

DPHSWD Activities in Nigeria

Applied Epidemiology Training

In 2008, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), through its Division of Public Health Systems and Workforce Development, helped the Nigeria Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) establish a Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program (N-FELTP), based in Abuja.

The goals of the program are to provide service to the FMOH and work toward improving public health systems within the country through the training of field epidemiologists, public health laboratorians, and veterinary epidemiologists.

Program Structure

The N-FELTP is a 2-year in-service training program that trains residents in field epidemiology, public health laboratory, and veterinary field epidemiology for leadership positions at various levels of the FMOH, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, the States' MOHs, and the States' Ministries of Agriculture and Water Resources.

The N-FELTP is the first applied epidemiology program of its kind to offer a Veterinary Field Epidemiology track. The program aims to increase collaboration and strengthen linkages between epidemiologists and laboratorians, as well as between the human and the animal health sectors.

The N-FELTP involves 25% classroom instruction and 75% field assignments. After residents have completed all requirements, they are awarded a Master of Public Health in Field Epidemiology, Veterinary Epidemiology, or Laboratory Epidemiology and Management through Ahmadu Bello University or the University of Ibadan.

Outbreak Investigations

In late 2008 and early 2009, residents participated in a high-profile acute renal failure outbreak secondary to Diethylene Glycol poisoning. In addition, outbreak investigation short courses and TB/HIV short courses were conducted between 2007 and 2009. In May 2010, residents investigated an acute lead poisoning outbreak in two mining villages in Northern Nigeria, where 355 children were affected, 163 of whom died.

Funding and Partnerships

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Nigeria office; Global AIDS Program; National Center for Zoonotic, Vector-Borne, and Enteric Diseases



CDC is working on several fronts in Nigeria to strengthen that country's public health system, address neglected tropical diseases, and help strengthen Nigeria's epidemiology workforce.

- Nigeria Federal Ministry of Health
- Nigeria Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources
- Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
- University of Ibadan
- U.S. Agency for International Development
- African Field Epidemiology Network



Focusing on Neglected Tropical Diseases

CDC is working to address neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) in Africa, such as elephantiasis and schistosomiasis. Generally affecting the impoverished, these diseases are termed 'neglected' due to their lack of visibility and recognition in the developed world. Yet they have a devastating impact on more than one billion people worldwide.

Integrating Programs to Fight Neglected Tropical Diseases

Most control and treatment programs for NTDs focus on a single disease, but people usually face more than one disease threat at a time. Intervention strategies for the different diseases are often similar. A few years ago, integration of several disease control programs into one program took hold in the international public health community. Recognizing a need to obtain evidence of the feasibility and effectiveness of integration, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation granted funding to five integrated disease control programs. Of the five, the Carter Center/CDC program was the only one with a management capacity building component.

The goal of the Nigerian program is to determine the feasibility, effectiveness, and cost benefit of integrating disease control programs on a large scale. These control programs address elephantiasis, malaria, onchocerciasis, schistosomiasis, trachoma, and vitamin A deficiency.

Promoting Prevention Through Partnerships

The partnership between the Carter Center Nigeria and CDC, in collaboration with Emory University, led to the opening of the Sustainable Management Training Center (SMTC) in Jos. Since its opening, the center has trained more than 300 public health managers. A key challenge to successful integration is managing substantial organizational change. Historically, single disease programs have worked independently. The customized curriculum used at SMTC includes change management on all levels of the health system. By building managerial skills, this project equips public health managers to better manage integration interventions.

Working Towards Sustainability

The Carter Center/CDC program will be evaluated to determine if integration is more efficient and effective than focusing on a single disease. Additionally, the program will be seeking evidence that building the management capacity of the workforce will support more effective delivery of integrated interventions. If successful, the model used in this project will be implemented for integrated disease control on a national scale by Nigeria's FMOH.

**To find out more, go to www.nigeria-feltp.net/
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