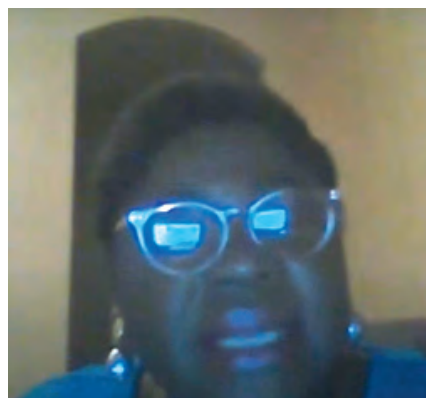


## ACCOUNTABILITY FOR MATERNAL DEATHS IN LAGOS STATE (LAGOS STATE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER MEETING)

29TH MAY, 2020

In a deviation from our regular town-hall style multi-stakeholder meetings as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, we hosted stakeholders to a webinar for the Lagos State multi-stakeholder meeting themed, Catalysing Accountability for Maternal Deaths in Lagos State.

Discussions centred around the critical role of multi-stakeholder collaboration and the attitudes of health workers. Delegates noted that at every point of a woman's maternal healthcare journey, there is a need for health education at every opportunity from the community level, religious centres, the media, professional associations and NGOs down to the health facilities. It was agreed by participants that the private sector has a key role to play in funding and supporting organisations to provide relevant information on best practices that will reach women where they are and



not wait for them to go to health facilities. In Lagos State, there is a significant reliance on faith-based care over health facility maternal care. This has been attributed, by some of the women, to the unpleasant treatment being faced by the women from health workers. The role of the healthcare provider is to have the right knowledge and skills to provide quality and supportive maternal care to the woman. Every healthcare provider that works within the continuum of maternal healthcare must adhere to protocols and guidelines for care and make sure that the women get the right type of care that they need with empathy and excellence. The meeting ended with suggestions for how to ensure better maternal care in a post-pandemic Lagos State.





## REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION FOR NUTRITION (2014-2018)

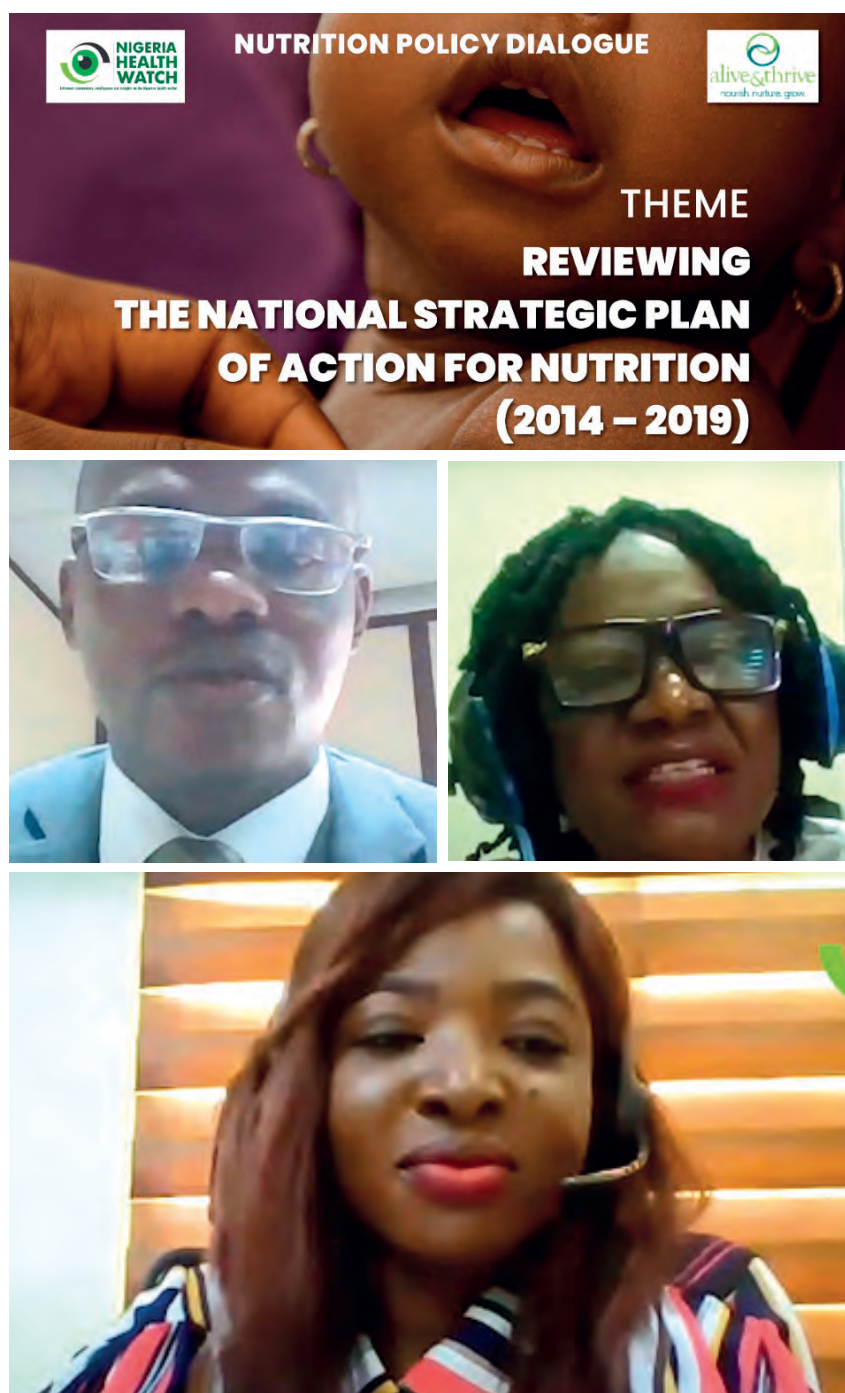
16TH JUNE, 2020

As part of efforts to address the nutrition situation in Nigeria, a National Strategic Plan of Action for Nutrition was devised for implementation between 2014 and 2019. The general objective of the plan was to improve the nutritional status throughout the life cycle of Nigerians, with a focus on vulnerable groups including women of reproductive age and children under five years of age.

At the Nigeria Health Watch nutrition policy dialogue themed 'Reviewing The National Strategic Plan of Action for Nutrition (2014 - 2019)', speakers and participants reviewed the strategic plan of action and focused on how well the plan was being implemented, successes and limitations of the plan and relevance of the plan - given current realities. Speakers shared lessons learned from the plan, current progress on plan implementation, recommendations and next steps.

