

NEWSLETTER

2014

Dear Colleagues and Friends

Welcome to the August - December 2014 edition of the Save the Children - Nigeria Country Programme Newsletter. This is an opportunity to share updates of the country programme activities which are focused around Advocacy, Campaigns, Maternal and Newborn Health, Nutrition and Links for Children, that supports the survival of Mothers, Newborns and Children across Nigeria. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the entire Nigeria Country Programme staff for their contributions towards this edition. We hope the stories in this issue will inspire you to continue giving children a chance to survive and thrive to their fullest potential.

Benjamin Foot

Country Director, Save the Children

Nigeria Country Programme



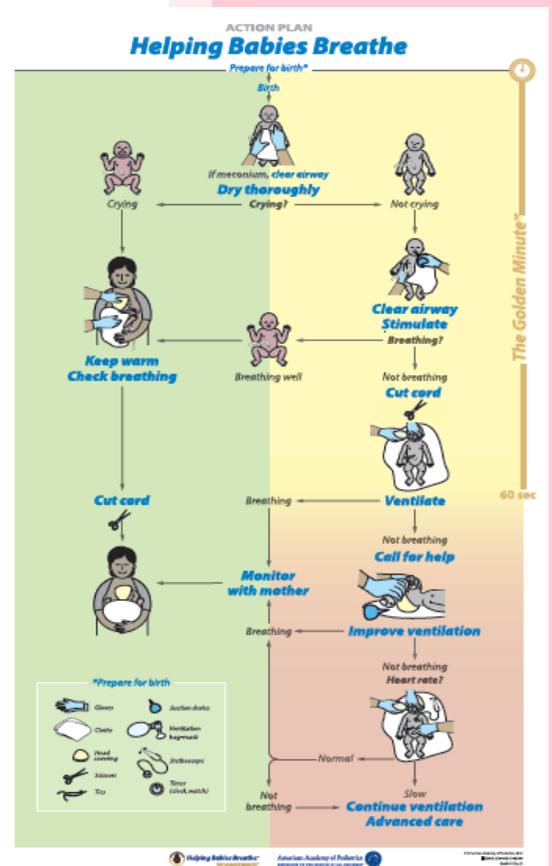
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Helping Babies Breathe

The Quality of Care Program is aimed at supporting the State Ministry of Health in Jigawa and Lagos to improve the quality of Maternal and New born Health (MNH) services. The main goal and objectives of the program are: to reduce maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality in the two states of Jigawa and Lagos by 2015 through creating an enabling clinical environment in 20 health facilities, and an effective referral system to increase access to quality healthcare at the time of birth and in the immediate postnatal period. The program also aims to ensure 1,000 health workers have the skills and support they need to provide quality health services to mothers and babies at the time of birth and post partum period thereafter. The Quality of Care Program also ensures that state and local decision-makers implement key national policies at local and state levels and enable communities to realize their right to quality Maternal and Newborn Health services.

The Quality of Care program conducted a two-day training from the 18th-19th of June, 2014 on **Helping Babies Breathe**. The training was organised for nurses, midwives and doctors to update their knowledge on the causes of neonatal death. The Curriculum or modules used for training include: Care of Newborn Reference Manual, Helping Babies Breathe (Learner's Workbook), Action Plan on Helping Babies Breathe, Helping Babies Breathe Facilitator Flip Chart and Neonatalie Mannequin. The methodology used was both theoretical and practical. PowerPoint presentations with graphical and practical demonstration of the use of Neonatalie were used. Realistic scenarios were used throughout the training with facilitators giving room for questions.. Pre/Post-test was also conducted. At the end of the training, participants gained more knowledge on preparing for birth and ensuring save deliveries



World Breastfeeding Week

Each year, World Breastfeeding Week (WBBW) (August 1st-7th, 2014) is celebrated all over the world with diverse activities to sensitize the general public and promote breastfeeding. The slogan and theme for World Breastfeeding Week 2014 was **BREASTFEEDING: Score a Goal - Save a Life!** The theme asserts the importance of increasing and sustaining the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding - in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) countdown, and beyond.

