

Quarterly Project Report

Nigeria CUBS

January – March 2014

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Community Based Support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Nigeria (CUBS)

Quarterly Report

January 1 to March 31, 2014



**CUBS beneficiaries singing during a girls' group meeting in Sokoto State
April 2014**

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Project Title: Community Based Support for OVC in Nigeria (CUBS)

Recipient: United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

To: Ms. Doreen Magaji, USAID OVC Manager

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Acronyms

| | |
|----------|---|
| AIDSTAR | AIDS Support and Technical Resources |
| AO | assistance objective |
| CPC | child protection committee |
| CPN | Child Protection Network |
| CSI | Child Status Index |
| CSO | civil society organization |
| CUBS | Community Based Support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children |
| DQA | data quality assurance |
| FBO | faith based organizations |
| FHH | female household heads |
| FHI 360 | Family Health International 360 |
| FMOH | Federal Ministry of Health |
| FMWA&SD | Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development |
| FOSH PAD | Foundation for Sustainable Health Promotion and Development |
| HES | household economic strengthen |
| IQC | indefinite quantity contract |
| IR | intermediate result |
| LGA | local government area |
| KOLGA | Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area |
| M&E | monitoring and evaluation |
| MSH | Management Sciences for Health |
| NOMIS | National OVC Management Information System |
| NPA | National Priority Agenda |
| NPOPC | National Population Commission |
| OR | operations research |
| OVC | orphans and vulnerable children |
| PEPFAR | President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief |
| PY | project year |
| QA | quality assurance |
| REACH | Rapid and Effective Action Combating HIV/AIDS |
| SIDHAS | Strengthening Integrated Delivery of HIV/AIDS Services |
| SMWA&SD | state ministry of women affairs and social development |
| STI | sexually transmitted infection |
| VSLA | voluntary savings and loan associations |
| WODIN | Women Alive Care Development Initiative |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |

I. Summary

A. Executive Summary

Management Sciences for Health (MSH), in collaboration with Africare and Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH), continues to implement the Community Based Support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Nigeria (CUBS) project. Though funding from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), CUBS provides support and coordination for scaling up HIV activities in Nigeria using community-based responses to:

- increase the number of OVC served with 6+1 services;¹
- strengthen the capacity of national and state governments to better protect and care for OVC;
- address OVC-related gender issues;
- increase local capacity to implement, monitor, and evaluate OVC programs; and
- document and disseminate lessons learnt.

Through its 38 partner civil service organizations (CSOs), the project provides quality services to OVC and continues to make progress towards meeting its project year (PY) 5 and life of project targets. A review of this quarter's data shows that the project provided 30,277 OVC with a minimum of one care service and the CSOs enrolled 410 of these children in OVC care programs. The total number of OVC served in PY 5 is 48,217, accounting for 96 percent of CUBS' PY 5 annual target. This quarter, the project also focused on empowering OVC household heads, especially the households headed by females, to sustain the gains of the short-term OVC services, as reported under intermediate result (IR) 4.

As the project prepares to a close in October of 2014, collaboration with the state and local government and IPs remains a high priority as we work together to transition our work to the state governments. To this end, CUBS' staff attended several meetings with collaborating state governments to support this transition and strengthen relationships. This quarter, for instance, CUBS' staff participated in the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development's (FMWA&SD) five-day meeting in Lagos where they helped to finalize the Vulnerable Children's Advocacy Toolkit and further strengthened partner collaboration.

¹ 6+1 services: the six services for OVCs include education, health, psychosocial, shelter, legal protection, and nutrition plus one service for OVC caregivers, household economic strengthening.

This quarter, the project also organized nine Girls' Groups meetings and provided adolescent reproductive health information to over 4,801 adolescent, OVC girls. Girls' Group participants received health information and participated in life skills development activities designed to reduce their vulnerability to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The meetings also enabled the girls to gain knowledge and skills for developing healthy relationships with their peers and family members.

CUBS' major project implementation obstacle this quarter was the frequent change of public servants supporting project activities at the national, state, and local government area (LGA) levels. These changes resulted in the loss of CUBS-trained staff, and in turn, delayed the implementation of project activities.

The following sections provide a detailed report of the achievements and challenges that CUBS encountered this quarter and the project's plans for next quarter.



CUBS' caregiver beneficiary tending her small business in Enugu State

B. Activity Financial Summary

| CUBS' FINANCIAL SUMMARY |
|---|
| Activity Name: Community Based Support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Nigeria (CUBS) |
| Activity Objective: Support the Government of Nigeria in implementing its <i>National Plan of Action on Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC)</i> by developing and strengthening community-based service delivery for OVC, building community ownership of OVC interventions, reducing gender discrimination in OVC programming, and increasing OVC involvement and advocacy. |
| Implementing Partner: Management Sciences for Health (MSH) Inc. |
| USAID/Nigeria Assistance Objective (AO): AO 3 - Increased Nigerian capacity for a sustainable HIV/AIDS and TB Response |
| Life of Activity (start and end dates): October 7, 2009 – October 6, 2014 |
| Total Estimated Contract/Agreement Amount: \$20,907,645 |
| Obligations to Date: \$17,976,104 |
| Current Pipeline Amount: \$1,919,109 |
| Accrued Expenditures this Quarter: \$949,571 |
| Activity Cumulative Accrued Expenditures to Date \$16,056,995 |
| Estimated Expenditures Next Quarter: \$1,120,343 |
| Report Submitted by: Dr. Zipporah Kpamor, CUBS Project Director |
| Submission Date: April 30, 2014 |

II. About the Community Based Support for OVC in Nigeria (CUBS) Project

Through the CUBS project, PEPFAR and USAID strengthen the capacity of Nigeria's federal and state government agencies to plan and implement OVC programs. The CUBS project provides these agencies with support and coordination for scaling up HIV activities using community-based responses to identify, locate, and protect OVC. Under the AIDS Support and Technical Resources' (AIDSTAR's) indefinite quantity contract (IQC) mechanism, MSH and Africare collaborate with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (FMWA&SD) and the state ministries of women affairs and social development (SMA&SD) to address these focus areas through CUBS' five-year contract. The project also supports the implementation of Nigeria's *National Priority Agenda (NPA) on OVC* by developing and strengthening community-based OVC service delivery.

Using a bottom-up approach to mobilize families and OVC care and support stakeholders, CUBS integrates a fragmented OVC service delivery system, mobilizes community support for OVC, and raises awareness about OVC needs to reduce the children's experience of stigma, discrimination, and isolation. The CUBS project provides capacity building and on-the-job mentoring for state and community-based providers and institutions, implements targeted systems strengthening activities, and offers small grants to CSOs supporting OVC service delivery.

The project's partnerships leverage existing resources and build on established federal, state, and community foundations to improve OVC service delivery and expand best practice implementation. By October of 2014, CUBS will have provided 50,000 OVCs in 11 focal states (i.e., Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Ekiti, Enugu, Gombe, Imo, Kebbi, Rivers, Sokoto and Taraba) with comprehensive OVC services that are consistent with Nigeria's national OVC guidelines.

Project Objectives

1. Provide support for coordination and scale-up of HIV activities
2. Mobilize and support community-based responses that identify, locate, and protect OVC
3. Deliver a holistic service package focusing on the multifaceted needs of OVC
4. Address gender-related issues in OVC programming
5. Document and disseminate successful, innovative approaches, sustainable models, and evidence-based best practices

Project Components

- *Capacity building and technical assistance:* CUBS builds capacity and provides technical support to national and state-level agencies, CSOs, and faith based organizations (FBOs).
- *Community mobilization and coordination:* CUBS fosters coordination and ensures OVC service quality, policy development, and advocacy through establishing OVC forums.
- *Systems strengthening:* CUBS strengthens OVC support systems to enhance the effectiveness of the national OVC program.

- *Service outreach expansion:* CUBS expands coverage and access to OVC services.
- *Resource leveraging and linking:* CUBS leverages and links resources, including clinical and community-based partners.
- *Small, innovation grants for CSOs:* CUBS provides CSOs and FBOs with small grants to support the identification of new OVC service delivery approaches, to expand OVC services, and to build the technical capacity of staff.



