Focus on the Benefits of Childbirth Spacing to Promote Contraceptive Use in a Pronatalist Society

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3 Focal States

• Northern Nigeria: Sokoto and Bauchi
• Southern Nigeria: Ebonyi
RH Snapshot

Northern:  TFR = 7.5  Ideal # = 8.9
Ebonyi:   TFR = 5.3  Ideal # = 6.4

Some of lowest mCPR anywhere:
  • <1% in most states in NW
  • 5% in Ebonyi State
  • <10% nationwide

High rates of maternal and child mortality and morbidity

Average age at marriage and first sex for girls in North: 15 years old

Low birthspacing intervals among younger women 15-29 years old
BEHAVIORAL AND PRIMARY COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

Behavioral Objective:
Increase CPR by 3% in Focal States

Primary Communication Objective:
Improve Social Norms: Increase % of people who perceive more positive social support for CS/FP.

Key Priority Audiences:
- Religious Leaders
- Men- Married
- Women- Married & Intenders

Influencer Dialogue with Khadiriya Leadership in Bauchi
FP vs. Childbirth Spacing
and the perception of Contraceptives

- Family Planning = Limiting = Unacceptable ✗
  - The terms “FP” and “Contraceptives” are often used interchangeably.

- Childbirth Spacing = OK ✓
  - though health benefits not clearly understood

- Contraceptives to achieve spacing = OK ✓
  - Critical mass of supportive religious leaders identified
Messaging Strategy

- Engage religious leaders in dialogue
- Focus on health benefits of childbirth spacing
- Entry point to the promotion of modern contraceptives to achieve spacing
- This isn’t news in Nigeria.
  - Widely recognized and accepted.
- However, programs haven’t addressed it intensively.
  - Clinical-driven approach; few SBC programs
  - Weight of messaging on contraceptive methods
Advocacy Meetings & Dialogues with Religious Leaders

1. Individual Meetings
2. Influencer Dialogues
3. Conferences
Islamic Religious Leader, Council of Ulama, Bauchi

“I have an aged mother who used to say that she is so concerned with the way women are giving birth to children so frequently without spacing childbirth. It wasn’t like this in her days”.
Religious Leaders Speak Out

• In communities
• In congregations
• On radio
• On news and talk shows
Community IPC

- Community Dialogues
  - Focus on men
  - Facilitated dialogue on benefits of birth spacing
  - Overview of contraceptives
Community IPC

- **Compound Meetings**
  - Focus on women
  - Facilitated dialogue on benefits of birth spacing
  - More in-depth info on contraceptives & side effects
  - Links to services
Mass Media

- Radio Spots
- Weekly Radio Magazine Shows
- FP Theme Song
  - featuring P² & Tiwa Savage

Vox Pop recording for weekly radio show in Ebonyi State.
Advocacy Core Group (ACG)

- Made up of government, religious, NGO and business leaders in each state.
- E.g. Bauchi State ACG Inauguration
  - Governor’s wife presented opening address
  - State RH Coordinator presented state MCH stats
  - Religious leaders presented on “Islamic and Christian Perspectives on Childbirth Spacing”.
  - Being from and of Bauchi, this galvanized the commitment of state leadership.

“... men often dominate decision-making and they are ones that determine whether a woman uses a child spacing method. So, I am assuring you all that with the caliber of people now involved in this committee, men in Bauchi will step up to their responsibilities as regards decision making in the household and child spacing”

Alhaji Abdullahi Yakubu Marafa. Former Grand Khadi
A community leader in Kangere, Ebonyi State

“I have attended several enlightenment talks organized by different organizations...but [never] have I heard a simple message that penetrated and made me understand the reason we should space our children like this gathering of today. All the ones I attended previously were like forcing us to go for child spacing. I like the way the messages presented were arranged.”
Coordination & Links to Services

Coordinate with MOH & Partner Organizations in Focal States

• Align demand with public & private services
  – Implement intensive IPC activities in catchment areas of “High Volume Facilities”
  – Coordinate with PPMV Assoc & Distributors

• Engage service providers in community activities
Conclusion

• FP Uptake in Nigeria is low and has been stagnant for decades
• The message strategy:
  – addressing the benefits of childbirth spacing
  – engaging religious leaders and men
• shows promise to breakdown some of the barriers and provides an entry point to addressing modern contraceptive use
• While this isn’t new, per se, we are doing it more comprehensively and strategically