As part of Save the Children's activities to mark the World Breastfeeding Week in Nigeria, a town hall meeting was held in Katsina State, with caregivers and the Mother to Mother support group in the community accompanied by a round table meeting with stakeholders. Katsina State Nutrition officer Hajija Rabia, in her opening speech on behalf of the Executive Chairman, State Primary Health Care Development Agency explained that when women practice Exclusive Breastfeeding, it saves them a lot of money from buying complementary baby food, gives them a better relationship with the children and saves them the emotional trauma mothers go through whenever their babies are sick. Hajija Rabia called out to women who are already practicing Exclusive Breastfeeding to continue and ensure they spread the news to other women in their communities. She said the Mother to Mother support group, is another avenue for women to empower their fellow women and there are no better ambassadors for Exclusive Breastfeeding than the women themselves especially those of them that have practiced or are still practicing it. Hajija Rabia urged the women to continue with the good work of spreading the news on Exclusive Breastfeeding and assured them that she will ensure that Katsina state starts supporting them in every way possible.

The leaders of the Mother to Mother support groups from Daura, Baure, Zango and Mai'adua also shared insights on their activities, which includes monthly meetings, door to door visits of pregnant women's homes to educate them, attending weddings, naming ceremonies, burials and generic women gatherings to tell them about Exclusive Breastfeeding. The women also use these mediums to speak to women about other health issues such as immunization, identifying malnutrition and referral to Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) sites. Other women also shared their experiences on the misgivings in the society on Exclusive Breastfeeding, the abuse and stigmatization they had to endure from relatives especially mothers-in-law and grandmothers. However, these women shared beautiful testimonies on the benefits of Exclusive Breastfeeding fast growth of their babies, smartness in learning, good health, even when the babies are teething, less visit to the hospital and so on. They only visit the hospital for routine immunization. Some even testified that during cholera outbreaks their babies did not fall victims.

A major highlight of the occasion was the baby show where mothers were divided into two groups; those whose babies are still on Exclusive Breastfeeding and those who are above six months and are now on complementary feeding. The babies were paraded before the audience all looking plump and healthy. Prizes were given to all the women for their effort and were encouraged to keep spreading the news. The media was on ground to interview some of the women who gladly called on other women to join them in Exclusive Breastfeeding and afterwards choose the right complementary feeding for their babies as they are readily available locally and cheap when they are six months.

Also within the week, was a stakeholders' roundtable meeting as part of the WBBW activities. Participants at the round table cuts across the executives, legislators, religious leaders, Civil Society Organizations, media, traditional leaders and other partners to discuss the role the different bodies of the society has to play on creating the right environment for women to practice EBF and be educated on the right complementary feeding for their babies after six months. Papers were presented by representatives of the executives, legislators, religious leaders, traditional leaders and the media. At the end of the meeting all participants agreed they have a role to play and need to do more in the state to see that women are supported and encouraged to practice EBF in the. Also the following came up as resolutions at the end of the meeting; The creation of a local Health Radio, The creation of Crèche in all government establishments, Nutrition Club in schools (both Girls only and Mixed schools) be created under the office of the state health educator, Formation of Social Media groups in the state to enlighten people on EBF and individuals and the media should also make statements on EBF on their page and during timeouts, Policy issues on breastfeeding should be reviewed for strict implementation, and Creation of Men support Groups.



Benefits of IYCF: Wakilis' Story



Wakili Madawaki is a 57 year old Fulani farmer from Geza, a district in Katuru Local Government Area of Zamfara State. He is married with one wife and six children. The eldest child is seventeen years old, while the youngest is Nine. Wakili was not aware of appropriate Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices, until he was invited to a community IYCF training by a staff of Working towards improving Nutrition in Northern Nigeria (WINNN). As a committed member of the community who was willing to serve his people, he made himself available to be trained as an IYCF Community Volunteer in the Local Government. Apart from his work as a farmer, Wakili supports the WINNN programme in the community by offering one-on-one counseling on appropriate IYCF practices to community members

As a part of Wakili's daily routine, "I wake up early in the morning and take my book house by house in the community, in search of malnourished children. Then I proceed to the Out Patient (OTP) site (in the health facility)", he says. On one of his daily trips, he met along the way Aliyu, a fellow Fulani farmer, who is a Normad and was in transit to Niger Republic. Aliyu frantically explained in confusion, that his wife just delivered a baby in his tent but was having challenges with expulsion of the placenta. According to Wakili, "I told him that there is something that we were taught and that if he can practice it, I know it will help. He asked me what it was and I told him that the baby should be placed on the mother's chest to breastfeed. If she does this, the placenta will be expelled".