Some of the recommendations included:

- The need to focus on communities to improve Nigeria's nutrition outcomes
- The need to involve local government chairmen and stakeholders at the community level
- The importance of collaborating more with SMEs and creating a demand for nutritious foods in Nigeria
- Having policies at the state and local government levels to enable implementation of the National Strategic Plan of Action for Nutrition







## FIELD TRIP WITH FEDERAL LEGISLATORS AND POLICY MAKERS TO NNAMDI AZIKIWE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, ABUJA

13TH JULY, 2020

The field trip was embarked on to assess the airport management's preparedness level ahead of resumption of flight duties and highlight gaps in epidemic preparedness and encourage lawmakers to be actively involved in advocating for increased funding for epidemic preparedness.

The team engaged staff of the Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) who demonstrated the health safety procedures in operation for travelers and other airport users. The procedures highlighted also included safety protocols for sick travelers and other airport users. Protocols for passengers or airlines who refused to comply with safety precautions in-flight were also revealed.

The lawmakers stated their desire to pay a repeat visit to the Lagos airport as well as other airports around the country to ensure that safe travel guidelines were being adhered to.



*Some Distinguished Senators of the Federal Republic of Nigeria at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport Abuja assessing preparedness levels as flights resumed after the COVID-19 lockdown in Nigeria.*

Key achievements from the tour were:

- Re-enforcing operating standards at the point of entry, to ensure protection for passengers and staff.
- Advocacy to relevant agencies of governments such as the ministries of Aviation and Health to provide regular funding for the running of the airports to ensure necessary equipment are available for use.

In attendance were: senators Chukwuka Utazi, Umar Sadiq Suleiman, Theodore Orji, Yaro Binos Dauda and Oloriegbe Yahaya



## REVIEW OF NAPHS AS AN EFFECTIVE BUDGETING TOOL FOR EPIDEMIC PREPAREDNESS IN NIGERIA

**23RD JULY, 2020**

The aim of the workshop was to reach out to budget officers in the ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) responsible for the implementation of the National Action Plan for Health Security (NAPHS) to reinforce the importance of budgeting for epidemic preparedness in their individual yearly budgets. In attendance were budget/finance officers and key agencies.

Dr. Oyeladun Okunronmade, Assistant Director Surveillance, NCDC, made a presentation on the critical gaps that exist in funding for NAPHS. She outlined the current funding sources to the NAPHS and highlighted major gaps which included:

- Lack of a direct access and implementation of emergency funding for outbreaks at the national level
- Lack of immediate availability of domestic funding for outbreak response at all levels

- Low budgetary allocation to health security
- Weak commitment of the MDAs
- Non-inclusion of human resources costs.
- Lack of a well-known federal mechanism for timely and substantial release of funds for public health emergencies

Calls to action outlined from the event were:

- NCDC needs to be the driving force to coordinate and engage with all NAPHS MDAs to budget for epidemic preparedness line items.
- Budget officers for each MDA need to draw the attention of their agencies to budget for epidemic preparedness line items according to the activities listed in the NAPHS. MDAs need to make yearly budgetary provisions for line items in the NAPHS
- A need to build existing relationships with the private sector to fund our health security
- Engaging with private sector to not only get involved in response but invest in preparedness, as epidemic preparedness is everyone's business.
- Messaging of the importance of NAPHS should be reinforced to all involved MDAs
- Reaching out to the IHR focal persons selected by each MDA to create a feedback mechanism for NAPHS coordination.







## HEALTH JOURNALISM MASTERCLASS ON EPIDEMIC PREPAREDNESS

6TH AUGUST, 2020

The objectives of the masterclass were to:

- Create and increase demand for epidemic preparedness funding increases at the federal and possibly priority state levels, through earned and digital media.
- Increase capacity of journalists to identify and report key issues around funding for epidemic preparedness.
- Encourage dialogue between journalists, media, etc. on the value of informed ethical journalism in reporting on COVID-19 and key issues concerning epidemic preparedness

Key outcomes included:

- Journalists understood that preparing and responding to epidemics involves a multi-stakeholder approach and all levels of government must be held accountable.
- To draw attention to the challenges in implementing the NAPHS, journalists were



urged to research and write on the following issues - Poor coordination between MDAs implementing IHR activities: e.g. Agriculture, Environment and Health with no clear understanding of responsibilities per countries implementation of IHR core capacities. Insufficient funding: Funds to fully implement prioritised activities in NAPHS often not available and insufficient (outside external funding sources) for relevant MDAs. Lack of formal communication/coordination within MDAs: Inconsistent attendance/representation of focal persons at various IHR-related activities resulting in a lack of understanding and delayed implementation. Too many prioritised, non-integrated activities: Numerous (often ambitious) activities prioritised to be implemented by various MDAs with each activity not entirely included in the MDA annual work plans and often with no budget.

- Journalists understood the National Action Plan for Health Security for themselves so are able to write authoritatively on the issues affecting its implementation.
- The capacity of journalists was improved to take advantage of the resources available in the public domain.





## **CROSS-LEARNING/ TRAINING SESSIONS WITH LEADERS OF COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANISATIONS (CBOs) - NASARAWA AND PLATEAU STATE**

**11TH AUGUST, 2020**

Nasarawa and Plateau States are two of the many states in Nigeria working to establish health insurance systems. With support from Christian Aid UK, Nigeria office, Nigeria Health Watch in partnership with the health insurance agencies of both states, a cross-learning/training sessions was conducted this month with leaders of community-based organisations (CBOs).

The goal was to conduct a connection between health insurance organisations, and community members. To achieve this, selected Community Based Organisations were equipped with tools for advocacy for health insurance. These CBOs were trained to then carry out sustained community advocacy in their various communities. The training was to help improve literacy for health insurance, connect health insurance stakeholders with target clients, create health insurance advocates for sustained advocacy

for health insurance and to understand needs of community clients and barriers to uptake of health insurance.

