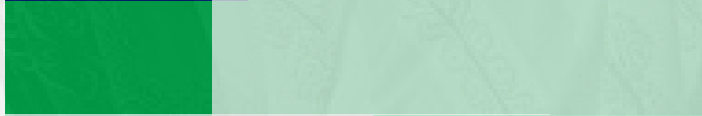




AGAINST ALL ODDS

A Compendium of Success Stories
for the LEOPOD Project

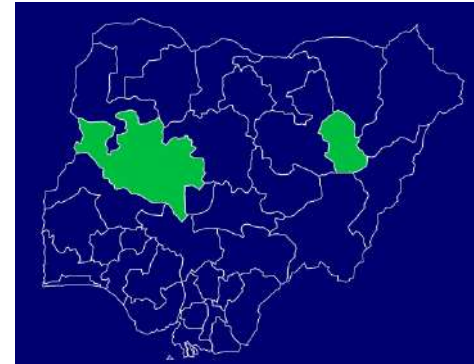


ABOUT CIHP AND LEOPOD DESCRIPTION

Centre for Integrated Health Programs (CIHP) is an indigenous non-governmental organization that has established networks and implementation footprints over an 11-year period in 16 states across all 6 geo-political zones of Nigeria delivering equitable, quality, cost effective and integrated public health interventions through sustainable partnerships.

In 2019, CIHP led an immunization project that have increased immunization uptake outcomes in two Northern Nigerian states: The Leveraging Enablers of Positive deviancy (LEOPOD) project, funded through through the Grand Challenges Exploration (GCE) innovation platform by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation addressing low immunization uptake using the positive deviance approach.

Through this initiative, CIHP reached 400 caregivers with non-fully immunized children (CNFIC) with the vaccination drive, leveraging the caregivers of fully immunized children (CFIC) or the immunization mentors.



Map of Nigeria showing implementing States

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This success stories compendium was created by the Centre for Integrated Health Programs (CIHP) for the LEOPOD Intervention carried out in Niger and Gombe States, with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) through the Grand Challenges Explorations (GCE) platform.

Please request the most updated version of this photobook prior to use as revisions may occur. Kindly provide feedback so that we can continue to improve this dissemination material. Please send comments to: info@cihpng.org.

Bolanle Oyeledun, MBBS, MPH, MSc
Editor, Chief Executive Officer & Principal Investigator
CIHP
July, 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This success stories compendium has been developed by the Centre for Integrated HealthPrograms (CIHP). We want to thank all those who helped to make the publication a reality by supporting the LEOPOD project.

The Nigerian Federal Government and State Governments of Niger and Gombe for their buy-in and for enabling implementation.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) for funding to support development of innovations for increased vaccination coverage in Nigeria.

The Grand Challenges Explorations (GCE); Gaya and Team for providing the platform for rare opportunities. Also to the World Food Programme (WFP) for the innovation acceleration bootcamp experience for our team members in Tanzania.

Dr. Sohail Agah, of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and his team for their contribution during the Innovation Accelerator Sprint Programme

Stephanie Peichl, and entire team of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) for their support through the WFP Innovation Accelerator Sprint Programme

Dr. Rebecca Lundgren, of the Centre on Gender Equity and Health, University of California, San Diego and her team for the series of enlightening sessions on social norms and its impact on programs.

Jennifer Rosen, a communications expert and mentor at the United Nations World Food Programme Innovation Accelerator Program for her mentoring role on Behavioral Change Communication (BCC) methods and communication material development

All external stakeholders, fieldworkers, partners and beneficiaries.

Dr. Olaitan Oyedun and Dr. Sola Fajobi: Consultants, Qualitative and Quantitative Data Analysis.

Mr William Adeyi: Consultant PLA Trainer.

The Immunization Department of the Niger and Gombe States Primary Health Development Agencies for providing an enabling environment and availing members of staff to support the conduct of the LEOPOD User Research which was key in the determination of the content of this photo storybook.

Finally, we want to express our appreciation and gratitude to the many individuals who were not mentioned but who have contributed immensely to the project as well as the development of this photo storybook.