III. Quarterly Data Achievement on Intermediate Results

| Results #1: Increased Access to 6+1 Services for OVC and Caregivers | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---------------|-------------|--------|----|----|--------|----------------------|--|
| Indicator | Indicator Description | Year 5 Target | Achievement | | | | Total | % of Target Achieved | Comment |
| | | | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | | |
| | % of children with improved well-being using the child status index (CSI) | 90% | | 50% | | | 50% | 50% | Based on preliminary analysis, further analysis is ongoing |
| 1.1 (C1.1.D) | # of eligible clients (OVC) provided with a minimum of one care service | 50,200 | 17,990 | 30,277 | 0 | 0 | 48,217 | 96.1% | |
| | Newly enrolled | 1,600 | 1,537 | 410 | 0 | 0 | 1,947 | 121.7% | Target exceeded |
| | Previously enrolled | 48,600 | 16,453 | 29,817 | 0 | 0 | 46,270 | 95.2% | |
| | Education (male) | | 1,094 | 1,987 | 0 | 0 | 3,081 | | |
| | Education (female) | | 1,212 | 2,376 | 0 | 0 | 3,588 | | |
| | Health (male) | | 4,041 | 9,162 | 0 | 0 | 13,203 | | |
| | Health (female) | | 4,419 | 8,918 | 0 | 0 | 13,337 | | |
| | Psychosocial support (male) | | 7,611 | 14,493 | 0 | 0 | 22,104 | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|-----------|-------|--------|---|---|--------|--|---|
| | Psychosocial support (female) | | 8,398 | 13,742 | 0 | 0 | 22,140 | | |
| | Shelter (male) | | 619 | 676 | 0 | 0 | 1,295 | | |
| | Shelter (female) | | 620 | 675 | 0 | 0 | 1,295 | | |
| | Protection (male) | | 720 | 1,279 | 0 | 0 | 1,999 | | |
| | Protection (female) | | 781 | 1,165 | 0 | 0 | 1,946 | | |
| | Nutrition (male) | | 2446 | 5,720 | 0 | 0 | 8,166 | | |
| | Nutrition (female) | | 2,416 | 5,610 | 0 | 0 | 8,026 | | |
| | Economic Strengthening (male) | | 0 | 74 | 0 | 0 | 74 | | |
| | Economic Strengthening (female) | | 0 | 122 | 0 | 0 | 122 | | |
| 1.2 (C5.1.D) | # of eligible clients (OVC) who received nutrition services | No target | 4,862 | 11,330 | 0 | 0 | 16,192 | | |
| 1.3 | # of caregivers trained in caring for OVC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | Although this target has already been exceeded, CUBS will train caregivers for newly enrolled OVC in Q3 |
| 1.4 | # of OVC referred for clinical services | No | 369 | 71 | 0 | 0 | 440 | | |

| | | target | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--------------------|------------|------------|----|----|------------|----------------------|--|
| Result #2: Strengthened Capacities of National and State Governments for Coordination | | | | | | | | | |
| Indicator | Indicator Description | Year 5 Target | | | | | Total | % of Target Achieved | Explanation |
| | | | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | | |
| 2.1 | # of AIDSTAR states with comprehensive OVC plans | 11 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | | NPA adaptation took place this quarter in Bayelsa, Delta, Akwa Ibom states |
| 2.2 | # of technical working groups coordinating the delivery of social services for vulnerable children at the state and LGA levels ² | 11 states/(33LGAs) | 10/36L GAs | 10/36L GAs | 0 | 0 | 10/36 LGAs | | LGA target achieved in 10 (91%) of the project-supported states; activity will not be conducted in the last state. |
| 2.3 | # of AIDSTAR states with existing, functional OVC referral systems | 11 | 9 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 11 | | Target achieved |
| 2.4 | # of persons from state ministries and LGAs trained in leadership and management | 30 | 28 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 67 | | Target exceeded due to increased demand from |

² This indicator was formerly “The number of functional state and LGA community coordination mechanisms (OVC forums) in place to monitor OVC programs.”

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|----|----|----|---|---|----|--|---|
| | | | | | | | | | partners |
| 2.5 | # of persons who successfully completed an in-service training in strategic information including data collection, collation, analysis, and use | 10 | 60 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 75 | | Target exceeded due to increased demand from partners |

Results #3: Strengthened Capacity of Communities to Better Protect and Care for OVC

| Indicator | Indicator Description | Year 5 Target | Achievement | | | | Total | % of Target Achieved | Explanation |
|-----------|---|---------------|-------------|-----|----|----|-------|----------------------|-----------------|
| | | | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | | |
| 3.1 | # of child protection committees (CPCs) coordinating the protection of vulnerable children at the community level | 0 | 116 | 116 | 0 | 0 | 116 | | |
| 3.2 | # of CSOs that refer OVC using the existing, functional state referral systems | 38 | 38 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 38 | | Target achieved |

Results #4: Reduced Vulnerability Status of the Girl Child and Women

| Indicator | Indicator Description | Year 5 Target | Achievement | | | | Total | % of Target Achieved | Explanation |
|-----------|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|----|----|----|-------|----------------------|-------------|
| | | | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|-----------|-------|-------|---|---|-------|--|-----------------|
| 4.0 | % of households with reduced vulnerability of female OVC and female heads of households | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | |
| 4.1 | # of OVC reached with individual and/or small group preventive interventions that are based on evidence and/or meet the minimum standards required | 600 | 1,859 | 4,202 | 0 | 0 | 6,061 | | |
| 4.2 | # of female child-headed household supported by the OVC program | No target | 20 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 20 | | |
| 4.3 | # of programs that address protection issues for female OVC and caregivers | 39 | 38 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 38 | | Target achieved |

Result #5: Strengthened systems for documenting & disseminating evidence best practice

| Indicator | Indicator Description | Year 5 Target | | | | | Total | % of Target Achieved | Explanation |
|-----------|--|---------------|----|----|----|----|-------|----------------------|--|
| | | | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | | |
| 5.1 | # of persons trained in the use of the CSI | 50 | 60 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 75 | | The SMWA&SD in Akwa Ibom requested support |

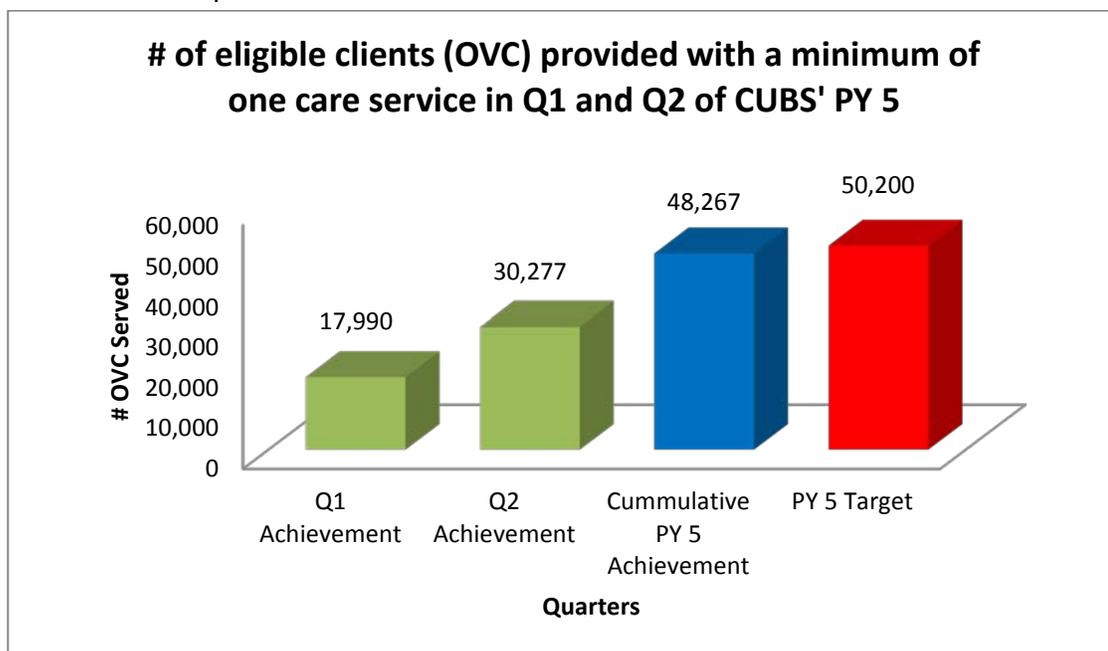
| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|------|----|------|---|---|----|--|---|
| 5.2 | # of service sites/delivery points that received a data quality assurance (DQA) visit | 38 | 0 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 38 | | Target achieved |
| 5.3 | # of CSOs that provided data that was complete, on a time, and based on the national <i>Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan for OVCs</i> | 38 | 38 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 38 | | Target achieved |
| 5.4 | % of service sites/delivery points that received a quality assurance (QA) visit | 100% | 0 | 100% | 0 | 0 | 0 | | QA was conducted in Q2; Target achieved |

IV. Quarterly Progress

IR 1: Increased Access to 6+1 Services for OVC and Caregivers

Progress towards the attainment of project goal

- This quarter, CUBS supported the provision of holistic and comprehensive services to families and children enrolled in the project-supported OVC care programs. In total, 18,080 OVC received health services, 4,363 received education services, 28,235 received psychosocial support, 2,474 received protection services, 11,360 received nutrition services, 1,351 received shelter and care services, and 196 received household economic strengthening services. CUBS reached 30,227 OVC with a minimum of one care service this quarter. This represents 60 percent of the project's annual target and a cumulative achievement of 96 percent in PY5.



- OVC need dedicated interventions to protect them from harm, help them when they are in need, and promote their overall development. One way CUBS achieves these goals is by helping OVC obtain national birth certificates (see box). In partnership with the National Population Commission (NPOPC), CUBS has trained CSO staff and volunteers to help OVC apply for birth certificates. This quarter, these trained staff helped 2,444 children obtain national birth certificates from the NPOPC.

