

Sokoto State Improves Health Data for Decision Making

Health information systems (HIS) allow policy makers, health practitioners and community members to use collected, processed, analyzed and transmitted data to optimally manage and operate services to achieve greater health outcomes.

USAID|TSHIP supported the Sokoto State government by assessing its HIS system using the World Health Organization Health Metrics Network (HMN) Framework. Among the findings of this assessment were that there was an insufficient number of dedicated staff for HIS and that information technology literacy among existing staff was quite low. There were neither personnel nor computers dedicated for HIS, and nationally-approved registers used to capture data in health facilities were largely unavailable in all of the 729 health facilities in the state. Health data from the state's 23 local government area (LGA) councils was often of low quality, submitted late, and incomplete.

Sokoto State now ranks **4TH NATIONALLY** for health-related data completeness

In response to the assessment findings, and complementing the state government's efforts to improve data for decision making, USAID|TSHIP trained all 23 of the HIS officers in Sokoto State and others in the data quality assessment (DQA) method. The project also supported the printing of revised data capturing tools and facilitated a training-of-trainers on the use of the prescribed form for staff of the state health ministry. All health facilities in the state have benefitted from this. Local government monitoring and evaluation (M&E) officers were supported to develop charts to track service delivery at the facility level. State health officials were also trained in geographic information system (GIS) software

to facilitate better presentation and use of their data for planning through maps. In addition to computerizing the data entry process, the project regularly supports the state to upgrade their reporting software to the latest versions.

A health data consultative committee (HDCC), dedicated to data management governance, which USAID|TSHIP also helped to set up, continues to oversee issues relating to data quality in the state. All the members of the HDCC, which is comprised of the State Ministry of Health, Ministry for Local Government, Hospital Services Management Board, State Primary Health Care Development Agency, National Bureau for Statistics, National Population Commission, Usman Danfodio Teaching Hospital, Specialist Hospital were all trained and fully participated in all of the DQAs that were conducted in the state.

As a result of these efforts, Sokoto State's health-related data is now accessible at the national level and the state ranks 4th nationally in terms of completeness. **In five years of USG assistance, Sokoto State's timeliness in LGA-level reporting to the national database has risen from close to zero to at times over 60%.** This positive development means that state- and federal-level health managers now have access to better quality data for decision making.

To promote data use, USAID invested in project states to enhance the capacity of community-based systems to interpret and utilize data for decision-making. Project states are now better equipped to monitor their own health outcomes through surveys and improved data governance.

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