Some of the key achievements include:

- Prominent placement of health insurance awareness billboards and informative flyers in Nasarawa improved curiosity and buy-in among the informal sector when enrolment begins in the state.
- Commissioned production of radio jingles promoting understanding and demand for health insurance in the informal sector.
- All participants and facilitators were able to engage and have a cross learning session/training in both Plateau and Nasarawa states
- Participants identified practical ways to keep various levels of government accountable to providing sustainable health insurance systems.
- The state agencies; NASHIA and PLASHEMA pledged to integrate the trained selected CBOs in their community advocacy programs for health insurance activities.
- Strengthened capacity of community-based organisation to conduct advocacy and sensitisation on health insurance with hands-on class practical sessions.
- The trained selected CBOs identified key influential community influencers (Stakeholders) who can play a critical role in advancing the advocacy on health insurance in their various communities.
- Aired radio jingles





## HARNESSING INNOVATIVE FINANCING FOR NUTRITION IN NIGERIA - UNRAVELING THE BOTTLENECKS

18TH AUGUST, 2020

Malnutrition has been a public health problem in Nigeria and a global concern. The situation is more worrisome in children below the age of five years and pregnant women. This is what the Aisha Buhari Foundation sought to address at the virtual National Nutrition Conference on 'Harnessing Innovative Financing Options For Nutrition - Unravelling The Bottleneck'. Nigeria Health Watch supported the delivery of this virtual conference.

The conference advocated for increased domestic investments in nutrition. Deliberations centred on how to harness innovative funding streams for nutrition, optimise the funds currently available and recommend a reliable funding plan that will provide a viable financing framework capable of delivering the resources needed to implement appropriate nutrition actions at national, state and local government area (LGA) levels. Critical ways to



strengthen and broaden the multi-sectoral nutrition coalition to ensure that actors in different sectors work effectively to prevent a full-blown national crisis. Bottlenecks that acted as barriers towards maximising the benefits of available funding for nutrition were outlined – and a consensus on how to mitigate these challenges was reached. The discussions also threw up possible solutions on how to improve coordination in the nutrition space, and how accountability and early releases of budgetary allocations could improve delivery of nutrition interventions. Key strategies to optimise and sustain funding for nutrition were put forward. Participants were drawn from key government stakeholders, private sector, international development partners, civil society organisations (CSOs) and others.

The Aisha Buhari Foundation and (International Society for Media in Public Health, Network for Health Equity and Development, Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre) consortium partners in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Finance and Budget and Planning, and Nigerian Health Watch, convened the a one-day Abuja Nutrition summit.





## GIVING BIRTH IN NIGERIA: 'WHY ARE WOMEN DYING WHILE GIVING BIRTH IN NIGERIA?' - REPORT LAUNCH

**30TH NOVEMBER, 2020**

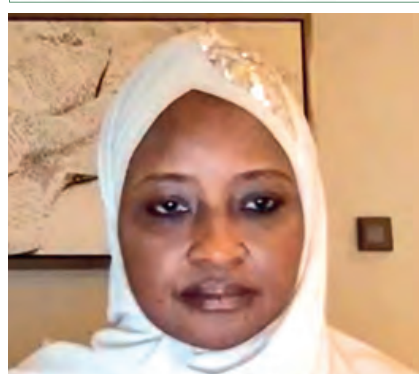
The Giving Birth in Nigeria programme was launched as an 18-month campaign to create advocacy and facilitate a community-centred audit to catalyse accountability for maternal deaths in Nigeria. This campaign is supported through funding from MSD through its MSD for Mothers Program. The programme was implemented by a consortium consisting of Africare, Nigeria Health Watch and EpiAFRIC. The aim of the programme is to enable a system where the government at all levels, the community, social groups, health care providers and families each bear greater responsibility for safer deliveries. Over the lifespan of the programme, 18 communities across six states, covering the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria were engaged, to conduct an inquiry into the reasons why women die while giving birth in these communities and to employ the findings and insights from these findings in

advocacy and driving for greater accountability, among key stakeholders in Nigeria. The 'Why Are Women Dying?' Report pulls together the summary insights and conclusions from a year long community audit into maternal deaths in communities in Nigeria. The conference focused on discussions around the report findings. The virtual launch was aimed at presenting findings of the 'Why are women dying?' report to policymakers, key decision makers and stakeholders that will effect change in maternal outcomes in Nigeria, with a focus on community-level solutions.

Dr. Zainab Shinkafi-Bagudu, First Lady, Kebbi State, delivered the keynote address on the "importance of political will in driving better quality maternal health care in Nigeria". The panel one discussion focused on sub-theme: The role of community leadership and state government -local government collaboration in facilitating community Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response (MPDSR). While Panel two discussions centred on Strengthening the unskilled workforce in the community.

Some of the recommendations included:

- The need to focus on communities to improve Nigeria's nutrition outcomes
- The need to involve local government chairmen and stakeholders at the community level
- The importance of collaborating more with SMEs and creating a demand for nutritious foods in Nigeria
- Having policies at the state and local government levels to enable implementation of the National Strategic Plan of Action for Nutrition