Unsure of what will happen but willing to try anything to prevent his wife from dying, Aliyu accepted the advice. Wakili then went back to call a Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA) in his compound and together, they followed Aliyu to his tent. Following Wakili's instructions, the TBA went in, cut the umbilical cord of the baby and placed the child on the chest of the mother to begin breastfeeding. In Wakili's words, "After she held the baby and started to give him breast milk, I went out to leave. Just as I crossed the road, I heard a voice shouting and calling me. When I turned my back, I saw Aliyu coming towards me, smiling and thanking me. He told me the placenta had been expelled." Wakili was filled with joy, at hearing the news.

He used that moment to encourage Aliyu to ensure that the baby is fed on only breast milk for the next 6 months, without adding anything, not even water. Aliyu was initially bothered that the child might die of thirst, but Wakili succeeded in convincing him to stick to exclusive breastfeeding. Afterwards, Wakili left. Two weeks after the incidence, Aliyu sent a goat to Wakili's home in appreciation, and left the community for Niger. The news spread among the Fulani community and this has made Wakili highly influential and respected. Now, IYCF is welcome among the Fulanis in Geza Community, who before now never believed or practiced early initiation or exclusive breastfeeding.

#MDG500

August 18th, 2014 marked the 500 days until the target date for the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the world's 'to-do-list' to improve lives and alleviate poverty around the world. Over the course of 500 minutes on August 18, a broad group of MDG supporters took action to raise awareness on MDG progress and Solutions to rally the world to join United Nations in continuing the MDG Momentum. Supporters such as Save the Children, Association for Reproductive and Family Health (ARFH), Wellbeing Africa, DMD Initiatives, Devnovate, TSHIP_Nigeria and EnspireATV facilitated by @estherclimate participated in a communications surge over 500 minutes to put the MDGs front and center in the global conversation.

Save the Children via our Twitter Handle @savechildrenNG spoke on Maternal Health forecast for Africa—State of the World's Mothers Report with the Hashtag #MDG500 #MDGMomentum.

Care givers earn individual incomes

In September 2014, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) representatives held a monitoring visit to Save the Children's Systems Transformed for Empowered Action and Enabling Responses for vulnerable children (STEER) project in Kaduna State. Led by Dorcas Amolo (STEER, Chief of Party) the visit provided the team an opportunity to meet with the project staff, some Civil Society Organization partners, Caregivers Communities and the State Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development. For Caregivers of the Handicapped Village managed by Hope for the Handicapped Persons Foundation, the word "Hope" has assumed a more significant meaning. The caregivers, made up of people rejected by their own families - the Crippled, Blind and Lepers along with their children, have been engaged on various capacity building trainings through STEER project.

"We want a better life for our children; we have been taught how to ensure we do not spend all that we make, make little contributions and develop new businesses. With our increased income, we will be able to take better care of our children".

"I used to give my baby mainly water, but after we were trained on the importance of breastfeeding, I now breastfeed my baby regularly and could see improvements in the way she looks"

"Our children used to stay out on the streets till very late into the night at times up till 9pm or even 10pm, but now we ensure they do not leave the community after 8pm and ensure parents take responsibility for taking care of them" – Caregiver Yakubu.

Within just 3 months of receiving Financial Literacy and Economic Strengthening trainings through STEER Project, the caregivers have already embarked on income generating activities like shoe-making, production of soaps, disinfectants, deodorants and other products. Apart from these, members have developed a savings culture, organized themselves into cooperative groups, and taking actions to register these cooperatives and open bank accounts. Nursing mothers have also moved on from giving their babies water to ensuring that they are breastfed regularly. Child Protection Committees that were set up have started taking actions to ensure that community members take better care of children, holding caregivers responsible for children's wellbeing.

The Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Kaduna also expressed their gratitude for how the 'Organizational Development' component of the project has greatly benefited the Ministry. While speaking, Madam Aisha Muhammad, the Director of Social Welfare & Child Development stated how STEER has helped in carrying out Organization Capacity Assessment, reactivated the State's Technical Working Group, and engaged key staff in Capacity Building Trainings. At the moment, plans are underway to include Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in the Ministry's budget and a Steering Committee is being set up at the State level to advocate for OVC issues at the highest level of governance. While responding, the USAID team expressed satisfaction with the project's progress so far, including the choice of CSO partners and the capacity building work carried out with the caregivers. With additional CSO partners on board, the project will reach more caregivers and children in the coming months.