About 70 percent of the 5 million children born annually in Nigeria are not registered at birth. Without a birth certificate, these children do not have the right to an identity, name, or nationality and may have difficulty accessing basic services, such as education and health care.

- Psychosocial support is an ongoing process that involves identifying and meeting beneficiaries’ social, emotional, mental, and spiritual needs, all of which are essential elements for meaningful and positive human development. In view of this, CUBS supported CSOs to take their OVC beneficiaries on excursion to special places like airports, libraries, publishing houses, national art galleries, and recreational centers to expose OVC to different professional opportunities they can explore in lives. These and other psychosocial support activities reached 28,235 OVC this quarter.
- CUBS conducted refresher trainings on the 6+1 service areas for eight community volunteers and staff from three CSOs to ensure high-quality OVC service delivery. The trained volunteers will cascade this training down to caregivers of newly enrolled OVC next quarter. Training caregivers on the 6+1 service areas brings quality care into OVC homes and makes it easier for vulnerable children to be reached. This is in line with CUBS’ strategy of building community systems from the bottom up and strengthening households. We believe that this is a more sustainable strategy, because children will continue to be assisted by trained caregivers long after the CUBS project ends.
- The CUBS project aims to strengthen community-based systems to provide quality OVC support services. One of the critical needs that CUBS identified in the project-supported communities is that many female heads of households (FHH) who care for OVC have low or no household income. To reduce this burden, CUBS helps FHH and OVC caregivers form voluntary savings and loans associations (VSLAs). VSLAs provide a mechanism for caregivers to pool their savings so they have a source for lending funds. Members make savings contributions to the pool, borrow from it, and repay their loans with interest. This quarter, CUBS continued to strengthen these VSLA groups through monitoring, mentoring, and hands-on training. The project staff trained 78 FHHs on the basics of microenterprise, income generation, household nutrition, and homestead gardening. Skills-based training components included food demonstration, food preservation/processing, and disease education and prevention. Together, these trainings will improve the FHHs’ business skills so they can earn more income to provide for the children in their care and will help caregivers improve their children’s nutritional status and general well-being.



Caregivers at a VSLA meeting in Taraba

Block grants

- The CUBS project continues to administer block grants as part of its exit strategy. In order to create community ownership, these block grant proposals were developed by the project-supported CSOs in partnership with leaders from the beneficiary communities. The proposals targeted needs within the communities that, once addressed, will directly benefit OVC and their caregivers as well as other members of the communities. The block grant projects are funded jointly by CUBS, the CSOs, and community members.
- This quarter, 33 CSOs signed memorandums of understanding with 145 communities or schools detailing their willingness to procure items to benefit OVC and OVC caregivers. To secure these items, the communities and CSOs will use USAID-approved procurement guidelines, as introduced by CUBS during the CSOs' organizational development trainings. This will be the first time the CSOs will be undertaking major procurements on their own, with CUBS guiding the process from the sidelines. How well the CSOs and communities succeed in this activity will demonstrate the extent to which they have absorbed and taken ownership of the procurement process. This will indicate a major achievement in CUBS' sustainability and exit strategies.



CPC members from Gotomu community signing the block grant memorandum of understanding.

IR 2: Strengthened Capacities of National and State Governments for Coordination

- In the quarter under review, CUBS trained 146 OVC stakeholders at state and LGA levels in advocacy, collaboration, and resource mobilization. Through a problem solving methodology, this training empowered participants from Akwa Ibom, River, Delta, Gombe, and Bayelsa to identify community needs, match them with available resources, and apply these resources to meet the needs. Using skills acquired from this training, community members from Kaltungo in Gombe convinced their LGA chairman to fund a CSO called Knightingale so it could begin providing OVC services. Additionally, the Delta State Ministries of Women Affairs and Child Development used the skills they acquire during the training to develop a proposal for the World Bank's . This is the first time they have done this and they did so with minimal support from CUBS.
- At the end of the CUBS project, all achievements and activities will be transitioned to state, LGA, and community structures. To ensure that this transition is successful, CUBS has built

and supported social welfare systems at the community, LGA, state, and national levels through its bottom-up approach. If these systems are not well-managed, the project's impact will not be sustained. CUBS believes in developing and strengthening leaders' sense of ownership and accountability so they can collaboratively identify and implement innovative solutions to health challenges. In line with this objective, CUBS trained 39 state and LGA staff from Delta, Bayelsa, and Akwa Ibom in leadership, management, and coordination skills this quarter. The skills these trainees developed will enable them to sustain all that CUBS has achieved through its partnerships at the state, LGA, and community levels.

- The *National Priority Agenda (NPA) for OVC* is a policy document for OVC programming in Nigeria. With support from its partners, the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs has finalized the latest version of the NPA. This document will guide OVC program implementation in Nigeria from 2014 to 2020. State governments are expected to adapt this document to their specific contexts. Through a participatory process, CUBS helped Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, and Delta States adapt the NPA for their states and integrate it into their state priority agendas. These customized NPAs are now fully owned by the state governments. They will guide the LGAs to adapt their state documents and develop operational plans that will translate to improved OVC well-being in their states.

IR 3: Strengthened Capacity of Communities to Better Protect and Care for OVC

- Households with economically empowered household heads will be able to better protect and care for their members. Children whose household heads are economically empowered are less likely to drop out of school, become destitute, be taken advantage of, or die from preventable and treatable ailments. CUBS' household economic strengthening (HES) program reduces the vulnerability of children, caregivers, and families and improves their well-being. Last quarter, after training caregivers on micro-enterprise and basic book keeping, CUBS selected 326 trainees with promising skills and gave each of them approximately USD \$50 in small business start-up grants. The caregivers are now using profits from their small businesses to pay for their OVC's school fees,



"My children are confident to go to school like all the other children and are not ashamed to call me mother!" said a HES beneficiary from Kebbi.

purchase them school uniforms, and provide them with nourishing food. Without this support, many of the OVC beneficiaries would have been unable to attend school and may have become sick.

IR 4: Reduced Vulnerability Status of Girl Children and Women

Disbursement of seed grants for HES beneficiaries to start or expand small businesses

- During CUBS' HES training, beneficiaries learned how to develop a business plan. The trainees developed over 400 plans and 326 of the plans were approved by CUBS for funding. This quarter, CUBS gave small grants (~USD \$32-\$65) to all beneficiaries with approved business plans to start or expand their existing businesses. CSOs organized community-level events to distribute these funds and other in-kind donations to beneficiaries. During the events, all beneficiaries were encouraged to employ the learned business values of hard work, accountability, perseverance, and record keeping. Community leaders, CPC members, SMWA&SD staff, and other relevant stakeholders attended these events.

“I want to thank DBI and Africare for their thoughtfulness and good heart towards me and other women and our children in this community, I pray God will continue to bless and provide for DBI and Africare very well, and I promise you people that we will not disappoint you. Anytime you come to monitor our business we would have improved very well.”

*~ Fyne Dappa
(OVC caregiver and HES beneficiary from Rivers State)*



CUBS HES beneficiaries in Enugu State during a ceremony to distribute in-kind donations for their small businesses.

- Beneficiaries expressed their sincere appreciation to CUBS and the CSO staff for their consistent, post-training follow-up, mentoring, financial support, and in-kind donations that have helped them implement their business plans.

“I am happy today because of this support... I don’t remember the last time any person gave me money to support my business. I have struggled and suffered to take care of my children. I promise I will go make sure this money brings more profits to my business. My God will bless you for remembering people like us,” said Grace Bindei, an OVC caregiver supported by KOLGA in Bayelsa State.



Beneficiary from FOSHPAD, Ekiti State

“I can’t believe this kind of good thing reached me, but my God has blessed me through this project. I thank you. My fish business profits will increase with this support. More fish, more money, and more savings,” said Sarah Ibori, also from Bayelsa State.

- The project has continued to encourage FHH beneficiaries to increase their savings but supporting and supervising their participation in VSLAs. Thus far, CUBS has supported the development of 92 VSLAs in 11 project states. These VSLAs have saved approximately USD \$20,700 to date, including the amount they closed with the previous cycle.

- The VSLA members participate in joint enterprises, such as palm oil processing, cassava processing, stone mining, farming, and produce sales. Some of these groups have obtained loans from financial institutions and other foundations. One of the cooperative groups in Imo State obtained a loan for USD \$8,387 from Oche Microfinance Bank. Staff from CUBS and Women Alive Care Development Initiative WODIN, one the project-supported CSOs, visited Active Point



Beneficiary from Foundation for God’s Love in Enugu State

Micro Finance Bank to negotiate for financial support for VSLA groups in Akwa Ibom State. The bank managers agreed to sustain CUBS’ progress by conducting a three-month financial and business management training for the project’s HES beneficiaries. Subsequently, they trained 35 beneficiaries on financial and business management skills, including loan

management and repayment. All 35 beneficiaries then submitted business plans and loan applications to the bank.