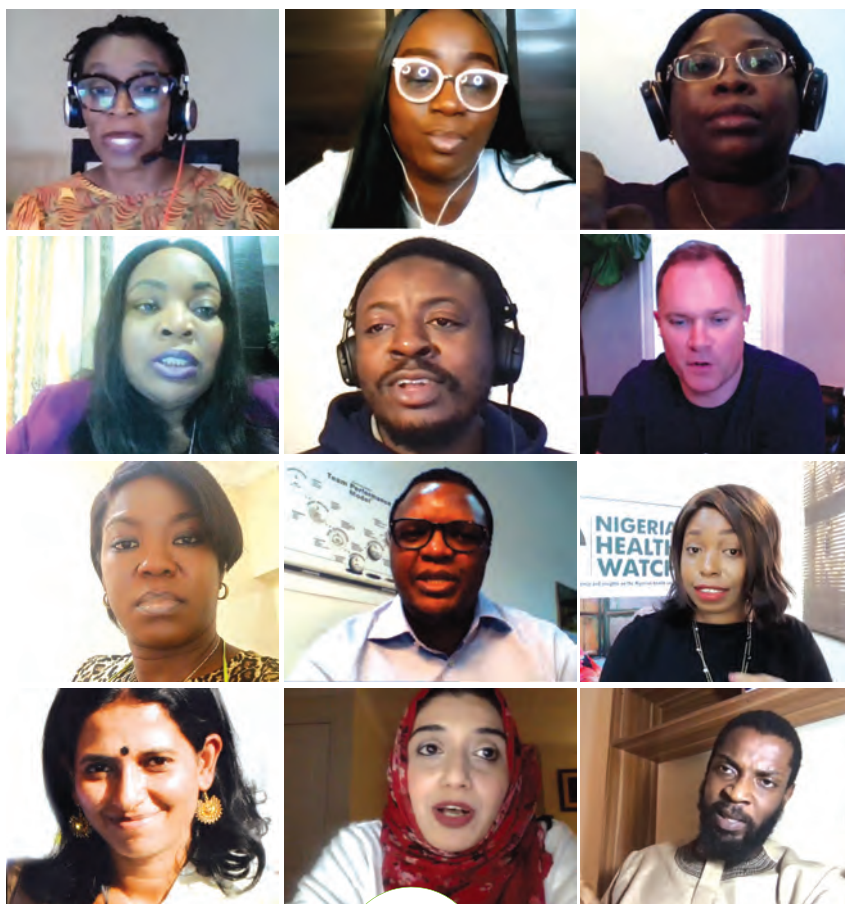


## INNOVATION: IMPROVING HEALTH AND SCALING UP HEALTHCARE ACCESS

3RD DECEMBER, 2020

The year 2020 witnessed an unprecedented upheaval in every sector of most countries, Nigeria inclusive. Delivered via webinar for the first time, The Future of Health Conference 2020 themed Innovation: Improving Health & Scaling up Healthcare Access was all about showcasing innovations in Nigeria's health space. Delegates were emphatic that innovations in healthcare are important for every part of the healthcare ecosystem, and that creating maximum impact will require coordinated effort and collaboration across various stakeholders.

The Future of Health Conference offered attendees the opportunity to connect with healthcare innovators and learn firsthand about healthcare innovations. It also threw up opportunities to connect with funders and organisations that could help innovators at every stage of development to increase their impact in healthcare and share insights about the challenges and opportunities scaling up global healthcare innovations. It was also



"COVID-19 has shown us, it is feasible. In fact, it is critical and imperative to have digital health solutions and innovations in driving, improved health outcomes."

**DR. KENDRA NJOKU**  
Quality Lead / Head of Programs,  
mDoc Healthcare

**"Innovation in primary healthcare for the disability community is more unique, and is related to attitudes, compassion, empathy, and connecting with the disability community."**

**DR. SHUBHA NAGESH**  
Director- Research &  
Follow-up Programs, Latika  
Roy Foundation

"Empirical evidence actually shows that the future of health in Sub-Saharan Africa will be underpinned by the development and adoption of homegrown innovative solutions, that will be adapted to each country's specific needs."

**DR. MOREDRECK CHIBI**  
Regional Advisor for Health Innovation,  
WHO Regional Office for Africa

agreed that innovation could support epidemic prevention and response and protect the future. The Conference had three sessions which gave opportunity to the 12-speakers to share insights and experiences at the conference. The sub themes were innovations in maternal healthcare, innovations in epidemics preparedness and innovations in primary healthcare.

# CHANGING COURSE IN 2020 - COVID-19 RESPONSE

## NIGERIA HEALTH WATCH'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

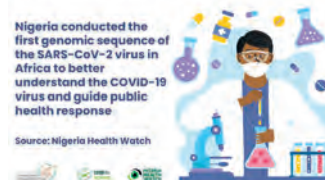
### #COVID19NAIJARESPONSE: DOCUMENTING THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PROJECT

**FUNDER: BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION (BMGF)**

Nigeria recorded its first confirmed case of the virus in February 2020, and since then the country has been recording new cases at an exponential rate. This project was designed to provide critical and urgent technical, operational catalytic communications design support to the NCDC Risk Communications team; mine existing data for communications action in all stages of the pandemic—containment, treatment, care; and document, analyse and synthesize lessons learned from response to COVID-19, to improve Nigeria's future preparedness/response with epidemics and disasters.

Nigeria Health Watch's major activities for the project include:

- Data mining – to understand the decisions being made by different agencies and partners during the outbreak and collate perceptions of different stakeholders on the outbreak response
- Engaging, coordinating and collaborating with stakeholders
- Documentation of Nigeria's COVID-19 response – by publishing articles on our platforms, driving a social media campaign about the response and developing a report that outlines the overview of how Nigeria responded to the outbreak, how partners contributed to the outbreak, especially BMGF, the key lessons learnt from the outbreak and best practices from other countries.

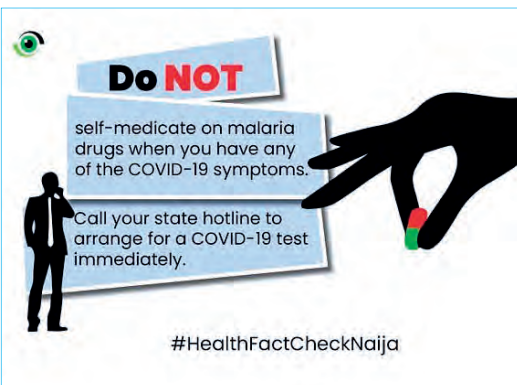
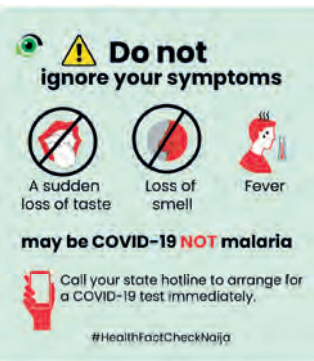


### NCDC MOLECULAR LABORATORY NETWORK

As at 3<sup>rd</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2020







## RESPONDING TO MISINFORMATION ON COVID-19 IN NIGERIA PROJECT

**FUNDER: MEEDAN**

The Misinformation Response Project implemented by Nigeria Health Watch and funded by Meedan, a non-profit social technology company focused on countering misinformation in Nigeria, including vaccines. The project was aimed at getting ahead of negative narratives around COVID-19, and fact-checking and debunking the misinformation. Through the project, rumours around COVID-19 in digital media was monitored to identify fake news. Nigeria Health Watch used a multi-media approach incorporating social media and traditional media to disseminate fact-checked health information. Information about the project can be found using the hashtag #Health.

Nigeria Health Watch's major activities for the project included:

- Continuous evidence-based media campaign to counter COVID-19 rumours, and misinformation
- Translation of messages into local easy-to-understand languages
- Production of infographics, animations and doodles around the campaign
- Nigeria Health Watch's website has a tab dedicated to COVID-19 with links to Meedan's Digital Health database: <https://learnaboutcovid19.org/>
- Extension of campaign to other media outlets with messages to reinforce accurate information and debunk fake news



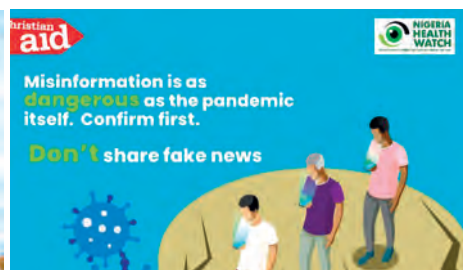
## COVID-19 IN NIGERIA - TELLING THE TRUE STORY PROJECT

FUNDER: CHRISTIAN AID UK-NIGERIA

This project aims to debunk COVID-19 misinformation in Nigeria. The project will gauge Nigerians' perception on the type of news that influences their behaviour. A major objective of the project is to also learn and document lessons from Nigeria's COVID-19 response and apply lessons learnt from different actors (including the private sector) for the containment of COVID-19 infection.