Dr. Bola Oyeledun
July 2022

CONTRIBUTORS

From inspiring the concept, to capturing moments, crafting the stories and organizing images, recording interviews, providing advisory value, providing technical feedback on the accuracy and flow, and editing the document, key contributors in the development and finalization of this success stories compendium are as follows:

PROJECT LEAD

Obioma Azurunwa

TECHNICAL CONTRIBUTORS

Evelyn Urueye | Ikeoluwa, Abobarin | Dr. Olakunle Yusuf | Dr. Phillips Abimbola

PHOTOS, GRAPHICS & STORY CRAFT

Valentine Onyeka Ogunaka

ILLUSTRATION, VISUAL CAPTION OUTLINING

Lois Aigbe | Pamela Aina Olorunda

EDITORIAL ADVISORS

Dr. Pius Christopher-Izere | Dr. Francis Ogirima | Mr. Collins Imarhiagbe

ACKNOWLEDGED CONTRIBUTORS

Mr. Busari Olusegun | Dr. Emeka Fred-Hilary Kanebi | Adeoluwa Adeluola

FIELD MEDIA SUPPORT

Iniabasi Udosen | Okechukwu Elias | Wisdom Ating | Eti-Inyene Godwin Akpan

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01 THE USE OF PICTURE BOOKS, FLIP-CHARTS PROVE IMPACTFUL FOR ZAINAB'S IMMUNIZATION MENTORSHIP JOURNEY

Positive deviant strategies obtained from caregivers of fully vaccinated children in Niger and Gombe states were developed into behaviour change materials which were used to drive the intervention through participatory Learning and Action (PLA). The materials inspired significant increase in demand among many beneficiaries

In Paikoro Local Government Area of Niger State, and at the heart of delivering key actionable messages on immunization to the mentees, Zainab, a 25-year-old mentor in Gwam Ward, was one of 20 caregivers of fully immunized children trained to sensitize them.



Zainab in action with the aid of LEOPOD picture book and flipchart



“LEOPOD has empowered me to enlighten women who do not fully immunize their children or don't immunize at all. I am able to teach because I have fully immunized all my children and now know more about its benefits through LEOPOD. I teach other women using picture book, flipcharts...”

- ZAINAB

40 Mentors across both Niger and Gombe states used the Participatory Learning Action package to advance knowledge and perception about vaccination in a more interesting, relatable and memorable way during community dialogue impact sessions.

Following analysis of the LEOPOD project implementation, 78% of the target group, that is mentees, were responsive to the sessions while 84% of the target group now understand vaccination, its benefits and ways to overcome barriers to accessing the service for their children.



The LEOPOD implementation team coordinator preparing Zainab and other mentees for an impact session

HADIZA, A COMMITTED AND PASSIONATE MENTOR FOR IMMUNIZATION

Over 80% of Immunization Mentors (IMs) through exit interviews for the LEOPOD project indicated a willingness to continue as an immunization mentor in the community.

Hadiza Mohammed, a teacher in Gwam Ward of Paikoro LGA in Niger State is one of 20 immunization mentors recruited into the LEOPOD intervention field implementation team. As a caregiver of fully immunized children, she participated actively in enabling vaccination uptake in the community.

When she called, she did not know why but like the other mentors, Hadiza was trained and later certified as a change agent. Her early experience prior was going against all odds, against the social norms of her community among other barriers to immunization, to ensure her children are healthy. This is the reason she qualified and was selected to become a mentor.



The reason I took my child for immunization (all my children have been immunized) is that my children as regards to sickness are not usually affected. Even if they get sick, it is usually mild. I believe I have now encouraged other women to understand this.



- HADIZA MOHAMMED

Indeed, immunization is beneficial, as it protects children from diseases. Hadiza commits her time energy, and knowledge to motivate caregivers of non fully immunized children in her community to be like her.



Hadiza engaging mentees



A mentee in Gwam Ward studying her flipchart during a session

03

WHEN A FATHER CARES: MOHAMMED ABUBAKAR VACCINATES HIS DAUGHTER

For a project primarily targeted towards women and in the absence of his wife, Mohammed Abubakar's story is quite a unique one which speaks more about the high level of impact achieved during the implementation of the project.



A cross section of mentee caregivers in Bida, Niger State

He lives in Bida, where he experienced the LEOPOD project immunization Impact Sessions as a mentee caregiver.

Him participating actively provided the impetus for completing his daughter's vaccination as he went extra lengths, against financial odds and transportation constraints to achieve this.



“

Once I started this vaccination, week in, week out, I trekked from my area to that place [the health facility] for my baby. I wasn't bothered because I want my baby to be healthy. I needed to take care of her!

”

- MOHAMMED ABUBAKAR

Mohammed, as a father expressed how he cares for his baby with a passion similar to the mentee mothers. He is Particular about his daughter's well-being and LEOPOD provided him the opportunity to learn about vaccination as a tool for keeping her strong and healthy through the various instituted support groups, sessions and materials with targeted messaging.

