



Addressing the shortage of female health workers in rural Northern Nigeria

IMPACT SUMMARY

- ✓ W4H **changed attitudes**, making it possible for rural women to train as health workers and return to serve their communities.
- ✓ **Transformed training colleges**, improving infrastructure and the quality of teaching, and increasing indexed places.
- ✓ **Successfully recruited** thousands of rural women, supporting them to study to become nurses and midwives.
- ✓ Ensured **sustainability**, with state governments taking over funding and control of all activities – with new laws passed to ensure commitment.
- ✓ Set up a **knowledge and learning hub** to support improving health worker education into the future.

The Women for Health programme ended in October 2020 after eight years of activities in five states of Northern Nigeria – Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Yobe and Zamfara. For the last two and half years, the programme applied an adapted version of its proven model to make a difference in Borno state. In all these states, we achieved tangible results: swelling ranks of health worker students; refurbished, well-run health training institutions (HTIs) at maximum capacity; and an upsurge in midwives and nurses now helping patients in rural communities.

Women for Health (W4H) also succeeded in changing attitudes around appropriate roles for women in rural communities in Northern Nigeria – making it possible for young women from poor, marginalised communities to become trained health workers. Our key intervention was the Foundation Year Programme (FYP), which supported young women from rural communities to qualify for entry to colleges of nursing and midwifery – and to help them succeed in their studies and return to their communities to serve as qualified professionals.



“I’m proud to be the first ever midwife in our village and to serve my community.”
FYP graduate



Why Women for Health was so important

Hauwa's story Hauwa, a young married woman from Katsina, was pregnant with her first child when she started bleeding. She knew she needed to be checked by a trained health worker. But the only health worker nearby was a man, and Hauwa's husband refused to allow her to see him. Eventually Hauwa was taken to the hospital, but she lost her baby. Afterwards, Hauwa's husband divorced her because she had been attended by a male health worker.



Hauwa's experiences gave her a deep longing to become a midwife and help other women in her community. But as a rural woman without the necessary education, finances and support, she had no chance of becoming a trained midwife. Hauwa's fortunes changed when she was recruited to the Foundation Year Programme (FYP), W4H's key innovation. After a year on the FYP, and three years of professional study, Hauwa is now a trained midwife working in her community, fulfilling her dream of supporting other women and babies.