STEER project is currently being carried out in five states of Northern Nigeria – Kaduna, Kano, Sokoto, Plateau and Bauchi States. The project uses a 360° systems strengthening approach to strengthen families, communities, government systems and engages the private sector to ensure that all orphans and vulnerable children access and utilize comprehensive and coordinated services and are able to realize their full rights.



Community efforts in improving wellbeing of vulnerable children in Nigeria

The Links for Children (LFC) Project is a five-year (2009-2014) United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded project targeted 26 communities in three states of Northern Nigeria (Kaduna, Bauchi, and Katsina). The project was implemented by Save the Children in partnership with a national organization; Association for Reproductive and Family Health (ARFH) and 6 other local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) namely; Association of OVC Networks in Nigeria (AONN), Jamatu Nasril Islam (JNI), Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Nigeria Red Cross Society (NRCS), Network of People Living with HIV&AIDS in Nigeria (NEPWHAN) and Federation of Muslim Women in Nigeria (FOMWAN).

These CSOs established 26 functional Child Protection Committees (CPCs) across the 3 states. These CPCs provided care and support services to 13,114 vulnerable children which surpassed the project's target of 11,950 vulnerable children over the five years period. The services provided were on education, child protection, food and nutrition, psychosocial support, shelter and care and health for the children and economic strengthening for the caregivers through the village savings and loans strategy. The project closed out in 2014, with an end of award meeting of Links for Children project held during September in Abuja. Some representatives of the project's beneficiaries testified to the improvement in the wellbeing of the children, increase in capacity of caregivers and CPCs in meeting to the needs of vulnerable children in the community and sustainability measures put in place for continuity and increased access to services with support from the government state Ministries of Women Affairs and Agencies.

The CSOs and CPCs also shared on the increase in their organizational capacity to the extent that CSOs in Bauchi and Katsina wrote proposals and were granted funding. Participants at this meeting were moved with the passion and inspiring words from the LFC project beneficiaries and it was evident that communities could actually respond to the needs of vulnerable children which would bring about remarkable changes in their lives. Participants at this meeting were also thrilled with a video documentary which displayed all the achievements, lessons learnt and recommendations from the project and products from vocational skills training provided to the children such as bags, shoes, sewn clothes, washing soaps, and beads.

The Links for Children (LFC) Project would like to say a big THANK YOU to United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the American People and the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development for contributing to improving the wellbeing of vulnerable households in Nigeria.



Emergency Situations in Northern Nigeria

The insurgency in Northern Nigeria has displaced hundreds of thousands of people from Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states. The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) report hundreds of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) arriving in camps in Maiduguri on a daily basis. As at October 2014, an estimated 350,000 displaced persons were living in 10 IDP camps (ACAPS) - IDPs are unlikely to return as the Local Government Areas (LGAs) remain unsafe for return. (OCHA Nigeria SRP).

In response to the IDP crises in Borno State, Save the Children completed a multispectral assessment on the 16th October 2014, with plans to establish a field office to facilitate a rapid scale up of response operations. In line with our humanitarian mandate, Save the Children is implementing a Water And Sanitation Hygiene (WASH)-cholera prevention project in Borno targeting 1500 beneficiaries. This project is being implemented through a partnership with the Nigerian Red Cross, who are already operational on ground, providing health services to IDP's. The project focuses on the distribution of hygiene kits, and Nonfood Items (NFI's). Mass Hygiene awareness sessions are also being conducted in the IDP camps by the Red Cross focal persons.



Race for Survival

The Race for Survival is an event organized the world over on World Food Day in which children participate in a symbolic race in an attempt to draw the attention of political leaders and persuade them to take steps towards tackling preventable child deaths, hunger, and malnutrition.

The 2014 Race for Survival which took place in Katsina State on the 25th of October, 2014 was an opportunity to focus on state level commitments towards achieving the MDGs in Nigeria with messages centred more around the achievements of MDG4 and what governments can do within the 500 day countdown to the end of the MDGs. This reawakened the consciousness of political leaders towards their commitments and responsibilities with regard to the achievement of MDG 4 at the state level using the strong voice of children as a medium. Its major focus was on key achievements on MDG 4 and specific short term actions to be taken within the 500 day countdown to the end of the MDGs.