Particularly impressed by the impact sessions, Mohammed Abubakar represent the husbands and fathers in the LEOPOD beneficiary communities whose support enabled seamless implementation for the project.



Mohammed's fully-vaccinated child

WITH HOME VISITS, VACCINATION MESSAGING AND EXPERIENCE BECOME MORE ENJOYABLE FOR MENTEES

Beyond holding community dialogue impact PLA sessions, which is a core element in educating caregivers of non-fully immunized children on the LEOPOD project, lies home visits.

Anchored by mentors who have been trained and mobilized with the resources to engage mentees, home visits buttress the essence of follow up on mentees' commitment to attitudinal change.

Safiya is one of the beneficiaries from Paikoro LGA. She enjoyed the biweekly home visits paid by her mentor as it allows her share her progress, concerns, questions and to discuss at a personal level with her mentor.



“Honestly we enjoy how she [the mentor] does this. She asks about the children and how we take care of them and we also tell her. For immunization too, we are also trying and taking our children for it. The children have adequate care now. Look at my daughter. I am so happy about the project.”

- SAFIYA

Many mentees across the project's implementation locations who did not commence vaccination early were reached through home visits averaging 7 over a course of 2 months and emphasizing the importance of vaccination to the caregivers as well as serving as a means of encouragement towards the larger aim of reducing child mortality in Africa.



A LEOPOD home visit session in Kaltungo LGA, Gombe using the Home Visit monitoring tool

THE IMPACT OF THE LEOPOD PROJECT THROUGH A TRADITIONAL RULER'S LENS

Traditional/community leaders across the LEOPOD project beneficiary locations played crucial roles in ensuring the success of the project. From the community entry to supporting the implementation phase, the project enjoyed solid support from the community leaders in Niger and Gombe states.

In Anguwan Kwanayi community of Paikoro LGA in Niger State, Gambo Mohammed even went extra lengths to assist facilitators. He first committed himself to waking up early, checking up on his community members, and getting selected beneficiaries of the project ready for each session. In fact, he demonstrated full support for the LEOPOD project and graced all sessions with his active presence.



“

I saw that the LEOPOD project is good for my community. Anything that is important and beneficial to Anguwan Kwanayi, as village head I always approve and give my full support.

”

- GAMBO MOHAMMED



Gambo playing his part as a community leader, listening to concerns and ensuring everyone is involved

When the project was introduced, Gambo also called women from other nearby communities which are headed by his brothers. He invited them to participate in the LEOPOD impact sessions, and often stayed till the end. Participating in the LEOPOD project gave him fulfilment as he revealed his vision for a healthier Anguwan Kwanayi where many of their children will be strong enough to help in the farms.



Caregivers participating in LEOPOD sessions in Anguwan Kwanayi

FOR HEALTHIER CHILDREN IN BIDA, CHECHE DISTRICT HEAD ENDORSES IMMUNIZATION

Bida in Niger State is one of the four Local Government Areas where the LEOPOD study was implemented.

Following the intervention to increase the demand for childhood vaccination in Bida, Abubakar Mohammed, the district head of Cheche commended the project, its implementers Center for Integrated Health Programs and then its funders, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. He believes immunization is important to having healthier children and safer communities.

In addition to endorsing, the district head showed his commitment by giving the entrance hall of his palace for the LEOPOD impact sessions to hold regularly. A centrally placed and accessible hall, and he regularly stops to encourage the women during their impact sessions. During an interview with the LEOPOD media team, he promised his unrelenting commitment to encourage vaccination uptake in Cheche community.



“

“We will continue to sensitize the women especially, to bring out their children for immunization. Our children will be healthy children and that's what we want. A healthy community is a wealthy community.”

”

- ABUBAKAR MOHAMMED



A LEOPOD trained facilitator collecting responses from a beneficiary outside the Cheche's palace



LEOPOD project Coordinator and Cheche district head in Bida

CAPACITY BUILDING: AN EMPOWERED MENTOR SPEAKS

Completing vaccination is one of the criteria used to select LEOPOD mentors, and Maryam Abubakar who played the role of one has been grateful for the opportunity.

As a caregiver of fully-immunized children, she did not experience any challenge in her family, like other women (now her mentees) who had suffered some resistance from family members as they went through vaccination process.

Now, recruiting her into the LEOPOD mentors cohort, Maryam was exposed to their realities and became so enthusiastic about helping the caregivers, using the participatory Learning and Action (PLA) tool (a flipchart) to teach them how to manage challenging situations.