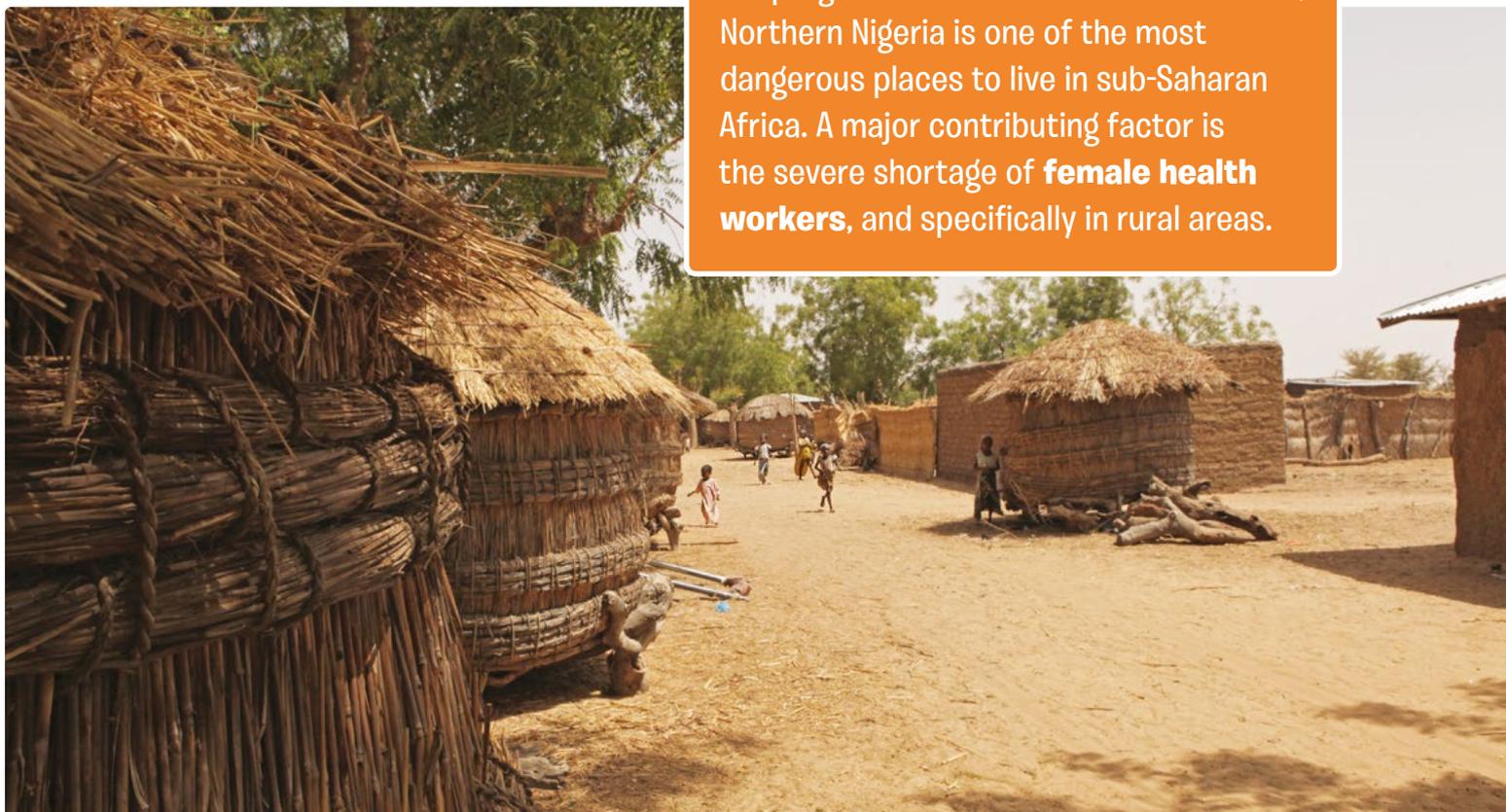
W4H was set up to help women like Hauwa. There are now hundreds of communities across rural Northern Nigeria that have a skilled, female health worker nearby for the first time ever. These women are already saving lives.



Dr Fatima Adamu,
W4H National
Programme Manager

“ We knew we could not resolve this problem of a lack of rural health workers if we continued in the normal way of picking just anybody for health worker training. The ones chosen are often the children of the elite who will not go to work in the remote places. So that is why we need people like Hauwa to train. We need people from these communities, who understand how it is in rural areas, who respect the women there, so that more women get the healthcare they need. ”

For pregnant mothers and their newborns, Northern Nigeria is one of the most dangerous places to live in sub-Saharan Africa. A major contributing factor is the severe shortage of **female health workers**, and specifically in rural areas.



What we were able to achieve

556 FYP students

have graduated so far as trained health workers, 78% of whom been posted **to rural areas**

1,528 indexed training places before W4H initiative **3,915 after**

202 infrastructure

and improvement projects completed - 167 at health training institutions, and 35 houses for midwives in rural postings

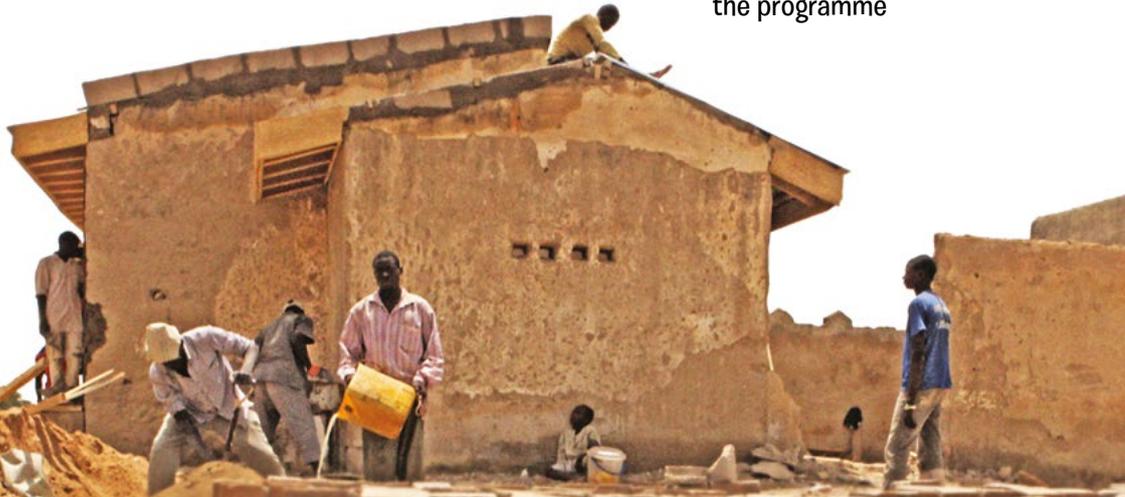
Key programme achievements Women for Health interventions have contributed to Nigeria's progress in meeting WHO's global HRH ambition 2030 for achieving universal health coverage. W4H has contributed to **nine** of the **13 global milestones** - 10 of the 14 recommendations (at least).