A global campaign film was also launched during the Race for Survival. It's a beautiful film that shows children across Latin America, Africa and Asia claiming to have seen flying superhero figures. The film is shot in a documentary style and highlights our work on child survival. This film has been viewed by over half a million people in less than a week- Watch it here: <http://bit.ly/l5bZn40> #beasuperhero



Improving ways of working in the Nigeria Country Programme

The Nigeria Country Programme extended leadership team is "committed towards working better together". On December 2nd and 3rd, 2014, Cortina McCurry, International Program Change Manager at Save the Children International office in London, met with members of the Nigeria Country Programme senior management team, in addition to senior technical advisers, and field office managers as a part of a two day offsite focused on leadership and team development.

During the two days, the team reviewed and discussed the challenges that are facing the country office and brainstormed solutions to tackle the issues, not in individual silos, but, as a team. Additionally, they had the opportunity to build rapport and strengthen relationships. From the feedback provided, the participants are committed to "be the driving force to change organization culture". One suggestion was that there should be a forum to exchange lessons learnt and best practices from the 80+ Save the Children programs across the globe.



National Health Bill signed into law

On the 9th of December, 2014, President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan signed the #NationalHealthBill into law. The journey to effective implementation for Nigerian mothers and children is just beginning as this has demonstrated the result of being committed to a course. This marks a new dawn in the Nigerian Health Sector. The bill is also expected to set standards in health care services rendered across Nigeria and also help eliminate medical quacks in the system. It seeks among others, the enablement to provide one per cent of Nigeria's consolidated revenue fund for the development of primary health care. The various states across Nigeria through this fund, are expected to improve on primary health care services in their states. The bill also covers provision of health care insurance for Nigerians especially the less privileged. Congratulations Nigeria!!

Save the Children proudly initiated the formation of the coalition and has also actively engaged in mobilizing citizens' to take mass action for the passage of the Health Bill. We organized workshops, media and social media engagement retreats and capacity-building activities for stakeholders like Market Women Association and the Guild of Editors as well as health professional associations.

Save the Children also embarked on two researches: a landscaping analysis to test the environment and capture learnings needed to effectively campaign on the National Health Bill and a cost benefit analysis aimed at producing evidence to showcase what Nigeria stands to gain with the passage and signing of the bill.

Perseverance indeed pays especially when you believe in a cause – that of the Nigerian child. We say a big thank you to President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan for putting the bill through and signing it. The coalition will consolidate its position to show its findings to all ministries, departments and agencies responsible for implementing this bill. For Save the Children, the journey has indeed just started and we look forward to an effective implementation.



Nigeria Holds 1st Newborn Health Conference in Nigeria

Nigeria accounts for nearly one-quarter of Africa's maternal and newborn deaths. In 2013, 260,000 babies died in Nigeria in their first month of life and an additional 295,000 were stillborn. In Nigeria, newborns currently account for more than 33 percent of all deaths of children under age five. The majority of these newborn deaths result from prematurity, complications during child birth including asphyxia, and severe infections.

The Nigeria Newborn Health Conference held from 23-24 October 2014 was convened to build synergy and commitment toward ending preventable newborn deaths and renewing the momentum for newborn survival. State health profiles have been released, making it possible for health officials to easily compare the health status of mothers and newborns in each of Nigeria's states. The conference culminated with the launch of the Call to Action on the Nigerian adaptation of the Every Newborn Action Plan (NENAP), with the Honorable Minister of State for Health, Alhaji Khaliru Alhassan launching the document today, on behalf of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan.

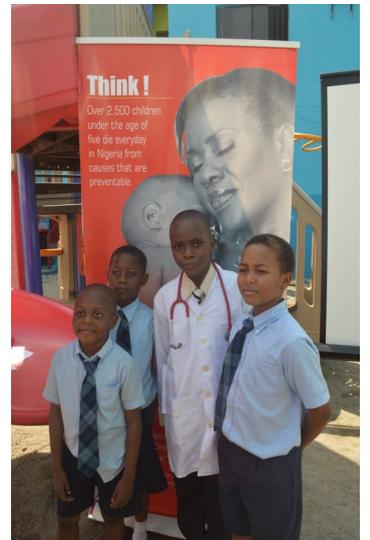
For further information about the event, check Nigeria Newborn Health Conference website: <http://ow.ly/D9bOa>



Health Fair

In recognition of our role in promoting child health and wellbeing, Pace Setters Academy, a private educational institution with campuses located in various parts of Abuja, invited Save the Children to their first ever children's health fair. This event comprised of exhibitions and demonstrations from various Non-Governmental Organizations such as UNICEF and Paths2 designed to educate pupils about their bodies and how to take care of themselves; improve their health seeking behavior and encourage fun-filled learning of essential elements of health and wellbeing.

