

# COMMUNITY HEALTH WATCH

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



**NIGERIA  
HEALTH  
WATCH**

Informed commentary, intelligence and insights on the Nigerian health sector



**COMMUNITY  
HEALTH  
WATCH**

*August Edition*

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# “Equip our health centre”: Ejiko community pleads

6<sup>th</sup> August 2021

The inhabitants of Ejiko community in Gbako Local Government Area (LGA) of Niger State are dealing with what they describe as “a health facility that lacks the most basic facilities”.



Ejiko health facility has no fence, no water and no electricity

According to the community leader, Isah Muhammad, while the people appreciate the fact that they have a government healthcare centre, the facility is barely useful as the community members cannot go there to be treated for diseases like malaria and typhoid fever. A frequent occurrence in the community. Fatima Salihu, a community member said, “The most dangerous issue is the fact that there are absolutely no drugs or equipment to handle deliveries in the health facility”.

As a result of this, women in the community are taken to health facilities in other villages for delivery. The in-charge of the facility, Salihu Isa said, among other challenges, the facility also faces the non-availability of basic essential medicines. He therefore refers patients to health facilities in the urban areas even for health conditions that could be handled at their own health facility.



The health facility in Ejiko community lacks plaster, tilted floors and beds for delivery

“It is not right that there will be a healthcare centre in Ejiko, yet people will have to go elsewhere to access healthcare services,” he added.

The facility is in urgent need of water, electricity, more health workers, drugs and equipment and basic improvement in the current infrastructure. Health facilities can never function optimally in the condition Ejiko health facility is. Gbako LGA and the Niger State government should do the needful on this health facility. As it stands, it is just a mere structure.



According to Salihu Isa, the incharge of the facility in Ejiko, there is always the none availability of basic essential medicines



The interior view of the poorly structured health facility in Ejiko community

## What the community wants

1. Ensure that at the minimum, all essential and basic drugs as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) are available in Ejiko PHC.
2. Gbako local government council should rehabilitate and provide basic infrastructure in Ejiko PHC, including electricity, beds, medical tools and a standard delivery room.
3. Ensure there is a fence around the PHC to ensure the security for health workers and patients.
4. Engage and deploy more health workers to the PHC.
5. In line with the National Primary Health Care Development Agency’ (NPHCDA) Minimum Standards for PHCs in Nigeria, provide adequate and gender equitable Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities in the PHC.

# “We have a beautiful building, but no water”: Health workers at Papuji Model Clinic cry out

20<sup>th</sup> August, 2021



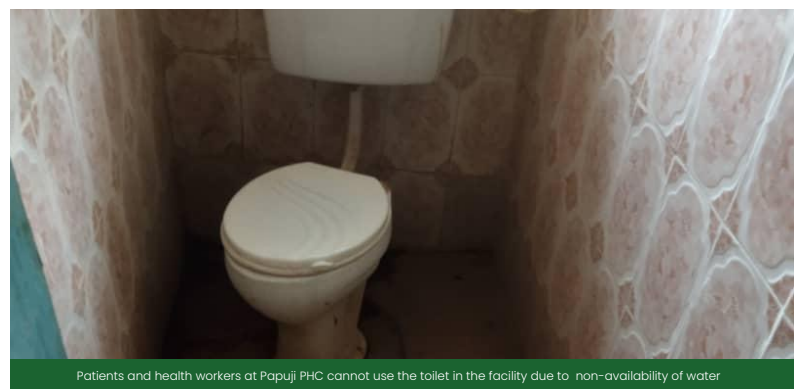
Zapupi Model Clinic in Paikoro, Paiko Local Government Area of Niger State is a Primary Health Centre (PHC) that has enjoyed continuous renovation over the years. It is a beautiful building that reflects the attention and care it has received from successive governments. The facility provides services such as antenatal, postnatal and delivery, as well as immunisation. However, despite efforts to improve its look and productivity, one of the critical infrastructure gaps experienced by the PHC is that there is no clean water supply. According to Kande Alibako, a health worker at the facility, a borehole, which was the sole source of water supply to the facility, has not been functioning properly for over three years. “We mostly buy water from truck pushers and sometimes it is not even available. The borehole has been fixed many times, but it stops working soon after. We’ll appreciate it if the government will alternate it with a Solar powered borehole to arrest our difficulties,” she said.

The lack of water at the facility affects the optimal delivery of healthcare services at the facility, said Salomi Silas, a volunteer health worker. She revealed

that keeping the toilets clean is challenging, as is supporting mothers when they are giving birth..