82% of young women from rural communities say the FYP has enabled them to develop careers or become local champions

95% of FYP students said their communities now show greater support for women's employment

2,801 young women have enrolled in the Foundation Year Programme

23 fully accredited health training institutions in six W4H states: just 1 before the programme



Transformation - our partnership with state governments

Women for Health worked with state governments to transform the HTIs in six Northern states: refurbishing infrastructure and constructing new facilities; increasing tutor numbers and improving the quality of education; and improving governance, leadership and management. State governments followed our lead and invested in supporting the FYP and HTIs.

Zamfara

£0.49m

Total investment

N95m N122m

Katsina

£0.87m

Total investment

N245m N97m

Jigawa

£0.93m

Total investment

N78m N262m

Borno

£1.06m

Total investment

N65m N413m

Yobe

£1.56m

Total investment

N215m N480m

Kano

£17.3m

Total investment

N196m N5,063m



(N) Amount of spend by each State on the Foundation Year Programme



(N) Amount of spend by each State on Health Training Institutes, equipment etc

£22.21 million leveraged from state governments, compared to **£33.86** million total programme spend

Scaling up our impact in the Northern states

All six states supported by Women for Health have taken over the management and funding all of the programme's interventions. All six states have passed laws committing them to sustaining the FYP and funding the health training institutions. From 2016 to 2020, the six states invested N 894 million in supporting the FYP, and a further N 6,437 million in support for the health training institutions.

Women for Health also supported six other Northern states that were interested in implementing their own version of the FYP – Adamawa, Gombe, Kaduna, Kebbi, Niger and Sokoto.

- All six have developed strategies and costed plans for implementing the FYP, and developed advocacy groups to drive political commitment and financing for FYP.
- Three have already begun recruiting young women from rural areas – Kaduna, Kebbi and Sokoto.
- Two other states – Bauchi and Cross River – are adopting aspects of the W4H model.

NMCN: scaling up the success across Nigeria

The partnership that blossomed between Women for Health (W4H) programme and the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria (NMCN) will help spread the benefits of the programme across Nigeria. The programme supported the council to develop its organisational capacity and create a strategic plan for 2018-2022. The NMCN is now working to spread the interventions developed by Women for Health nationally.

“W4H have been our very strong partners for a long time. Before the programme, the schools of nursing and midwifery only had provisional status, now all but one have full accreditation, and student intake has increased. This is linked with improved performance, with pass rates up to 90%. I want to acknowledge with gratitude that things have improved enormously at the schools.”

Alhaji Faruk Umar Abubakar, Registrar, Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria

Taking up the cause - the HRH Learning Hub

The Human Resources for Health Learning Hub was established in 2018 as a joint venture between W4H and the Centre for Gender Studies at Bayero University Kano.

The Hub aims to support transformation of Nigeria's health workforce by providing training, as well as access to learning, evidence and technical advice. All the resources developed during Women for Health can be found on the Hub's website:

www.learninghub4hrh.org



The W4H programme is funded with UK aid from the UK government.



The programme is led by DAI Global Health (incorporating Health Partners International and GRID), in partnership with Save the Children.



For further information contact: HRH Learning Hub, Centre for Gender Studies, Bayero University Kano

Visit: www.learninghub4hrh.org www.women4healthnigeria.org Email: hrh@learninghub4hrh.org October 2020