Representatives from Save the Children spoke about the importance of hygiene, demonstrated key messages and household practices to promote healthy living for the benefits of the children, their parents and teachers and exhibited various IEC materials.



Farewell Message from Country Director Susan Grant



With the end of 2014 advancing, I have had the good fortune of being the Country Director in Nigeria for over four years and a half. I have seen Save the Nigeria Country Programme transform into an innovative, exciting and respected organization which has demonstrated that it can adapt to deliver immediate and lasting changes for children in complex environments. There has been some challenging and difficult times however, we have met the challenges head on and survived. It was successful by working as a team to get through the rough times as well as the good times.

I hope to continue to provide support to the West and Central African region and to Nigeria in particular in a different capacity in the future. In the meantime, I confirm my commitment to each and every-one of you . In 2015 and years to come we will continue to promote one Save the Children to live our values and demonstrate good leadership in everything that we do. A big thank you to the entire staff of Nigeria Country Programme for your dedication and good work all through the years. I will be heading off at the end of September, 2014 and wish you and your families a happy and peaceful time over the coming years.

Message from the New Country Director, Ben Foot

As I write this I have been in the position of Country Director for a few months. That's not very long to come to terms with a programme as complex as the one we are all part of in Nigeria. It's also not very long in coming to terms with the external environments which we work in and which are so very different, presenting very different challenges from State to State and in particular from North to South. So, there are many challenges facing an incoming Country Director.

But, of course, I have been to Nigeria before – twice before in fact. The first time was when I entered this world being born in what was then called the Greek Hospital in Lagos. That was way back well before independence and, because my parents moved on when I was only 2 years old, I do not remember anything of that very first visit to Nigeria. But I do remember the second.

The programme has grown enormously since I left at the end of October 2007. It is now reaching out to many thousands of children and developing work across all Save the Children priority areas. It is important that we acknowledge the dedication, commitment and sheer hard work of Susan Grant in making this possible. ~~Whatever happens in the future it will be her tenure as CD that will be remembered for showing the courage to take risks and making sure that we not only always say,~~ but also make it a reality that : “Yes we Can”

Her legacy leaves us all with the challenge to build on what she has achieved and in this I recognize that her achievement was only possible with the support and dedication of you all. In all the briefings I have had as part of my induction I have been excited by the sense of commitment and enthusiasm of both the programme and the support teams. All have been keen to highlight their achievements as well as being open about challenges and all have had visions for improving in the future. The commitment to the idea that we can always improve, we can always do better, has to be at the center of how we approach our work. Being able to critically analyse positively how we work and how we relate with others, both within our team and across the programme as a whole, will be essential in ensuring also that quality remains central to everything we do.

As the programme continues to grow there is a danger that we drift towards working increasingly in sectorial or even project silos while at the same time quality takes second place to quantity. My vision is to contribute to building ‘one’ country team and to continue to reach out to as many Nigerian children as is possible while ensuring that all our work is recognized throughout the Save the Children Movement, and within Nigeria, as being of the highest quality. I need to ask each of you to help me in achieving this.



POEM: The Nigerian Dream (National Anthem Revised)

Arise, O compatriots,
Let's come together to build the broken walls,
Arise, your sinking ship for safety calls;
Let's rebuild our heroes' humble halls.

Nigeria's call obey,
Like a baby she yearns and yells for succor;
The spears and swords of war grieves her sour,
Let arise to save her heart that's faint and poor.

To serve our fatherland,
Nor make our green garden, a terrain for test;
Let's arise to give our fatherland the very best.

With love and strength and faith...
Not with our grains soaked in gall and greed;
We have a patriotic plea and a noble need,
To build a nation with love: a colorful creed.

The labour of our heroes past...
Yearn and yell for our hand to uphold
The sure substance in our state's stronghold,
So we can remain a fat and flourishing fold.

Shall never be in vain...
Let's furnish our field to stop brain drain;
Let's shield our seas from spills and stain,
Let's get our gains without playing with pain.

To serve with heart and mind...
A land where there is hope and health;
A land where lords and labors walk in
wealth,
A land where giants and ants share same
strength.

One nation bound in freedom, peace and
unity
Walking in wealth and wisdom,
Seen by sons and strangers as a kind
kingdom,
Where everyone is sure of soaring to
stardom

Culled From: <http://www.poetrysoup.com/poems/best/nigerian>

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