- Last year, CUBS supported 14 adolescent girls in Rivers State to attend vocational skills acquisition centers where they learned computer skills, hair styling, and/or dress making. After completing their trainings last quarter, CUBS assessed the girls to determine if they needed equipment or start-up grants to support their small businesses. The project team will distribute these funds and equipment to the girls early next quarter during their graduation ceremony.



One of the 14 adolescent girls from Rivers State trained in vocational skills.

Support provided for Girls Group forums on life skills building, HIV prevention, and protection

- The CUBS project works to reduce adolescent girls' vulnerability to HIV & AIDS and STIs by establishing Kids Clubs, youth groups, and Girls' Groups. Girls' Groups promote networking, peer interaction, information sharing, life skills building, and career development. Girls Group forums bring together girls from various Girls Groups to learn through experience sharing and interaction.
- This quarter, the Girls Group meetings reached 4,801 girls in Sokoto, Kebbi, Gombe, Taraba, Ekiti, Delta, and Imo States. During these meetings, girls received life skills and reproductive health information and career guidance. They also engaged in extra-curricular activities such as dancing, drama, games, etc. The groups' purpose was to reach more girls with knowledge that will enable them to live healthy lives, improve their self-esteem, develop life skills, and attain their full potential in life. Facilitators made the sessions interactive so the girls could express their feelings and share experiences while encouraging integrity, honesty, and mutual respect are encouraged. The girls were taught how to establish and strengthen healthy and mutually respectful. Consultants and professionals were contracted to lead interactive sessions on livelihood options, goal setting, career guidance, skills acquisition,



A cross-section of girls in Sokoto State singing during their Girls Group meeting



A girl from Taraba speaking during a Girls Group meeting.

gender, human rights, and risk reduction related to rape, trafficking and abuse. Participants also learned about menstruation, teenage/unplanned pregnancies, abortion/post-abortion care, HIV & AIDS, and STIs. Discussions focused on building life skills such as goal setting, decision making, negotiation, rejection, assertiveness, value setting, self-esteem, and other gender issues that affects girls.

Commemoration of International Women’s Day 2014

- The 2014 International Women's Day theme, *Inspiring Change*, was established to celebrate Nigerian women’s social, political, and economic achievements, while also focusing on areas requiring further action and advocacy for women's advancement. With this theme in mind, the CUBS team and Girls Group members in Delta State participated in an International Women's Day rally alongside staff from the Delta SMWA&SD and the wife of the Delta State governor. During the rally, participants held up banners and posters with various messages such as, “*educate the girl child*”; “*say no to child trafficking*”; “*stop girl child early marriage*”; “*stop sexual harassment*”; and “*say no to prostitution.*” The celebration concluded with a symposium organized to further inspire and empower women through a lecture called, “*Equity for Women is Progress for All.*” The symposium was organized by the wife of the Delta State governor in collaboration with RUBIES School of Women Empowerment and the Pink Pearl Foundation.



Girls in Delta state with the Africare-CUBS IWD banner

Reproductive health impact assessment

- CUBS completed the reproductive health impact assessment which had begun in nine project states and, this quarter, was conducted in the remaining 3 states: Sokoto, Kebbi, and Taraba. The assessment involved focus group discussions among female caregivers and in-depth interviews with project beneficiaries between the ages of 11 and 18 years. In total, CUBS assessed 40 female caregivers and 125 adolescent OVC across the 3 states. The team is now compiling the final assessment report and will share the results in the CUBS end-of-project report.

Update on operations research

- The gender component of the CUBS project was designed to determine which OVC service delivery approaches are most effective for female OVC and FHHs. CUBS' *Enhanced Gender Focused Strategy* outlines effective approaches for reducing HIV vulnerability among female OVC and FHHs. Based on this strategy, CUBS conducts operations research to evaluate and document innovative best practices for reducing risk taking behavior among female adolescents in order to fine-tune the project's implementation strategies and maximize its impact. The team is currently conducting this research in two states that were selected for their large population of female, adolescent OVC to ensure the study considers all variables and accounts for Nigeria's diversity. CUBS shared findings from a rapid appraisal activity with the CSOs and beneficiaries in the focal states and assessed how well the CSOs have been able to use the baseline as: improve their service delivery and fill identified gaps. At the end of the quarter, CUBS concluded the final appraisal and, in the coming quarter, will share the reports with its state teams and, subsequently, with USAID in the final report.



CUBS beneficiary at her oil mill.

Documentation of success stories related to women's empowerment and behavior change at the system and service delivery levels

- CUBS staff documented the project's achievements in Delta, Rivers, and Akwa Ibom States. They conducted interviews with CSOs' executive directors, successful HES beneficiaries, and adolescent OVC girls.



CUBS' HES beneficiary during a CSO meeting in Enugu State.

IR 5: Strengthened Systems for Documenting and Disseminating Evidence-based Best Practices

Organizational capacity strengthening and sustainability enhancement

- CUBS helped its 38 CSO partners establish boards of directors and ensured that board members were meeting regularly and had developed strategic plans and policies. Now, at the end of the project, CUBS depends on these organizations and boards to sustain so they can continue to provide high-quality OVC service delivery. This quarter, 70 community members from 10 CSOs benefited from CUBS' board development trainings. These trainings were designed to improve board functionality and effectiveness in leading and providing

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Table of contents from the strategic plan document for CESFORD in Ekiti State

organizations develop five-year strategic plans. Strategic plans give focus and direction to an organization, improves its overall performance capacity, and enhances its sustainability by guiding the organization’s technical strategy, based on its mission and vision.

CUBS continued to monitor, mentor, and provide supportive supervision to help CSO staff improve implementation of their organizational policies and capacity improvement plans. The capacity improvement plans were drawn up with the CSOs during CUBS’ capacity assessment. Since then, project team has been consistently helping the CSO partners to implement their plans and this has yielded enhance capacity in various dimensions.

Monitoring, evaluation, documentation, and dissemination of best practice

- This quarter, CUBS completed an analysis of the CSI data collected during the project’s baseline assessment and the four reapplications the staff conducted over the past four years. Results indicate that 50 percent of the children enrolled in CUBS’ OVC support programs show improved well-being. The team is now conducting a further analysis of this data, as well as a desk review to guide the data analysis and interpretation.
- The project team conducted its annual DQA and verification exercise to evaluate and improve the CSOs’ documentation systems. The exercise is part of CUBS’ efforts to strengthen established M&E, information management, reporting, and documentation systems and promote sustainable structures and best practices among partner organizations.

direction to the organizations. Participants learned how to run board meetings, document decisions and develop corresponding action items, and ensure implementation of those action items. They also learned how to recruit, hire, support, and evaluate CSOs’ chief executives and hold them accountable.

CUBS helped five CSOs develop their strategic plan documents this quarter. In total, the project has helped 36

- This quarter, the project team finalized four technical briefs. These briefs documenting the project’s achievements and best practices related to OVC service delivery, community engagement, gender, and HES. CUBS will disseminate these documents to share the project’s strategies and lessons learned with partners, donors, CSOs, and other OVC stakeholders (see Annex 2).
- CUBS conducted a training on the National OVC Management Information System (NOMIS) for 15 staff from the Akwaibom SMWA&SD and LGAs. Participants learned to use NOMIS for monitoring of OVC activities. In PY5, CUBS has trained 75 staff on NOMIS, which is over 100 percent of the project’s set target.



CUBS caregiver and OVC beneficiaries in Enugu State

Chief of Party’s monitoring visit to River State

- The curtain is gradually being drawn on CUBS project in the Africare-supported states of Niger and Delta. Now, the states’ stakeholders and partners must protect and sustain the project’s achievements. To support this transition, the CUBS Chief of Party visited the project-supported sites in Rivers State, one of the Niger Delta states. During this visit, the Chief of Party reminded stakeholders of the project’s end date and encouraged them to continue to apply what they have learnt from CUBS to ensure sustainable, high-quality OVC service delivery in their state. The Director of Child Development, who spoke on behalf of the Ministry of Social Development and Rehabilitation, lauded MSH’s system strengthening approach to development, which has led to many achievements and will ensure continued OVC service delivery and integration.

V. Problems and Opportunities

Collaborations

The CUBS project collaborates with other implementing partners, government ministries, SMWA&SDs, and agencies like Family Health International 360 (FHI 360) and Pact. Together, these partners strengthen state and LGA systems for improved social welfare service delivery. This quarter, CUBS worked with staff from Pact's Rapid and Effective Action Combating HIV/AIDS (REACH) project and FHI 360's Strengthening Integrated Delivery of HIV/AIDS Services (SIDHAS) project to hold a capacity building workshop on social welfare system strengthening for state and LGA staff in Ekiti State.