Maryam Abubakar is also happy that she was able to transfer the knowledge of vaccination successfully, and in the language they understand, which is Nupe. She was initially shy but through the training and her work as a mentor, she can now speak confidently in public gatherings.



“I immunized my children for its importance, and so being selected to teach caregivers like me how to complete their immunization made me happy. The experience taught me a lot. In fact, I don't usually speak in public but becoming a mentor, I started. I gave myself that confidence of facing people since they are mothers like me.”

- MARYAM ABUBAKAR

A mentor who was also given a certificate, Maryam is now known by many caregivers and families impacted by LEOPOD intervention in Bida. She became popular within the community of both caregivers of non-fully immunized children (CNFICs) through the impact sessions and has some mentees who are now her friends as they enjoy staying together.



Maryam going through the LEOPOD story flipchart before starting her session

BENEFITS OF IMMUNIZATION: A FASCINATING EYE OPENER FOR MENTEE HABIBA

Habiba Bello was enrolled for the LEOPOD project in Paikoro to learn about vaccination. She qualified as a mentee because she had not completed vaccination for her baby.

Following community enlightenment, through the group learning facilitated by trained mentees, Habibah Bello would no longer relent in committing and acting to fully vaccinate her baby. As one of the caregivers of non-fully immunized children, she feels greatly impacted.

In fact, intervening through impact sessions to reach caregivers like her now meant that she realizes that vaccination is very important and bears many benefits for her daughter. She also revels in how the experience has enabled her to shape her husband's perception about immunization because before commencing immunization, her daughter was often ill and her husband had refused to allow her go for it.



“

With the enlightenment, we have come to see why our daughter has been developing fever. Now, my husband is happy. We are all happy and grateful for this.

”

- HABIBA BELLO

As a beneficiary, Habiba further demonstrated the will to support the positive vaccination narrative in her community. She pledged to volunteer in urging other caregivers yet to fully vaccinate their children to do so. This is one wish marking her journey to keep her children healthy and also to becoming a mentor in future.



A mentee group in Paikoro where Habiba is also a member.

A NEW EXPERIENCE FOR HASSANA AND HER CHILD

High vaccination uptake was the goal set for communities that have now benefited from the LEOPOD intervention. Before the intervention, immunization coverage rate in the implementation locations was less than 50%.

The story is different now as the intervention increased vaccine completion rate from less than 50% to 88%. A 38% increase! It is also recorded that about 96.8% of children enrolled in the study received at least one extra dose of vaccine during the intervention period. Hassana Adam's child who was not fully immunized before is one of them. And just as the children of 400 caregivers who participated in impact sessions across the two states of Niger and Gombe, Hassana realized that since taking vaccination seriously, one beneficial experience was that her child no longer gets sick often.



“
When we were not taking
vaccination, our children used to come
up with measles, fever, stooling, polio,
but since we started, my children no
longer experience these.”

- HASSANA ADAM

Hassana further revealed that her husband felt so content around the impact of immunization on their baby. He even endorsed it during her first visit to obtain vaccination and gave approval for a continued vaccination until fully completed.



Hassana and her daughter at paikora

MENTEE TURNED MENTOR TO TRAIN OTHER MENTEES

At least, 84% of overall LEOPOD beneficiary pool demonstrated increased knowledge about immunization post intervention. Helen is one of them, and in her case, she even learnt enough to begin passing the knowledge of vaccination and its benefits during the intervention.

Enrolled as a mentee and a teacher by profession, Helen John soon became a mentor and contributed to impacting caregivers of non fully immunized children, thus bringing more enlightenment to her community in Bida. Helen had known only very little about vaccination but participating in the LEOPOD project exposed her to a higher learning.



“

My experience in the LEOPOD project was unique, great and fun. Being a teacher somehow made it easier for me to learn a lot as a mentee. With my new knowledge, I grew fast into a mentor and then started bringing women together to coach them. This gave me joy.

”

- HELEN JOHN

Spreading the knowledge of vaccination and its benefits, and how to navigate challenges across low vaccination communities remains one key sustainability element for the LEOPOD intervention to record more meaningful stories towards bringing about a change in behaviour and norms.



Kafee joined other mentors in Bida community to prepare for an impact session

HUSBAND TO MENTOR SUPPORTS HIS WIFE'S LEOPOD EXPERIENCE AND WOULD TAKE A STEP FURTHER

One of the key barriers to immunization is a vaccine-resistant husband, who could have a different opinion about vaccinating his children. So he'd refuse his wife to take their children there due to fear of probably side effects and some cultural practice..

