

## **Sustaining MNCH social behavior change interventions with integration of COVID-19 Messages**

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**I**n Nigeria, the impact of COVID-19 on care-seeking for Maternal Newborn Child Health and Nutrition (MNCH+N) has created a barrier to uptake and utilization of services. United States Agency for International Development (USAID)- Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria (BA-N), engaged community mobilization agents to integrate COVID-19 messages and health interventions to increase the practice of care-seeking and prevent the spread of the virus. BA-N trained 1,005 Community Volunteers (CVs) and 474 Ward Development Committees (WDC) across three northern states via mobile device interactive voice response (IVR) on risk communication, community engagement (RCCE) and MNCH+N priority behaviors.

A 'volunteer in each street' campaign was launched using megaphones by town announcers, loudspeakers at places of worship within the community where prerecorded key messages and songs to promote MNCH+N behaviors and COVID-19 precautionary measures were broadcasted. 15 community activities were conducted per CV reaching 237,286 persons within 3 months (April -June 2020). 75 WDCs locally mobilized NGN1,153,533 used to provide megaphones, batteries, transport allowances for town announcers and CVs to disseminate MNCH+N and COVID-19 prevention messages. Veronica buckets were also provided for hand washing and sanitizers, waste bins, and face masks at health facilities. For effective referral system, the WDCs maintained ambulances and community emergency transportation services (ETS), transporting 325 women for Ante-Natal Care (ANC), 389 for delivery, 103 children for emergency care, 1,570 children referred for immunization, and 780 defaulters tracked for completion. Despite COVID-19 restrictions, Information disseminated by community mobilization agents can generate more support and acceptance within their community through community collective action.