Challenges

VI. Next Quarter's Expected Results and Related Tasks

IR 1. Increased number of OVC served with 6+1 services

- Support the state in monitoring community-based block grant activities
- Document baseline data and assess progress of block grant activities
- Support the safeguarding of children and women in Ohunowerre community in Enugu State
- Update the directory, review the process, develop a tool to collect results from the frontline SMS activity

IR 2. Strengthened capacities of national and state governments to better protect and care for OVC

- Mentor and build the capacity of staff from SMWA&SDs to use the national OVC M&E system for monitoring and planning OVC support activities
- Mentor and build capacity of state and LGA OVC staff to use OVC assessment tools
- Support SMWA&SD and LGA staff to implement action plans drawn from capacity assessment results
- Support SMWA&SD staff by conducting two coordination meetings in each of 11 states
- Support LGA staff by conducting two coordination meetings in 11 states
- Support SMWA&SD staff to adapt the *National OVC Priority Agenda* for their states
- Support SMWA&SD staff to evaluate their progress in implementing state OVC action plans
- Support the FMWA&SD by conducting social welfare systems strengthening activities

IR 3 Strengthened community support for OVC care

- Mentor and build the capacity of CSOs staff to use OVC assessment tools
- Support the Kaltungo CPC's OVC support activities
- Support the SMWA&SD to ensure staff at the state and LGA levels use the *OVC Service Provider Referral Directory*

IR 4 Reduced vulnerability status of girl children and women

- Write a position paper on CUBS' gender-related research and interventions in the Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers States

IR 5 Strengthened systems for documenting and disseminating evidence best practices

- Organize a national roundtable to discuss promising HES practices
- Conduct a data review meeting with M&E specialists
- Conduct a phased project close-out meeting
- Facilitate short-term technical assistance visits to support project close-out



Annex 1: Success Stories

“I can make it!”: The story of Bridget

By, Gilbert Ojiakor (CUBS' Delta State Program Officer), Farzaneh Foroozan (MSH Nigeria Communications Intern), and a Nigeria AIDS Intervention Organization Program Officer



Photo credit: MSH/Francis Duru

After being widowed in 2008, CUBS helped Bridget Egesi start a pharmacy so she could earn an income to support her five children.

Forty year-old Bridget Egesi has been the sole caretaker of her five children since her husband's death in 2008. Until recently, Bridget pieced together an income by washing laundry, cleaning her neighbors' cars, and working as a security guard. Unfortunately, these menial jobs did not always pay enough to provide for her children's basic needs and Bridget had to withdraw them from school.

Implemented by Management Sciences for Health (MSH), the PEPFAR-funded, USAID project, Community-Based Support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CUBS) in Nigeria, began helping women understand how to better care for the children in their homes in 2012. Through workshops held in conjunction with community-based organizations, CUBS taught Bridget and 1,049 other caregivers about children's health and emotional needs. Partnering with the Nigeria AIDS Intervention Organization, CUBS also taught the caregivers how to start a business, track their incomes and expenses, and regularly save.

Motivated by the training and mindful of her community's needs and her experience as a nurse, Bridget decided to open a pharmacy. CUBS helped Bridget write a business plan and submit it to a village savings group called Esusu. Impressed with Bridget's well-developed plan and budget,

Esusu gave her a start-up loan of 40,000 naira (US \$250), with which she rented a building and obtained a pharmacy license. Within 12 months, she had opened her pharmacy.

Bridget's business now generates enough income for her to purchase adequate food and clothing for her children, and send all five to school. With a minimum daily profit of 3,000 naira (US \$19), Bridget has been able repay 80 percent of her loan from Esusu.

"CUBS has made me realize that I can make it! The income-generating skills training I received helped me to save and plan properly for myself, my family, and business... [I've also learned to] build relationships with people who [can support] my vision and dreams," said Bridget.

Since the project started in 2009, CUBS has worked with local organizations to provide income-generating skills training for 12,500 household heads. These caregivers now have improved skills and means to provide for the 40,000 orphans and vulnerable children in their care.

In preparation for the project's conclusion in 2014, CUBS is partnering with training centers in each of the project-supported states to sustain and expand the caregiver trainings. CUBS is also working with two micro-finance banks that will continue providing loans to caregivers interested in opening or expanding small businesses.

Annex 2: CUBS Technical Briefs

Technical Brief 1: Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Service Delivery



Raising Nigerian Children: Community-Based Solutions Bring Hope



Nigeria is home to approximately 17.5 million orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). According to the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, one in every four children in Nigeria is considered vulnerable due to unmet needs for nutrition, education, shelter, care, or support.

The Need for New Solutions

Traditionally, Nigerian community members have taken on the responsibility of caring for children in the wake of their parents' death or the absence of family support. Today, however, with 1.8 million Nigerian AIDS orphans, the OVC burden has become too large for communities to bear. Without resources or social structures to help these children, many grow up impoverished, ill, and uneducated, and become vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

Stakeholder Collaboration for System Strengthening

In 2009, to address these needs, the PEPFAR-funded, USAID-implemented Community-Based Support for OVC (CUBS) project began supporting vulnerable children in 11 states of Nigeria. Implemented by Management Sciences for Health (MSH) in partnership with Africare, CUBS worked with 38 civil society organizations (CSOs) to improve support for vulnerable children in 11 states of Nigeria. These organizations collaborated with caregivers, community leaders, and state ministries to develop the local capacity and social systems that are now supporting over 50,000 vulnerable children.

“About 1 million Nigerian children die each year before their fifth birthday. This is a shocking 10 percent of the global total.”

- UNICEF, Nigeria

Strengthening the Community Response

To ensure the CSOs were meeting each child's unique needs, CUBS used Measure Evaluation's Child Status Index to quantify children's health and well-being and track their progress in six holistic areas: *food and nutrition; health; shelter and care; psychosocial care; protection; and education and skills*. CUBS measured each child's progress biannually and tailored its interventions to ensure the children were progressing significantly and consistently in each of the six areas.



From 2009 to 2014, CUBS and its CSO partners reached 50,000 children with one or more service. Rather than offering all children the same service package, CUBS trained CSOs to conduct home-based assessments every six months to ensure each child was receiving the support they needed and improving over the course of the year.

Food and Nutrition

CUBS and project-funded CSOs provided food and nutrition services to over 16,000 OVC. These services included food donations and training on nutrition and homestead gardening for caregivers. Over 14,000 caregivers received nutrition training and several trainees established gardens where they now grow fruit and vegetables so the children in their care can maintain a diet rich in nutrients. CUBS also trained over 1,000 caregivers in income generating skills. The project provided seed money to over 500 individuals, which catalyzed their businesses, enabling them to earn enough money to purchase an adequate supply of food for their families.

Health

Because many OVC do not have an adult in their lives to provide them with consistent care, these children often become ill and malnourished. Health centers will rarely treat children who present for services without an adult, and even if they were seen, few OVC could afford to pay for health services. To improve OVC's access to health care, CUBS taught CSOs and child protection committees (CPCs) to advocate for free services for OVC from local health facilities. These efforts were successful in 116 communities, leading to provision of health services to over 27,000 OVC. CUBS is continuing to work with CPCs and CSOs to expand these gains in other needy communities.

Shelter and Care

CSOs ensured that all children were living in a shelter that was adequate, dry, and safe, with at least one adult who provided them with consistent care, attention, and support. If a child needed shelter, the CSOs advocated for construction support from community leaders or discounted housing from local landlords. If children were being neglected at home, CUBS offered parenting training to caregivers and invited the children to support groups for life skills counseling and peer support. In five years, CUBS provided over 14,000 caregivers with parenting skills and over 46,000 children with lifeskills education and counseling. Thus far, project beneficiaries have also received housing support from their communities. CUBS trained the CSOs and community CPC to sustain these interventions for years to come.

Health Center Offers Free Care to OVC



"Themesi" community in Imo State, Nigeria has a single health center that serves nearly 10,000 residents. Malaria, typhoid fever, and malnutrition are common and many caregivers cannot afford to pay for their children to be treated at the health center. The facility used to turn away children who could not pay.

In June 2011, CUBS initiated a support program for OVC in Ithemesi. Working with a local CSO, CUBS facilitated sensitization sessions to teach villagers about the importance of caring for OVC and convinced the health center to provide free care to these children for malaria, typhoid fever, malnutrition and minor ailments.

To improve the quality of care, CUBS trained an OVC focal person in growth monitoring, health education, HIV testing and counseling, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and basic child care skills.

CUBS' training and advocacy activities have ignited a passion for OVC at Ithemesi Health Center. The staff now pay attention to these children and teach community members to bring ill children to the facility for care. Since 2011, CUBS has enrolled 1,106 vulnerable children into the care program.

Ithemesi's local leaders are grateful for the project's work in their community. "CUBS is really taking care of our children. They are placing children in school, giving them educational materials, and providing free medical treatment," said one of the village chiefs.

To sustain this work, CUBS has integrated training on OVC care into staff programs at the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, the Ministry of Health, local government areas, and community organizations.