As the LEOPOD intervention reached the phase for selecting and recruiting immunization mentors, Abdullahi's wife was identified for training. She had taken their baby for immunization when the LEOPOD field research and implementation team through focal persons talked her into accepting the journey to mentorship.

Of course, the reason of her being selected is that she would get to learn more about vaccination so she can have adequate knowledge and the requisite skill to teach other women who do not immunize their children in their community in Kaltungo. This, she told her husband, who was also aware that she usually goes for immunization and had completed such process in the past for their other children. He knew about its benefits and had to support his wife.



“ Since I saw all the benefits of immunization and since my wife qualified to be selected to learn more so she can teach other women, I allowed her to join. ”

- ABDULLAHI UMAR

Having gained more insights into what immunization was all about through his wife's full participation in LEOPOD, as well as something that already benefits his household, Abdullahi pledged to reach out to the village head to inform him. He believes most members of the community do usually immunization and said through the village head, will involve more men to encourage and support their wives to do so in one voice.



Marjam going through the LEOPOD story flipchart before starting her session

UMAR, HUSBAND TO MENTEE IN BIDA SUPPORTS WIFE TO ATTEND IMPACT SESSIONS

To have a husband facilitate a caregiver's journey to learn about vaccination, so they can both raise healthy children can be a priceless experience. Umar Suleiman happened to become a success story in this light as he eased his wife's LEOPOD experience.

Umar's wife explained to him all she is learning as a mentee and how it works. Before he did not agree with it but after he started bringing her on his motorcycle, he realized that Immunization goods health. He often brings her for impact sessions on his with his motorcycle. And for the times when his motorcycle is faulty, he gives her 200 or 300 naira because she may see something that she wants to buy or eat. So he gives her both transport and feeding money.



Even God says we should seek good health. So I am happy to be bringing my wife for immunization learning sessions all the time.



- UMAR SULEIMAN



Umar Suleiman brings his wife for vaccination all the time



Umar Suleiman and wife

13 MENTEES AND MENTORS GAIN KNOWLEDGE AND CERTIFICATION

Overall, 40 Immunization Mentors and 400 Caregivers of Non Fully Immunized Children participated in the LEOPOD project.

Now leveraging on the benefits of vaccination after learning about it THROUGH the LEOPOD Project, caregivers of non-fully Immunized Children in Niger and Gombe States have certificates to show for this. Issued by Center for Integrated Health Programs (CIHP), they belong to the LEOPOD immunization mentee cohort on social behavioural change (SBC) participating in the 5 months SBC program.



A mentor carrying her child poses with her certificate



I am grateful for the LEOPOD project because they have helped us a lot. Many of our women are not educated, with the program, they were able to understand what immunization is.

- PATIENCE JAMES

The Immunization Mentors were also certified for completing a 5 day participatory learning and action (PLA) training. The program was fun and eye-opening.

80% of Immunization Mentors who participated in the exit interviews indicated a willingness to continue as an immunization mentor in the community. 91% of the target group had also demonstrated strong intentions to continue vaccination. And post intervention having been given certificates, 84% of the target group demonstrated increased knowledge about immunization.



LEOPOD coordinator and LEOPOD Beneficiaries

THANK YOU, LEOPOD: BENEFICIARIES AT DABAN FULANI COMMUNITY EXPRESS APPRECIATION

Daban Fulani is a ward in Kwami Local Government Area of Gombe State. An extended village, within it are large families. In a particular Muazu Babangida household of 50 wives and caregivers who had not been immunizing their children until LEOPOD was introduced, impact was well felt and appreciated.

In the household, four (4) women first received immunization education from the LEOPOD team and also started immunization for their children who had been suffering from one childhood disease to another.

Later, it was observed within the household that there was a huge difference between the children who started immunization and those who do not. The message around immunization benefits was passed then more caregivers from the same extended family joined. Members of Muazu Babangida household remains happy and motivated.



“
Mungode LEOPOD.
Thank you, LEOPOD.”

- CAREGIVERS AT DABAN
FULANI COMMUNITY

As some go on to complete immunization for their children, more family members indicated they would join. This thus sustains the project beyond its implementation and exit phase.



Daban Fulani Community



More caregivers joining the project

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ISBN-13



For further information, kindly contact
Center for Integrated Programs:

Headquarter Address | Plot 1129 Kikuyu
Close, Off Nairobi Street, Wuse II, Abuja.
Phone | 09-2904563
E-mail | info@cihpng.org

We are also on social media:



Center for Integrated Health Programs



@cihpng



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