Nigeria Health Watch's major activities for the project include:

- Collating all misinformation in above-the-line and digital media.
- Analysing the information to understand triggers and trends of fake news and rumours related to COVID-19.
- Apply insights from reports to create continuous evidence-based media campaigns and products to counter COVID-19 rumours, fake and misinformation as well as identify and promote voluntary compliance to the containment of the pandemic in Africa.
- Using an opinion poll survey conducted by polling institute, NOI Polls and consulting firm, EpiAFRIC as a baseline; conduct one opinion poll at inception of project and another halfway in on the perception, knowledge, attitude and practices of Nigerians around news related to COVID-19.
- Desk review and documentation of Nigeria's COVID-19 strategy in comparison with strategies at the global level.





## COVID-19 Nigeria Stories

Telling the stories of Nigeria's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

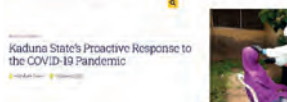
### COVID-19 Nigeria Stories



In The Midst of Rumors: Kano State's Response at the Onset of COVID-19 Pandemic



Kaduna State's Proactive Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic



## STATE-LEVEL DOCUMENTATION AND BUILDING NARRATIVES ABOUT THE COVID-19 RESPONSE

**FUNDER: FORD FOUNDATION**

### PROJECT GOAL

The overall goal and objective was to put in place a system that would enable the regular documentation of individual stories of people responding to the outbreak. The documentation process highlighted the personal stories of the rapid response teams (RRTs) as well as the state emergency operations centre (EOC) personnel. This project enabled the regular documentation of lessons learnt including the prevention and management of the outbreak in order to inform future outbreak responses. The lessons learnt and knowledge and experience sharing was instrumental to capturing and narrating the stories from the RRTs. This allowed for understanding the circumstances that informed decision making in the teams. It was vital to capture these first-hand testimonies at the frontline of the response

### PROJECT OBJECTIVE:

1. The selected states had different approaches to responding to the COVID-19 response, and being able to document those differences both through stories and a general literature review provides a foundational database to begin to understand where the opportunities and the gaps are in sub-national responses to infectious disease outbreaks.
2. The publication of state-level response stories garnered wide interest across the country. The engagement with stories published on *Twitter* and *Facebook* was high.
3. The documented stories documented helped provide lessons for future outbreaks. Working with narrators across Nigeria to document and tell Nigeria's COVID-19 story at the state level provided useful insights.

### APPROACH

In the primary states below, at least two journalists were recruited through a rigorous screening process. They were tasked with visiting and spending time at state Emergency Operations Centres. Over a 6-month planned activity period – at least twice a week – they engaged with the RRTs and documented their experiences and decision-making processes on a weekly basis. Additionally a team of two journalists operated as a roving team to collect data intermittently from secondary states that had interesting stories that came up as the outbreak evolved. They contacted state level contacts to document experiences that added value to the state-level documentation as decided by the project team.

### PROJECT STATES

Kano, Lagos, FCT-Abuja, Edo and Kaduna

## STATE-LEVEL DOCUMENTATION AND BUILDING NARRATIVES ABOUT THE COVID-19 RESPONSE

**FUNDER: FORD FOUNDATION**

### ACTIVITIES

#### CONTENT PRODUCTION

- Narrators continued to develop stories in the five selected states, producing a total of 25 stories over the period.
- Thirteen stories have been published on the NCDC's COVID-19 website as at the end of the reporting period, with the remaining stories going through the review process for publication.
- Documentary photographers were engaged in each selected state to take photographs of the State COVID-19 infrastructure and activities. These photos were curated into a database and used for photo stories and continued publicity of the state-level interventions.
- Graphic designers were engaged to produce infographics for the blogs being produced.

#### CONTENT DISTRIBUTION AND PUBLICITY

- Sponsored adverts on select platforms, especially *Facebook* and *YouTube*, to reach a wider audience of health sector players and the general public: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6M6E0-7VTU>
- Promotion of the project and narratives through broadcast media: *Rhythm FM Abuja*, *Nigeria Info Abuja*: <https://twitter.com/NCDCgov/status/1346737480960245765?s=20>
- Development of summary video clips, audio narratives, and a social media toolkit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6M6E0-7VTU>

### LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The interest shown by other states at the opportunity to tell their own narratives is one that can and should be explored to continually harness lessons from the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. The insights garnered from this project show that the fight against other disease outbreaks in Nigeria be documented as well, and knowledge gained in combating COVID-19 be transferred to other areas where relevant.
3. The idea of documenting state experiences during an outbreak is a novel and noble innovation. States must understand that projects like this are for their benefit and not to their detriment and should seek to work alongside narrators to enhance documentation.

**25**  
STORIES  
PRODUCED  
IN FIVE SELECTED STATES



**13**  
STORIES  
PUBLISHED  
ON THE NCDC'S COVID-19  
WEBSITE AS AT THE END OF  
THE REPORTING PERIOD

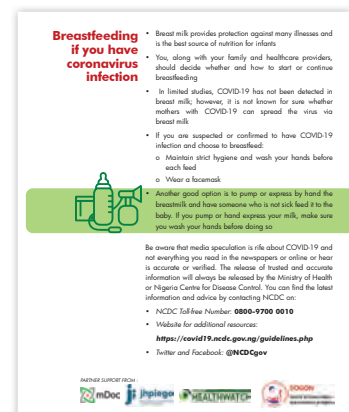
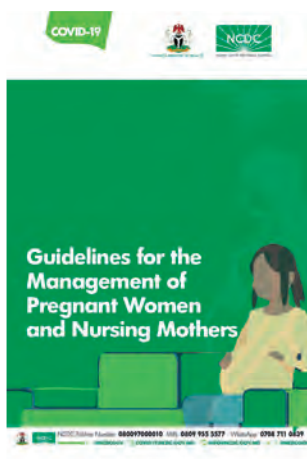
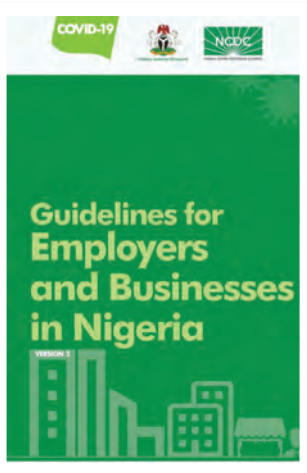


**INSIGHTS  
GARNERED**

SHOW THAT THE FIGHT  
AGAINST OTHER DISEASE  
OUTBREAKS IN NIGERIA  
SHOULD BE DOCUMENTED  
AS WELL, AND KNOWLEDGE  
GAINED IN COMBATING  
COVID-19 BE TRANSFERRED  
TO OTHER RELEVANT AREAS.