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Psychosocial

Many OVC have experienced loss, neglect, violence, abuse, and exploitation. Such trauma can leave children depressed and insecure, without the skills they need to recover. To help OVC become more emotionally stable and resilient, CUBS initiated Kids Clubs and Girl Groups, which now operate in all 38 project-supported CSOs. These groups provide children with emotional support and teach them critical lifeskills such as prevention of sexually transmitted infections, personal hygiene, assertiveness, and sexual and reproductive health. Group members are also invited to social activities such as sporting events and drama performances to give them a sense of companionship and belonging. The CSOs' Kids Clubs and Girl Groups currently have over 40,000 members and, each year, more children join. CUBS' most recent biannual assessment showed that Kids Clubs, Girl Groups, and caregiver psychosocial support trainings have improved the emotional health of over 30,000 OVC.

Protection

Many OVC suffer physical and sexual abuse and exploitation. To protect the children from these violations, the CSOs taught community members to report the offenses they witness or suspect. Through the CPCs, CSOs also trained police and legal authorities to prosecute perpetrators and offer protective housing and care to children in unsafe environments. Finally, CSOs evaluated if OVC needed legal support to obtain birth certificates and/or family inheritance. In total, CUBS, CSOs, and CPCs provided legal and social protection support to over 16,000 OVC and their caregivers.

Education and Skills

In Nigeria, final school exams can cost as much as 17,000 naira (US \$100). For poor OVC, these fees and annual tuition costs are often the greatest barrier to school attendance. In response, CUBS has taught CSOs and CPCs to advocate for educational support for vulnerable children. Some villages have convinced schools to waive tuition fees for the most vulnerable children and others have raised funds from local businesses, philanthropists, and community groups to send these children to school. Advocacy efforts have inspired community members to donate or pay for books, uniforms, and school supplies for vulnerable children. In total, CSOs and CPCs have provided educational support to over 10,000 OVC.

Maintaining Momentum

Although CUBS is closing in 2014, the project will leave behind 38 CSOs, 116 child protection committees, and 14,000 caregivers who are equipped and inspired to care for OVC in their communities. These leaders now know how to train OVC, where to refer them for support, and how to raise funds so that all children in their community have access to food, shelter, health care, psychosocial care, and education.



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Technical Brief 2: Household Economic Strengthening (HES)



Household Economic Strengthening: Sustainable Solutions for Vulnerable Children

By, Sarah Amahson, CUBS' Household Economic Strengthening and Gender Advisor



Limited Earning Capacity among Nigerian Women

In Nigeria, women and girls are not only caregivers for their husbands and children, but also for orphans, the elderly, and the ill in their communities. In recent decades, these caretaker responsibilities have been compounded by the AIDS epidemic, which has left Nigeria with over 1.8 million AIDS orphans and 3.1 million HIV-infected citizens. The burden of caretaker tasks often require girls and young women to forgo an education, thus leaving them unable to earn an income and vulnerable to poverty. In addition to Nigeria's HIV & AIDS epidemic, recent years of political instability and violence have increased mortality rates among Nigerian men and left many families struggling to survive without the support of a male breadwinner. The widows and children these men leave behind are often disowned by relatives who cannot afford to

care for them. Without an education or professional skills, many orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) are drawn or coerced into child labor, early marriage, and sex work. Although some government and community programs exist to support Nigerian women and children, such services are sparse and often ineffective due to mismanagement, a lack of human resource capacity, and insufficient funding.

Including Caregivers in OVC Programming

In 2009, the Government of Nigeria welcomed Management Sciences for Health (MSH) to lead the PEPFAR- and USAID-funded Community-Based Support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CUBS) project. Within the first project year, the CUBS team discovered that the majority of OVC enrolled in their programs were under the care of impoverished female household heads. The team agreed that efforts to improve the lives of these vulnerable children could not neglect the needs of their female caregivers. If CUBS could help these women increase their income and use the new earnings to improve care for OVC, the long-term benefits would be significant and sustainable. The team began working toward this goal, and by 2010, had initiated the household economic strengthening program.

"I used to struggle to earn 50 naira [US\$0.30] a day, but now I have money to buy food and books for my children."

~ David Callista Udo
CUBS-supported caregiver



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Integrated Trainings Equip Caregivers for Business Benefits

Through its household economic strengthening program, CUBS helped over 1,000 female OVC caregivers increase their earning capacity and improve their parenting skills. CUBS trained facilitators from 38 local civil society organizations (CSOs) to teach the women how to develop a business plan, manage profits, secure loans, determine pricing, and design effective marketing. The CSO facilitators integrated these business components with modules on hygiene, nutrition, and parenting skills to ensure the trainees were linking their economic growth to their caregiver responsibilities. Staff from the 38 CSOs now have the skills, resources, and motivation to expand these trainings to caregivers throughout their communities.

Tailored Support Reaches the Most Vulnerable

Although CUBS' training equipped thousands of caregivers to secure business loans from commercial institutions and community donors, a number of particularly impoverished women were unable to meet the lending requirements of these institutions. The project team identified these women and developed further training for them, tailored to their unique needs. Some of the women needed training on budgeting, saving, and effective spending, whereas others benefited from training on business diversification, site placement, and staffing. After the trainings, CUBS and the CSOs provided this group of women with in-kind donations ranging from 5,000 to 20,000 naira (US \$30 - \$120), which they used to purchase bulk supplies, secure needed equipment, or erect a business venue. This support enabled over 500 women to either establish or expand small businesses in livestock farming, vegetable gardening, food processing, dress making, food sales, and hair dressing.

Saving Strategies Expand Program Impact

Although the household economic strengthening program was a great success among the selected beneficiaries, thousands more caregivers were eager to participate in the program. To reach the women on this ever-growing waitlist, CUBS trained staff from 38 CSOs to help their beneficiaries initiate voluntary savings and loans associations (VSLA). VSLAs are groups of people who pool their savings so they have a source for lending funds. Members make savings contributions to the pool, borrow from it, and repay their loans with minimal interest. Since 2009, the 38 CSOs have helped their caregiver beneficiaries form 85 VSLAs. These VSLAs have enabled over 3,000 caregivers to start or expand small businesses.

"I Can Make It!": The Story of Bridget



Bridget Egesi has been the sole caretaker of her five children since her husband's death. Until recently, Bridget pieced together an income by washing laundry and cleaning cars. Unfortunately, these menial jobs did not always pay enough to provide for her children's basic needs.

In 2009, CUBS began helping women understand how to better care for the children in their homes. Alongside local CSOs, CUBS taught Bridget and 1,049 other caregivers about children's health and emotional needs. The project team also taught these caregivers how to start a business, track their incomes and expenses, and regularly save.

Motivated by the training, Bridget decided to open a pharmacy. CUBS helped her write a business plan and submit it to a village savings group called Esusu. Impressed with Bridget's well-developed plan and budget, Esusu gave her a start-up loan of 40,000 naira (USD \$250), with which she rented a building and obtained a pharmacy license.

Within 12 months, she had opened her pharmacy.

Bridget's business now generates enough income for her to purchase adequate food and clothing for her children. With a minimum daily profit of 3,000 naira (US \$19), Bridget has been able repay 80 percent of her loan from Esusu.

"CUBS has made me realize that I can make it! The income-generating skills training I received helped me to save and plan properly for myself, my family, and business... [I also learned to] build relationships with people who [can support] my vision and dreams," said Bridget.



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Sharing Achievements Supports Expansion

The CUBS household economic strengthening program has drawn attention from CSOs, donors, implementing partners, and government ministries. Last year, these stakeholders invited CUBS' staff and program beneficiaries to attend a national forum where they shared their experiences and brainstormed strategies for replicating and expanding the program throughout Nigeria. CUBS has also helped beneficiaries share their experiences with other OVC caregivers in Delta, Gombe, and Akwa Ibom states. CSOs' and child protection committees' advocacy efforts have inspired state ministries and OVC technical working groups to build household economic strengthening activities into their annual budgets.

In addition to these national- and state-level achievements, CUBS has linked its 38 CSO partners to poverty eradication agencies for funding support and the ministry of agriculture for training services. A detailed mapping exercise has equipped CSOs with the information they need to advocate for future support for the program from agencies and microfinance institutions across the nation. The VSLA membership is also growing beyond the caregiver community, with other women and men actively participating in these cooperative saving schemes.

Business Training Empowers Out-of-School Girls

Poverty, early marriage, teenage pregnancy, inadequate school infrastructure, and cultural and religious norms prevent many Nigerian girls from attending or staying in school. With almost 70 percent of the Nigerian population living below the poverty line, girls are often sent to work in the markets or sell products on the streets. To support these girls, CUBS pilot tested a vocational skills training program with 14 female adolescent OVC who were not attending school. The girls received professional training in dress making, computer services, and hair dressing. Within a year, two of the girls had secured jobs and CUBS was helping the other 12 start small businesses. CUBS and its CSO partners are now using these girls' experiences to advocate for state ministries to replicate and expand the program.

