

COMMUNITY HEALTH WATCH

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



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Here's why the Government Should Renovate Saidu Namaska Primary Health Centre

3rd March, 2022

For any person seeking to ascertain how well a Primary Health Centre (PHC) operates, the best people to speak to are the health workers in the facility, as well as the patients, preferably pregnant women, who use it more frequently



than other community members.

Wasila Bala is a health worker at Saidu Namaska PHC in Magajiya community, Kontagora Local Government Area (LGA) of Niger state and she said the facility has numerous challenges. The most alarming being the poor condition of the delivery room. "It is difficult for us and the pregnant women to carry out delivery there because there is absolutely no equipment. We have only one bed which is not enough, the ceiling is broken, the windows are not covered and sometimes, we share the labour room with birds", she said, adding that essential medicine for pregnant women is not always available at the health facility.

Fatima Suleiman a resident of Magajiya community said that due to the poor state of the labour room and unavailability



of essential medicine, women are reluctant to visit the PHC for antenatal care and for delivery. She pleaded with the Niger State government and Kontagora LGA officials to rehabilitate the health facility, particularly the labour room, and provide essential medications to ensure that residents of the community can use the PHC comfortably.

Healthcare, especially maternal care, must be quality. This means, health facilities must have well-furnished, and functional labour rooms, qualified and adequate health workers and essential medicine for antenatal and postnatal care. Poor maternal care services could contribute to the third of the three delays associated with maternal mortality, which is the delay in accessing care in health facilities.



What the community wants

1. Rehabilitate the labour room.
2. Provide adequate delivery beds and equipment.
3. Provide essential and basic medications for antenatal and postnatal services.

Matandi PHC: Only a Total Renovation will do.

10th March, 2022

It is not hard for a first-time visitor to Matandi Primary Health Centre (PHC) to imagine it as the well-built, well equipped health centre it once was, positioned to meet the health needs of the people of Matandi community in Magama Local Government



Area (LGA) of Niger State.

But that was in the past. The PHC is currently in ruins and urgently in need of every critical intervention, starting with the building itself. According to Muhammad Rabo, the community leader of Matandi, there is no section of the PHC that is not broken. "We fear entering the hospital especially during the rainy season. If a pregnant woman comes to the facility to deliver, there is no place to do that. No one can go to the hospital to get medications, because the medications are not there", he said, adding that "the health workers themselves don't have a place to sit". It is commendable that the health workers are still able to offer some semblance of health services in the PHC despite its current state, however, this is not advisable as merely being in the building in its present state is a health hazard to both health workers and patients.

Aisha Gado Muhammed, a health worker at the PHC echoed the community leader's sentiments. She said the health workers can't conduct delivery in the PHC's labor room, they therefore



workers follow women home to conduct deliveries there. "Nobody wants to delivery in this kind of place. That's why the women prefer to deliver at home or go to another town. Those that are delivering at home we must follow them there to assist them". She added that essential antenatal medications are also not available, as a result, antenatal services are not performed properly.

Presently, residents of Matandi community must travel to Kontagora and Ibeto towns, which are several kilometers away to access healthcare. This is not ideal.



What the community wants

1. Complete reconstruction of Matandi PHC.
2. Provision of adequate equipment including delivery beds and couch, chairs, tables, and diagnostic equipment for the PHC
3. Provision of essential and basic medications for the health facility.

Lemu PHC: On the Way to Becoming a 'Model' PHC

17th March, 2022



Adama Sani brought her son to Lemu Primary Health Centre (PHC) in Lemu community, Gbako Local Government Area (LGA) of Niger State. According to Sani, services at the PHC started improving 2 years ago, thanks to the intervention of the Niger State Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) office. "Before, when you bring your child here, he or she would have to lie on a mat because there were no beds. But now there are beds in the hospital. Also, anytime you come, even at night you only need to knock on the door of the refurbished staff quarters and the health workers will come and attend to you. They provide services all the time", Sani said, carrying her son who had already been attended to.

Lemu PHC used to be extremely dilapidated said Moses Yisa, the officer in-charge of the facility. "Before the intervention of the SDGs, the hospital was like a house for goats. There was no water, no drugs, nothing that we could work with. Things have improved tremendously since it was rehabilitated and refurbished". According to Yisa, the PHC now has a solar borehole and toilet facilities, and



both male and female wards have automated beds and mattresses, all supplied by the SDGs. All these, including the newly built staff quarters, have improved the quality of services they provide to members of Lemu community, he added.

Yisa however lamented that water is still not connected to the toilets in the health facility, and health workers and patients must fetch the water themselves. Also, the staff quarters cannot accommodate all the facility's staff. He therefore implored Gbako LGA Council and the Niger State government to rehabilitate the old staff quarters which was not part of the initial renovation. The PHC doesn't have a fence, and according to Yisa, this poses a security threat to health workers and patients.

When health facilities are equipped to provide quality services, patients are guaranteed the care they need, and health workers can provide that care with ease. When health care is made accessible to rural community dwellers, it improves the health indices of the state and ultimately the country. In rehabilitating and refurbishing Lemu PHC, the Niger state SDGs have made a commendable move. It shouldn't take much of an effort to address their other needs which include,



What the community wants

1. Fencing the PHC to improve security of health workers and patients
2. Connecting the toilet facilities in the PHC to the solar powered borehole, so that patients and health workers can use the toilets with ease.
3. Rehabilitating the old staff quarters in the PHC, so that more health workers can be accommodated.

Runa Primary Health Centre: No Longer Reliable

24th March, 2022



Since the early 90s, residents of Runa community in Dawakin Kudu Local Government Area (LGA) of Kano State have relied on Runa Primary Health Centre (PHC) for their health needs. However, the health facility can no longer cater to the health needs of the community members.

According to Ahmad Abubakar, a health worker in the PHC, the facility has been in a dilapidated state for many years. The issues are diverse: the entire building shows clear signs of long-term neglect and urgently needs a total facelift; the facility is too small to meet the needs of the community which has grown exponentially since the PHC was built; there is only one toilet in the facility, and it is barely functioning. Most worrying for Abubakar, however, is the lack of adequate health workers in the PHC. "I am a laboratory technician, but I am forced to play the roles of a doctor and a nurse, due to the inadequate manpower in the PHC", he lamented.

Runa community leader, Gambo Runa who donated the land the PHC was built on, said the health facility cannot take care of his people



due to the challenges it faces. "I am ready to donate additional land if the PHC can be expanded and provided with equipment", he said.

A Primary Healthcare Summit is scheduled to take place in Abuja on March 24 and 25, 2022. It is "geared towards launching a historic programme to transform the under-resourced, weak primary healthcare system in Nigeria..." As experts gather to deliberate on a solution which is aptly named: 'Reimagining PHCs', we urge them to think of the people of Runa community and others like them, who also deserve to have quality, accessible and affordable healthcare, no matter where they are.



What the community wants

- 1. Complete rehabilitation and expansion of Runa PHC**
- 2. Deploy more health workers to the PHC**
- 3. Reconstruct adequate toilets for the PHC**
- 4. Provide a dedicated water source**
- 5. Build a fence around the PHC**



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.