## PRO BONO SUPPORT

### EMERGENCY RISK COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT

From the onset of the outbreak on the 27th February, Nigeria Health Watch supported NCDC by providing communications support. With our expertise in health communications, Nigeria Health Watch developed the following COVID-19 guidelines:

- Guidelines for Employers and Businesses in Nigeria v1
- Guidelines for Employers and Businesses in Nigeria v2
- Guidelines for Schools v1
- Guidelines on Face masks
- Guideline on Social Distancing
- Guidelines for Pregnant Women and Nursing mothers
- Guidelines for the Management of Pregnant Women and Nursing Mothers
- Advisory for Vulnerable groups

Further support included

- **Strategic Communications** – Providing technical assistance to the NCDC Head of Risk Communications to set the weekly communication message priorities. Insights are gathered from weekly data gathered from the NCDC rumour log system, state health promoters, NCDC social media platforms and perceptions surveys carried out by NOI polls and other research organisations. The weekly message priorities are then sent out to the state health promoters, PTF Risk Communications pillar and NCDC risk communications team in order for them to craft messages that address the weekly message priorities.
- Providing and updating answers to the frequently asked questions on NCDC's COVID-19 microsite
- Reviewing the NCDC's crisis communications documents, infographic content developed by NCDC
- Editing speeches for the Minister of Health's Press briefings at the initial phase of the outbreak



## PRO BONO SUPPORT

### #MYCOVID19NAIJASTORY

At the onset of the outbreak, COVID-19 was considered a foreigner's disease and Africans were falsely thought by some to be resistant to it. Despite scientific data showing that COVID-19 is a deadly new strain of coronavirus and has killed over a thousand people in Nigeria, some Nigerians still believed that the disease was a hoax and a money-laundering tool by the government. This led to skepticism about the existence of the virus and by extension that there people who had contracted COVID-19 and recovered.

- In April 2020, Nigeria Health Watch launched #MyCOVID19NaijaStory, a social media campaign to counteract COVID-19 denialism in Nigeria. Through the campaign, Nigeria Health Watch shared stories of survivors and frontline health care workers responding to the pandemic in Nigeria. These human-angle stories aimed to prove that #COVID-19 was not a hoax and more importantly, to encourage people to adopt good public health behaviours to mitigate its spread. The campaign garnered interest in Nigeria as these stories were reshared and more survivors began sharing their stories. The stories were shared in the form of short texts, photos and videos. Institutions such as the NCDC, Federal Ministry of Health and the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture joined the campaign, sharing these COVID-19 stories.

### MENTAL HEALTH RESPONSE

With the COVID-19 outbreak, Mentally Aware Nigeria (MANI), the foremost mental health organisation in Nigeria, witnessed a significant increase in the number of people reaching out to them for mental health support. The majority of the cases were from:

- Individuals who were currently in self-isolation/quarantine, due to possible exposure to the coronavirus
- Students who were out of school due to the lockdown
- Professionals who have to go to work despite the lockdown (essential services)
- Entrepreneurs whose businesses may have been affected due to the lockdown
- Individuals who were victims of domestic violence due to extended family time during the lockdown

Nigeria Health Watch supported MANI by:

- Publicising MANI's mental health resources on our social media platforms,
- Publicising MANI's isolation hotline for patients in the isolation centre
- Reviewing MANI's COVID-19 website where Nigeria Health Watch was listed as a partner.







## PRO BONO SUPPORT

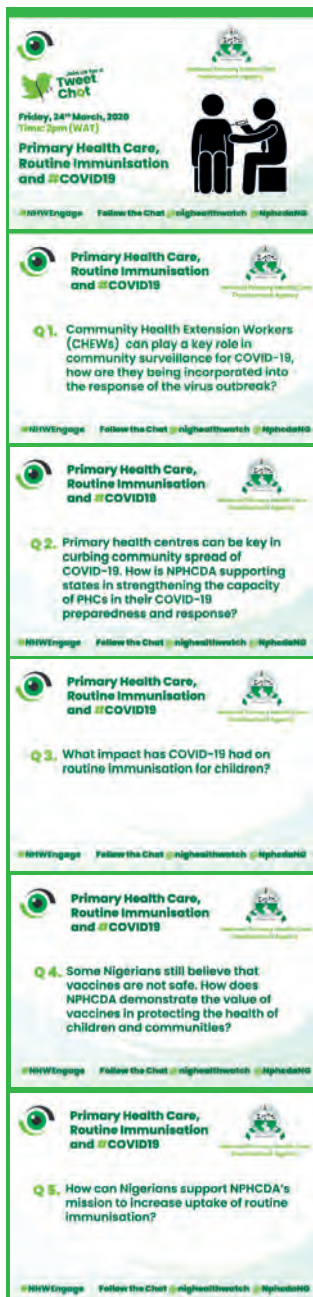
### PARTNERSHIPS

For partnerships with other organisations and groups, Nigeria Health Watch supported the following organisations:

- **Telecommunications companies** - Liaised with a telco to develop scripts to be used by the NCDC Connect Centre
- **Creative entrepreneurs** - Liaised with creative entrepreneurs to produce risk communications content
- **National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA)** – organised a Twitter chat in April with NPHCDA on the role of PHCs, CHEWs in the fight against COVID-19, impact of COVID-19 on routine immunisation in children and COVID-19 vaccine.
- **WaterAid Nigeria** – partnered with WaterAid Nigeria to develop COVID-19 promotional materials, messages, jingles and skits materials
- **Resolve To Save Lives (RTSL)** – Through the Nigeria Health Watch's RTSL project, Nigeria Health Watch drafted a COVID-19 script for the Sultan of Sokoto on preventive measures and funding for epidemics

### EDITORIAL CONTENT IN NEWS DAILIES

Nigeria Health Watch wrote articles that were published in the following media outlets:



THE NEWSPAPER YOU CAN TRUST  
**DAILY TRUST**

**The Guardian**  
Conscience, Nurtured by Truth

**New Telegraph**

**THIS DAY**

**NAN**

**Vanguard**

**BUSINESS DAY**

**LEADERSHIP**  
NIGERIA'S MOST INFLUENTIAL NEWSPAPER

**NIGERIAN TRIBUNE**

**THE NATION**  
Truth in Defence of Freedom

## PRO BONO SUPPORT

### SOCIAL MEDIA SUPPORT TO NCDC

Nigeria Health Watch supported NCDC's social media team by:

- Curating daily social media reports
- Conducting media monitoring activities for NCDC news mentions and composing messaging for #NCDCInTheNews
- Developing draft social media messaging for the #TakeResponsibility campaign
- Engaging Nigerian celebrities and influences to participate in the #TakeResponsibility campaign
- Supporting the management of NCDC's Instagram account
- Reporting fake NCDC *Twitter* accounts

### RUMOUR RESPONSE SUPPORT TO NCDC

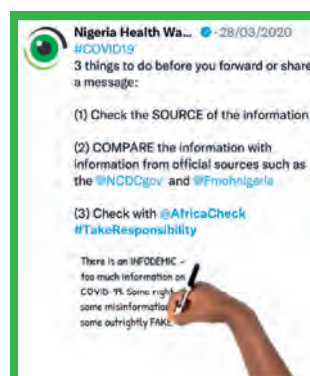
Nigeria Health Watch joined organisations such as Africa Check and Dubawa to support NCDC's rumour response to COVID-19. Nigeria Health Watch supported by:

- Detecting misinformation on social media and sending to the rumour response sub-group for debunking
- Collating rumours in the NCDC rumour log, analysing, and developing content to debunk them
- Producing infographics and doodles to debunk these detected rumours
- Disseminating debunked rumours on Nigeria Health Watch's social media platforms

An abstract on the rumour response work which Nigeria Health Watch contributed to was presented at the IAS virtual conference in July 2020. The title was 'Debunking high-impact rumours during the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria, February - May 2020'.

### COVID-19 WEBINARS

- **Innovation in the Global Fight Against COVID-19:** In May 2020, Nigeria Health Watch to organised a webinar to highlight some of the work being done in different spaces—public, private and community level—making use of dynamic innovations to tackle COVID-19. Speakers included Prof. Lynn Morris, Interim Executive Director of the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) and Principal Medical Scientist in the HIV Virology Section at the NICD in South Africa; Dr Abasi Ene-Obong, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of 54gene, a genomics research, services and development company; and Mr Collins Akanno, Founder Diet234.com, who launched the initiative, Communeating, to scale up nutrition awareness and education in Nigeria.



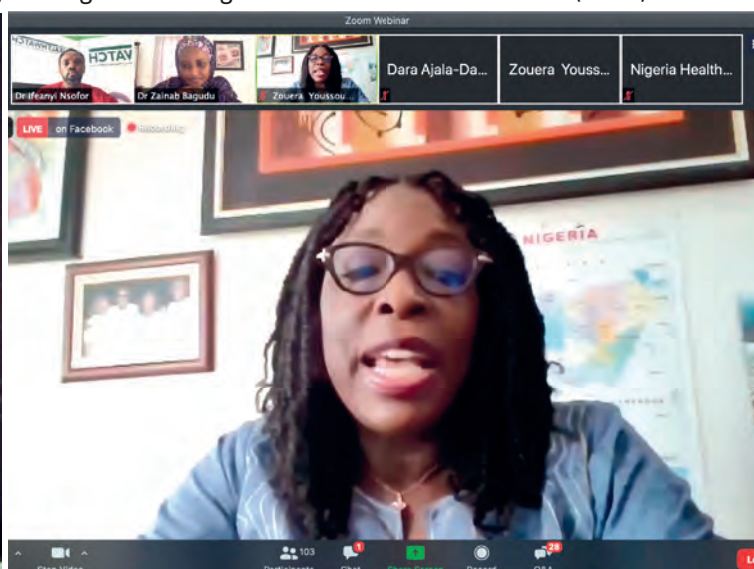




## COVID-19 WEBINARS

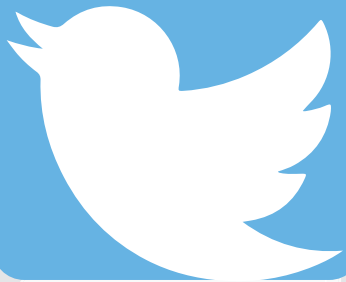


- **Funding the COVID-19 Response in Nigeria:** Organised in May 2020, the webinar explored various issues around funding approaches to COVID-19 in Nigeria. Speakers were Dr Ola Brown, Founder, Flying Doctors Healthcare Investment Group and Oluseun Onigbinde, co-founder and CEO of BudgIT.
- **COVID-19 Funding Streams:** Organised in June 2020, the webinar focused on identifying and reviewing different COVID-19 funding streams and using lessons learnt to prepare for future epidemics in Nigeria. Speakers at the webinar were Zouera Youssoufou, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Aliko Dangote Foundation (ADF), and Her Excellency Dr. Zainab Shinkafi-Bagudu, Founder/CEO of Medicaid Radio-Diagnostics Centre and Medicaid Cancer Foundation and wife of the governor of Kebbi State.
- **Promoting Behavioral Change that improves Public Health and Social Measures (PHSM) through Risk Communications:** Organised in June 2020, the webinar speakers highlighted the need to effectively communicate the importance of PHSM, how risk communications can help achieve this and the central role of journalists in shaping narratives about public health actions and outcomes. Speakers were Dr. Nandita Murukutla, Vice President of Global Policy and Research at Vital Strategies, Moji Makanjuola, Chief Executive Officer of the International Society of Media in Public Health (ISMPH) and Dr Chinwe Ochu, the Acting Director Prevention, Programmes, and Knowledge Management at Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC).