Program Monitoring Demonstrates Impact

CUBS and the CSOs trained community volunteers to track the progress of caregiver and OVC beneficiaries of the household economic strengthening program. Every six months, volunteers visit the beneficiaries' homes to collect information on their income level and the well-being of children in their care. Since the program began in 2009, these data show steady and significant improvements in the caregivers' income levels, as well as the OVC's nutritional status, school attendance, and disease incidence.

Maintaining the Momentum

Although CUBS will close in 2014, the project will leave behind 38 CSOs and 1,200 caregivers who are equipped and inspired to advocate for expansion of the household economic strengthening program. These beneficiaries now have the skills and knowledge needed to start, expand, and sustain small businesses and ensure that the generated income is used to provide sustainable, life-saving support to Nigeria's most vulnerable children.



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Grassroots to Government: Gender-based Solutions for Nigerian Women

By, Sarah Amahson, CUBS' Household Economic Strengthening and Gender Advisor



In Nigeria, as in most countries, women and girls assume the bulk of the caregiving burden for those infected with HIV and children left vulnerable or orphaned by AIDS. These responsibilities often prevent girls and women from obtaining an education and developing income-generating skills. Exacerbating these problems are social norms that inhibit girls and women from accessing health information and services and severely limit their control over their sexuality, leaving them vulnerable to violence and abuse. Other cultural norms may deprive women and girls of economic resources and inhibit their ability to seek legal protection from exploitation or mistreatment.

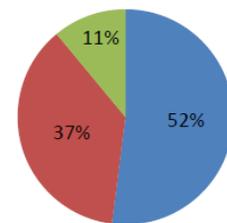
Gender-Based Solutions

Fortunately, since 2009, the PEPFAR-funded, USAID project, Community-Based Support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CUBS), has been addressing these challenges by working with orphaned or vulnerable girls and female caregivers, as well as civil society organizations (CSOs) and key stakeholders at the national, state, and community levels. Implemented by Management Sciences for Health (MSH) in partnership with Africare, CUBS works to improve gender equality by empowering women, educating their families and communities, and working with government stakeholders to strengthen social services, expand support structures and reduce barriers to care. CUBS is currently supporting 10,000 young and adolescent girls and 10,958 female caregivers.

Addressing HIV

In Nigeria, 1.7 million women are infected with HIV and prevalence among young women aged 15 to 24 years is three times higher than it is among men in the same age group. Among those with HIV in Nigeria, 52 percent are women and just 37 percent are men. Societal norms discourage HIV-positive women from revealing their status. Those who are HIV positive are often accused of adultery, abandoned by their husbands and families, and severely discriminated against by those in their communities. To ensure Nigerian women and girls receive the knowledge and care they deserve, CUBS trained 38 CSOs to provide HIV-positive women with female-focused health education and access to legal support, counseling, and housing assistance. These interventions are helping to make Nigeria a safer place for HIV-positive women and girls.

HIV Prevalence in Nigeria



- women over 15 years old
- men over 15 years old
- children under 15 years old



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Empowering through Education

Many Nigerian women lack access to basic health information. Recent studies show that 33 percent of Nigerian men have a correct and comprehensive knowledge of HIV, compared to just 22 percent of women. Although schools provide children with health information, many Nigerian girls become pregnant before the age of 19 and drop out of school to care for their children. Furthermore, when community leaders offer public health events and trainings, many women are discouraged from attending or expected to stay home to care for their children.

To improve health knowledge among women, CUBS taught staff from 38 CSOs to facilitate health education sessions for their female beneficiaries. These sessions provided a new venue for girls, women, and out-of-school youth to access health information. Women were invited to attend these sessions with their infants and young children, making it easier for them to leave home. Since 2009, the CSOs have trained over 3,000 OVC caregivers on HIV prevention and care, personal hygiene, contraception, nutritional health, the importance of breast feeding, and prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV. These trainings are now conducted regularly by CSO and community-based facilitators.

CUBS provided health information to adolescent girls by developing a peer education program and establishing 33 Girl Groups. After being trained by CUBS and its CSO partners, the peer educators and Girl Group facilitators reached over 8,000 girls with information on HIV and STI prevention, assertiveness, self-esteem, puberty, and personal hygiene. These outreach activities are gaining popularity in the project-supported states and attract more adolescent participants each year.

“When I told my guardian that I was seeing blood coming out of my body, she told me I was pregnant and that I should say who was responsible. I was so afraid I didn’t know what to do so I kept it to myself wondering what will happen to me next. When it stopped [and I realized I wasn’t pregnant] I felt some relief but I still was not sure of what lay ahead... This [Girls Group] meeting really taught me a lot about [myself and my body]... I now know what to expect and how to address it as it comes. Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity.”

Lucy, Gombe Girl Group participant



Strengthening Support Systems

To strengthen support systems for women and girls, CUBS conducted gender trainings for 260 service providers, law enforcement agents, project implementers, state officials, and local government representatives. These trainings guided participants to identify gender-related needs in their workplaces and communities and develop corresponding solutions. Participants have committed to implementing a number of solutions including:

- Training male leaders and mentors to educate other men about the benefits of supporting women’s health and development;
- Recruiting and training women for leadership, management, and governance positions at the workplace and in communities;
- Inviting and encouraging men to participate in health programs with their partners to increase uptake of PMTCT, reduce maternal and child mortality, and prevent gender-based violence; and
- Improving the content and logistics of community meetings so more women attend and participate in discussions and decision-making.

“I used to dismiss gender talks... but now I know how development impacts women and men differently.... The knowledge will definitely help our programs work better.”

~ OVC program staff



Advocating for Women’s Rights

Stakeholders in seven project-supported states have worked with CUBS to advocate for women and girls’ rights during public rallies, International Women’s Day events, and the Day of the African Child celebrations.

In 2013, female caregivers from four states of the Niger Delta joined community members in an International Women’s Day rally where campaigners raised banners and slates reading:

- “Stop all forms of violence against women”
- “Give women a chance”
- “Stop female genital mutilation”
- “Promote girl child education”
- “Say no to wife battering”
- “Stop girl child early marriage”
- “Educate the girl child”
- “Empower women”

In three other states, CUBS made community-based presentations on topics entitled:

- Women as Agents of Change and Development,
- Identifying Harmful Social Norms and Practices that Increase Vulnerability of Women, and
- Legal Protection for Women and Girls.

For the first time in many communities, Nigerian women are empowered to speak out publically and collectively about their right to health, education, and equality.

Increasing Female Community Participation

Although many communities arrange health services and education activities for women and girls, few women are consulted in the planning and design of these interventions. As a result, such activities are often offered at a time when females cannot attend or include content that does not speak to their real needs.

To address this challenge, CUBS teaches leaders to consult women in the design of community-based programs and activities. Such discussions can be arranged through focus groups, one-on-one interviews, or community forums. After these trainings, child protection committee (CPC) members, CSO staff, traditional leaders, and religious leaders have begun developing activities and information sessions on topics relevant to women, such as HIV prevention, reproductive health, parenting, and nutrition. Women also convinced leaders to hold these activities on days and at times when they could more easily attend and allow them to bring their infants and young children.

Since 2010, these minor adjustments have increased female participation in community-based activities in the CUBS’ supported states. Furthermore, over 100 women have become members of their communities’ CPCs and many women now hold positions in their states’ OVC technical working groups.



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Protecting through Legal Support

Nigeria’s patriarchal culture often excludes women from making decisions within the home and community and males have more authority over family assets. Because women and children are often considered their husband and father’s property, violence and sexual abuse often go unreported and unpunished. As a result, many Nigerian women and children are in desperate need of legal support to assist them in child custody cases and protect them from physical and sexual abuse and disinheritance.

CUBS addressed this challenge by training community members to recognize when women and children need legal protection and help them access such services. Since the project began in 2009, CUBS has provided this training for over 250 staff members from law enforcement agencies, civil society organizations, and local courts in 11 states. Since attending these sessions, trainees report that they have been able to support for more women and children in need of protection, and for urgent cases, make timely referrals to agencies offering legal support. These referrals have increased reporting of abuse cases and led to the prosecution of rapists and child abusers.

Legal aid is also helping women access assets that belong to them but have been seized by relatives or community members. In Rivers state, for example, a recently widowed woman reported that a male relative had seized all of her family’s possessions and property. The CPC, newly trained by CUBS, resolved this issue in favor of the widow and restored the assets to her. Similarly, in Bayelsa state, a CPC chairman who had attended the CUBS training was inspired to initiate police action against a man suspected to be sexually abusing his daughter.



Rescuing Ngozi from Abuse and Neglect

CUBS conducted gender awareness trainings for 38 CSOs throughout Nigeria. Since participating in this training, Foundation for God’s Love (FFGL) has been working to address discrimination against women in Enugu State. One strategy the project uses is partnering with the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) to provide free legal services to women and girls.

In 2012, FIDA provided legal support to Ngozi, a 25-year-old orphan and single mother who had suffered abuse and neglect her entire life. Ngozi was dedicated to an idol at birth by her parents, which denied her the rights to marriage, education, and a social life. She was an outcast and the property of the religious chief. As a teenager, she was abused by her brother.