Salamatu Danjuma, a resident of Papuji who uses the health facility agrees that most women face difficulties when they want to use the toilets in the facility during their antenatal visits. “We cannot use the toilets because there is no water inside. We must wait till we get home,” she said. Salisu Garba, whose wife attends antenatal at the clinic is not comfortable with her spending several hours at the facility without having a means to comfortably ease herself when she needs to. “A place that is meant to provide health should not be a breeding ground for diseases”, said Garba.

Water is critical for efficient service provision at a fully functional health facility. Without water, a health care facility isn’t a health care facility. Paiko LGA and Niger state government should complement their efforts towards upgrading Papuji Model Clinic by ensuring that the facility gets a stable source of water supply. Only then will women be confident enough to use the clinic as they are certain that they will receive the proper care during deliveries and can confidently use the toilets during their hospital visits.



## What the community wants

1. Paiko local government should provide adequate and gender equitable water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in Papuji PHC, in line with the recommendations of the Technical Guidelines for WASH in PHCs in Nigeria.
2. There is a need to implement minimum standards of infection, prevention and control protocols to limit the spread of infectious diseases.
3. Sustained funding will be needed to maintain services for safe water, sanitation and hygiene in the health facilities.

# Battling Cholera Outbreaks While Students at GGSS Lemu Cry for Toilets

30<sup>th</sup> August, 2021

Government Girls' Secondary School, Lemu in Gbako Local Government Area is an all-girls school with over 1000 students. However, approaching the premises of the school a foul, unpleasant smell greets one. This is because of the open



Government Girls Secondary School Lemu has only two toilets for a population of over 1000 students

defecation in and around bushes very close to the school. Despite the huge student population, GGSS Lemu has only two toilet facilities, forcing students to make use of the adjoining open bushes. Worse still, the available toilets are in a bad condition, making their use unhygienic and posing a threat of infectious diseases for the students and teachers. "I stay away from using the school toilets to avoid infections" said Khahiat Muhammad, a student of the school. She adds that she and her fellow students prefer to make use of the bushes, despite the dangerous reptiles they sometimes come across. Salihu Ibrahim, a teacher at the school lamented that the lack of proper toilets in the school is a source of difficulty for the students and staff. He adds that even one of the two dilapidated toilets available, which is a pit latrine, was constructed by National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members many years ago.

Nigeria is currently battling a major cholera outbreak, which has become a yearly occurrence. Lack of proper water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities including toilets is one



Government Girls Secondary School Lemu has only two toilets for a population of over 1000 students

of the major causes of cholera and other infectious disease outbreaks in the country. The consequences of inadequate access to WASH facilities is ever more evident on entry in schools, where infectious diseases can spread quickly among children, due to their close contact with each other. Also, lack of proper WASH facilities is a major reason for school absenteeism by children, especially young adolescent girls when they are menstruating and could have an effect on their long-term education and careers. Over 40 million Nigerians practice open defecation according to the World Bank. This is not a statistic to be proud of, so a lot of attention needs to be tailored towards providing WASH facilities in our schools and for the general public. Niger State government should provide proper, quality and gender friendly WASH facilities to GGSS Lemu and all other schools in the state to protect students and teachers from preventable infectious diseases.



Inside the toilets of Government Girls Secondary School Lemu with a student population of over 1000



Inside the toilets of Government Girls Secondary School Lemu with a student population of over 1000

## What the community wants

1. Niger State government should construct adequate toilet facilities in Government Girls' Secondary School, (GGSS) Lemu to mitigate the outbreak of infectious diseases.
2. Build more functional separate teachers and students toilet facilities with water supply within the school premises.
3. Replicate the same for other schools in the state to ensure that students and teachers are protected from preventable infectious diseases.
4. Bring together other relevant ministries, especially where there is a connection to health to ensure delivery of all aspects of safe water, sanitation and hygiene and infection prevention in the health facility.



Nigeria Health Watch is a not-for-profit health communication and advocacy organisation that seeks to advocate for better health for Nigerians. We have worked to actively engage and support the government in raising awareness and increasing knowledge on a wide range of health issues in Nigeria. We aim to hold duty bearers accountable for delivering affordable and quality healthcare to Nigerians. The unique capacity of Nigeria Health Watch lies in the combination of its communication and health expertise, which enables the organisation to provide solutions for evidence-based communications and advocacy in the health sector.