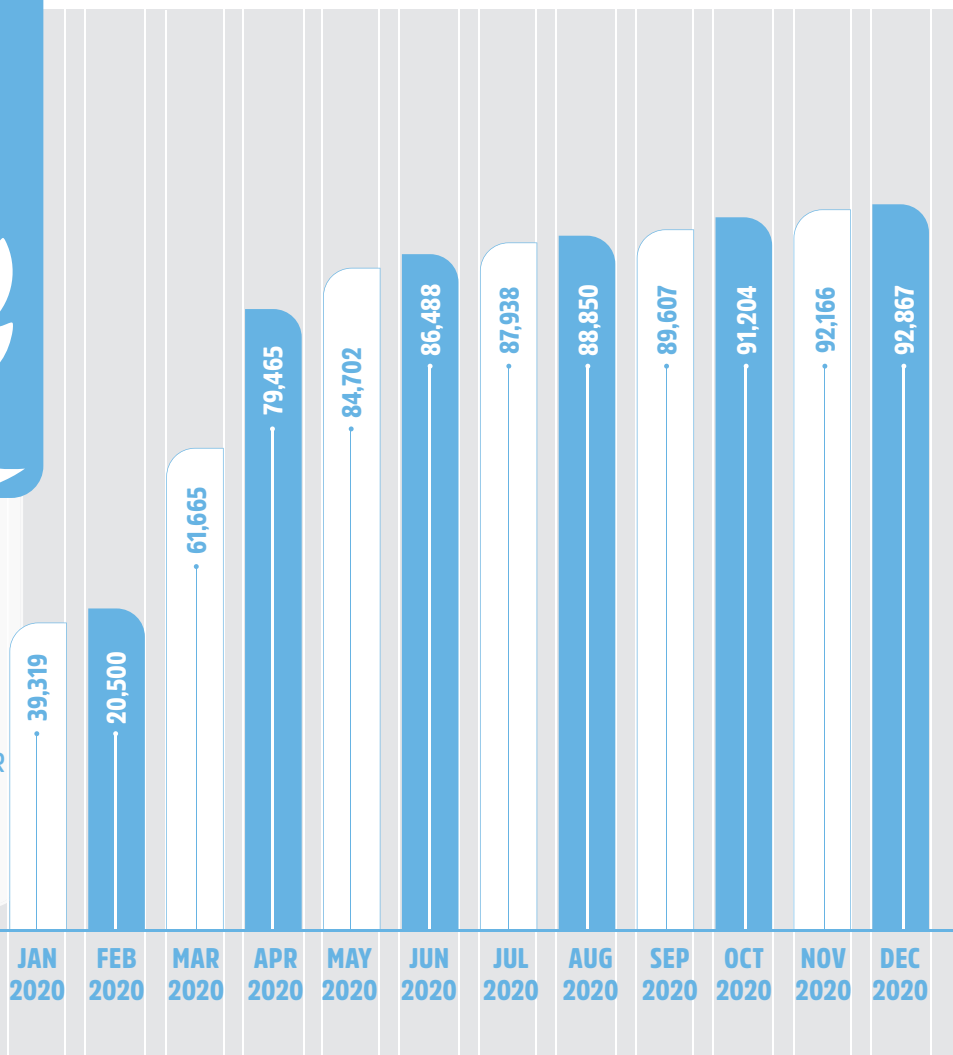


## SOCIAL MEDIA

### TWITTER FOLLOWERS IN 2020



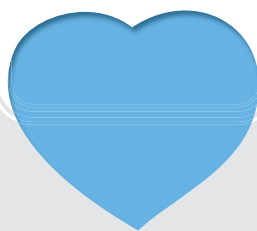
**92,867**  
TWITTER FOLLOWERS  
AT THE END OF 2020 FOR  
**@nighealthwatch**



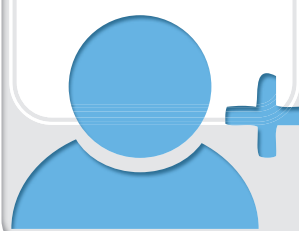
**34,040**  
RETWEETS



**60,921**  
LIKES



**54,467**  
NEW FOLLOWERS



**204,128**  
MENTIONS





## FACEBOOK

LIKES AND FOLLOWERS IN 2020



**1,521**  
**facebook**  
**NEW LIKES**  
AT THE END OF 2020

**55,882**  
**facebook**  
**likes**

AT THE END OF 2020 FOR  
[www.facebook.com/  
NigeriaHealthWatch](https://www.facebook.com/NigeriaHealthWatch)

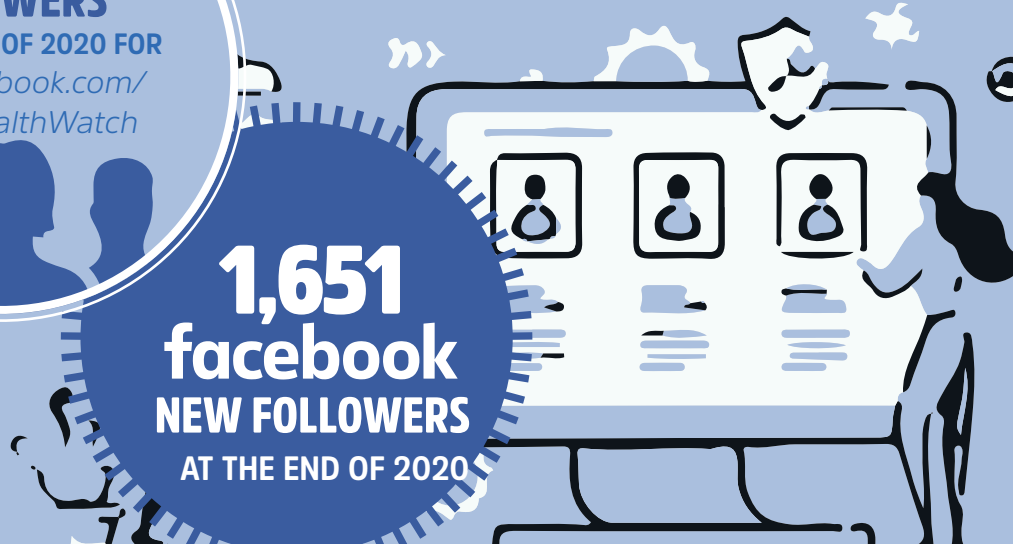


**56,284**  
**FOLLOWERS**

AT THE END OF 2020 FOR  
[www.facebook.com/  
NigeriaHealthWatch](https://www.facebook.com/NigeriaHealthWatch)



**1,651**  
**facebook**  
**NEW FOLLOWERS**  
AT THE END OF 2020





**INSTAGRAM**

FOLLOWERS IN 2020

**6,104**  
**Instagram**  
FOLLOWERS IN 2020

**19,404**  
*MailChimp*  
SUBSCRIBERS  
AT THE END OF 2020



**LINKEDIN**

FOLLOWERS IN 2020

**6,354**  
**LinkedIn**  
FOLLOWERS IN 2020

**>37**



**SOUNDCLOUD**

**RADIO  
SHOWS  
IN 2020**



Partners



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.





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