Fortunately, in 2013, FFGL identified Ngozi and registered her and her child in their OVC program. After learning about her traumatic past, FFGL referred Ngozi to FIDA for further assistance. The team at FIDA helped Ngozi bring legal charges against her brother for abuse and gain freedom from her parent’s’ oppressive religious practices. Within two months, Ngozi was able to leave her family home and her brother was sent to prison. To help Ngozi support herself, CUBS and FFGL provided her with alternative shelter and food. Ngozi now lives with her husband and two children in Benue State.



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Increasing Womens' Earning Capacity Benefits Thousands of Needy Children

Most Nigerian women and girls assume caregiver roles within their families and communities. The nation's high HIV prevalence (4.1 percent) means that many of these girls and young women must care for AIDS patients, provide for households when breadwinners die, and take responsibility for AIDS orphans and vulnerable children in their community. The burden of these tasks often requires girls and young women to forgo an education, thus leaving them less equipped for work and income generation.

To improve caregivers' economic capacity, CUBS provided income generating skills training and small business start-up loans to over 1,000 women. These activities enabled 500 caregivers to establish or expand small businesses that have increased their income. In partnership with Save the Children, CUBS then trained 38 CSOs to help their OVC caregivers initiate cooperatives or voluntary savings and loans associations (VSLA) so they could better manage their increased incomes. VSLAs are groups of people who pool their savings so they have a source for lending funds. Members make savings contributions to the pool, borrow from it, and repay their loans with interest. Since 2009, the 38 CSOs have helped their caregiver beneficiaries form 85 VSLAs or cooperatives. Many caregivers have used the VSLA loans to start or expand small businesses.

CUBS' trainings and financial support have helped over 1,000 caregivers improve their economic capacity, increase their incomes, and secure savings. Such skills have equipped these caregivers to meet the educational, health, and nutritional needs of the 2,548 children in their care.

Advocating for Protection

OVC, especially girls, are at a high risk for early marriage, sexual abuse, violence, and child labor. Early marriage is still common in Nigeria, with young girls often forced into marriage and premature sexual relations, causing them increased health risks and exposure to HIV. By the time they turn 15, 20 percent of Nigerian girls are married, and by 18-years old, 40 percent are married. Among married girls age 15 to 19, just 2 percent are in school and 62 percent have already given birth.

To protect Nigerian children from these and other risks, CUBS helped 11 OVC technical working groups advocate for implementation of the Child Rights Act (CRA) in their states. This Act calls on leaders and stakeholders to prioritize the prevention and elimination of child marriage and sexual abuse, exploitation, and violence towards children. It also emphasizes the need to ensure that girls have access to education. Although the CRA was established in 2003, this is the first time the Act is being formally implemented to support and inspire state-level child rights discussions. CUBS' success in implementing the CRA is breaking the silence around injustices toward children and giving Nigerians the confidence and capacity to advocate for the rights of these young citizens.

Maintaining the Momentum

Although CUBS will close in 2014, the project will leave behind 38 CSOs, 116 CPCs, and 11 technical working groups that are equipped and inspired to advocate for the rights of Nigerian women and girls. These leaders now know how to educate women and girls, link them to support services, improve their economic capacity, inspire their community participation, and welcome their leadership. The thousands of women and girls who have benefitted from this support are hard at work to sustain and expand these gains throughout Nigeria.



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It Takes a Village: Mobilizing Communities to Support Nigeria's Most Vulnerable Children



Waning Social Support Structures

Nigeria is home to over 17 million orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) who struggle daily to access food, shelter, education, care, and support. In recent years, the community and family support networks that traditionally support these children have been eroded by the nation's high HIV prevalence, widespread poverty, and destructive political conflict. The existing social support systems are severely limited by insufficient funding and resources as well as inadequate staff capacity. Without family, community, or government support, one million Nigerian children die each year before their fifth birthday. Those that survive often do so in dire conditions.

Recruiting and Training Community Leaders

In 2009, to strengthen support for Nigerian youth, PEPFAR and USAID began funding the Community-Based Support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CUBS) project in Nigeria. Led by Management Sciences for Health (MSH) in partnership with Africare, the CUBS team spent five years building community support networks in 11 Nigerian states.

CUBS worked with 38 civil society organizations (CSOs) to form child protection committees (CPCs), tasked with protecting and improving the well-being of vulnerable children in their communities. Each CSO recruited 10 to 15 leaders from traditional ruling councils, land-lord associations, religious groups, and market associations to form their committees. CUBS then trained these leaders in advocacy, leadership, community and resource mobilization, child protection, and OVC needs. Within a few weeks of their first meeting, CPC members began:

- Identifying vulnerable children in their communities,
- Conducting home visits to assess the children's well-being,
- Raising funds and donations for OVC from community members,
- Referring cases of child abuse to social workers and legal authorities, and
- Facilitating home renovations for impoverished families without adequate shelter.

"CUBS is really taking care of our children. They are placing the children in school, giving them educational materials, and providing free medical treatment. This should not stop."

~ Village chief



CPCs in Action

In just five years, CUBS and the CSOs have established 116 CPCs in the 11 states. These committees have raised funds to pay OVC's school tuition and advocated for health centers to waive service fees for vulnerable children. The committees have also secured vocational skills training programs and small business start-up grants to enhance the earning capacity of over 1,000 OVC caregivers and adolescent OVC.

Child Abuse Solutions

In partnership with UNICEF and Nigeria's Child Protection Network, CUBS trained CPC members, CBO staff, law enforcement personnel, and judiciary members to effectively identify and address cases of physical and sexual abuse against children. Trainees learned how to provide timely support, make service referrals, and deal with cases in a manner that does not further victimize the child. All 116 CPCs now have partnerships with community-based law enforcement agents and are actively engaged in the early detection and mitigation of child abuse cases.

CPC Members as Community Role Models

In Rivers, Bayelsa, Imo, and Gombe states, CPC members became role models for their communities by opening their homes to families with OVC that had been evicted from their residences or displaced due to floods in 2012. These acts of charity have increased community awareness about the needs of vulnerable children and their families and inspired other community members to participate in CPC activities.

"The CUBS project was like a wake-up call to us. We now hold quarterly meetings to discuss the challenges of vulnerable children and how to tackle them. We take care of the vulnerable children when they are sick and buy medicine for them."

~ CPC secretary

Child Protection Committee Provides Children with Food, Education, Clothing, and Medicine



Dumbi* community in Sokoto State, Nigeria is home to thousands of AIDS orphans and vulnerable children who struggle to access food, clothing, shelter, and healthcare. In recent years, a growing number of children from Dumbi have started begging for money along the roadside, desperate to earn a small income.

In 2012, CUBS began working in Dumbi to mobilize community support for OVC. The team educated the community about vulnerable children's needs and brainstormed ways to support them. CUBS also visited state and community leaders to create awareness about OVC's needs, risks, and ways to reduce those risks.

CUBS training inspired community members in Dumbi to form a CPC. This committee now works with local leaders to identify vulnerable children and address their needs. In December 2012, the CPC established a community food bank for vulnerable children and the village chief began setting aside a portion of the community's produce for OVC after every harvest.

More recently, the CPC solicited donations from wealthy community members and used these funds to purchase school materials and medicine for 150 vulnerable children. At the CPC's request, the Zonal Education Office and the State Ministry of Education waived school fees for the children.

"Before the CUBS intervention, we found it difficult to feed [the children and], at times, [they] went to bed without eating. But since the intervention, they have been giving us food and distributing clothes to the children during celebrations. They even bought medicine for my child when he was sick and check up on us all the time," said a caregiver in Dumbi.



Impact Evaluation

To ensure the CSOs were meeting children's needs, CUBS used the Child Status Index, a tool developed by Measure Evaluation to quantify children's health and well-being and track their progress in six holistic areas: *food and nutrition; health; shelter and care; psychosocial care; protection; and education and skills*. CUBS measured each child's progress biannually and tailored its interventions to ensure the children were progressing significantly and consistently in each of the six areas. Between 2010 and 2013, the CSOs documented an improved overall wellbeing among 32,000 of their OVC beneficiaries and 12,500 OVC caregivers.

Maintaining Momentum

Although CUBS is closing in 2014, the project will leave behind 38 CSOs, 116 child protection committees, and thousands of community members who are equipped and inspired to care for OVC. These leaders now know how to identify OVC, refer them for care, address cases of abuse, and increase the economic capacity of their caregivers. Community-based stakeholders also now have the motivation and skills needed to advocate for OVC support from state agents, corporate institutions, and philanthropists. In years to come, the CPCs will increase their membership and resources and refine their strategies so they are able to reach more children with life-saving services and support.

All my life, I never carried a bag to school, and my uniform looked tattered. Today I am happy because I have a brand new school uniform and sandals, and my own bag and writing materials. Thanks to CUBS for adding value to my education and life.”

~ OVC beneficiary, 12



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