

Technical Report

Nigeria CUBS

Economic Strengthening for Female Household Heads

2011

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Economic Strengthening for Female Household Heads: An Integrated Approach to Improving OVC Care and Well-being in Nigeria

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Background

- 64% of Nigerians live below the poverty line and 54% are deprived of adequate food, education, and health.
- Female household heads (FHHs) are often affected by poverty and deprivations, as most Nigerian women lack decision-making power and access to resources.
- The PEPFAR-funded, USAID-implemented project, Community Based Support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CUBS) in Nigeria piloted a household economic strengthening (HES) initiative among FHH.
- CUBS' implementer, Management Sciences for Health, in collaboration with Africare and the Ministry of Women Affairs, designed and implemented the HES initiative to improve FHHs' earning capacity and, in turn, their ability to meet the needs of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in their care.



An excited female household heads during CUBS' household economic strengthening training.

Impact of Female Household Head (FHH) Skills Training and Small Business Seed Grants on School Attendance and Disease Incidence among Orphans and Vulnerable Children

	OVC disease incidence and school attendance before CUBS' intervention	OVC disease incidence and school attendance after CUBS' intervention	% improvement
Homes where FHHs received CUBS' training and grants	30%	40%	10%
Homes where FHHs received CUBS' training only	30%	39%	9%
Homes where FHHs did not receive CUBS' training or grants	30%	34%	4%

Methods

- In 2011, following a needs assessment, CUBS selected 491 FHHs in Gombe and Delta states.
- The project team then trained the FHHs in entrepreneurship skills, hygiene, and homestead gardening.
- CUBS also awarded small grants (\$45 to \$130) to 147 of the FHHs who had developed plans to initiate a new small business or expand an existing business.
- The 491 FHHs were caring for a total of 822 OVC:
 - 276 OVC were under the care of FHHs who did not receive CUBS training or grants,
 - 267 OVC were under the care of FHHs who completed CUBS training but did not receive grants, and
 - 279 OVC were under the care of FHHs who completed CUBS training and received grants.
- CUBS used the Nigerian Child Status Index Assessment Tool to collect data on the health, education, and psychosocial well-being of the 822 OVC, before and 6 months after the intervention.



Each month, female household heads participants in CUBS' household economic strengthening program meet together to discuss their businesses and ways to use their profits to meet the needs of OVC in their homes and communities.

Results

After 6 months of the intervention:

- In homes where FHHs received both training and grants, OVC school attendance and disease incidence improved by 10%.
- In homes where FHHs received training only, OVC school attendance and disease incidence improved by 9%.
- In homes where FHHs did not receive either form of support, OVC school attendance and disease incidence improved by just 4%. (see Table)
- FHHs who received both training and grants show an increased income of 70%.

Conclusion

- Training in entrepreneurship skills, hygiene, and homestead gardening, in combination with small business seed grants, can improve FHHs' income-generating capacity.
- Strengthened economic capacity and caregiver skills training among FHHs can lead to improvements in OVC well-being, in terms of disease incidence and school attendance.
- CUBS interventions should be replicated in similar settings to sustain and expand these positive outcomes among OVC.

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