Second Global Forum on Human Resources for Health
25 - 29 January 2011  |  Bangkok, Thailand

Reviewing progress, renewing commitments to health workers towards MDGs and beyond

Nigeria Midwives Service Scheme

National Primary health care development agency

Challenges

Nigeria has had a very poor record regarding maternal and child health outcomes. An estimated 53,000 women and 250,000 newborn die annually mostly as a result of preventable causes.

Project description

The National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA), under the 2009 Appropriation Act, was tasked with establishing the Midwives Service Scheme (MSS). The MSS is a public sector initiative and a collaborative effort between the Federation, States and Local Governments, the Federal and State Ministries of Health, the National Health Insurance Scheme, the Primary Health Care Development Agency and the National Health Security Scheme. The MSS was established to meet a critical needs gap and is supported by partners. Funding for the MSS, however, is restricted to the federal government. The MSS is a two-pronged approach to programme communication focused at political leaders/decision makers and clients respectively through radio/TV, billboards, community out reach, health centre branding and posters.

The MSS faces five key challenges, namely: implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding, availability of qualified midwives, retention of midwives, capacity building of midwives and sustaining of linkages. There needs to be more support and commitment from officers in relevant government departments, which can be achieved by ensuring clarity on the objectives and aims of the MSS.

Conclusions

Over the years, several initiatives and programmes have been introduced to reduce mortality among mothers and children in Nigeria. Despite these efforts, poor maternal and child health indices has continued to be one of the most serious development challenges facing the country. Progress has been accomplished in the implementation of the MSS initiative however and best practices identified under scheme will further be consolidated with a view to overcome challenges.

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