

The Nigerian Child



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Ensuring Education for All

Education is a basic human right, vital to personal and societal development and well being. All children deserve a quality education. Unfortunately the girl child is often marginalized and her prospects sacrificed when it comes to sending children to school.

As the lead agency of the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, UNICEF is committed to ensuring that the issue of girls' education remains at the top of the agenda in Nigeria, thus helping the country to reach two key Millennium Development Goals, the elimination of gender disparity in education and the achievement of universal primary education.

The Girls' Education project implemented in six northern States by UNICEF with DFID funding has demonstrated that a lot can be achieved when interventions are well articulated and focused and when resources are well managed.

This edition of our new UNICEF Nigeria newsletter is dedicated to education and will give you an overview of the Girls' Education Project through various stories from the human angle.

I hope it will convince you that progress is possible and that a lot is already happening on ground.

What we need now to scale up and sustain these valuable interventions are: commitment and political will that should materialize through allocation of adequate resources and improvement of infrastructure; an improved capacity of education sector institutions in planning, budgeting, delivering supplies and services necessary for quality education. Last but not least, training of teachers is crucial so that pupils will have acquired the expected minimum competencies at the end of the primary school cycle.

Ayalew Abai
UNICEF Representative

Education: Bridging the gap for girls

We see them often enough, on the streets and in the markets – young girls hawking food and various other wares. We even stop to buy an item or two from the trays they carry on their heads, but it does not occur to us that these girls shouldn't be here on the streets. We should ask ourselves why, in the middle of the day, these girls are not in school.

Over 80 per cent of the 44 million girls out of school worldwide live in Sub Saharan Africa. While Nigeria has made steady progress in primary school enrolment, girls still account for more than half the nation's out-of-school.

Progress in girls' enrolment and attendance will have to be twice as rapid as it is now if Nigeria is to meet the Millennium Development Goal of achieving gender parity in education by 2015¹. Without this, universal primary education will also not be realized.

According to a study by UNESCO and UNICEF measuring exclusion from primary education, more than 4 million girls aged 6-11 years old do not attend school in Nigeria². The 2006 National School Census revealed that 19 per cent of primary school age children (6-11 years) are not enrolled in primary schools nationwide.

In the Northern part of Nigeria, the proportion of girls to boys in school

ranges from 1 girl to 2 boys and even 1 to 3 in two states.

Illiteracy is catastrophic for any child but it is especially devastating for girls because it makes them more vulnerable to poverty, maternal mortality, hunger, violence, abuse, exploitation, trafficking, HIV/AIDS and other

diseases.

Girls' education not only brings the immediate benefit of empowering girls, but is also seen as the best investment in a country's development. Ensuring that girls are educated is a guaranteed way to increase a country's economic productivity, lower infant and maternal

mortality, improve nutritional status and health, reduce poverty.

Poverty, economic constraints, early marriage and teenage preg-

nancy, inadequate school infrastructure and cultural and religious misinterpretation are some of the main barriers preventing girls in Nigeria from going to school.

With 71³ per cent of the Nigerian population living below \$1 a day, girls are often sent to work in the markets or hawk wares on the streets. Enrolment is not the only issue. Retention remains a major challenge. Many of the

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Class in session at a Primary School in Dass town of Bauchi State.

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Girls' education increases a country's economic productivity, lowers infant and maternal mortality

girls that do attend school drop out before reaching primary six.

UNICEF Nigeria has made girls' education a priority in its cooperation plan to address some of these issues. In July 2003, the 'Strategy for Acceleration of Girls' Education in Nigeria' (SAGEN) was launched by UNICEF and the Federal Ministry of Education. The initiative has since been imbued by other development partners under 'SAGEN Plus'.

In December 2004, the Girls' Education Project (GEP) was launched. This joint initiative between the Federal Government of Nigeria, the Department for International Development (DFID) and UNICEF aims to eliminate gender disparity in education through improving the quality of life of girls in Nigeria by a collaborative approach to girls' education.

With a £25 million funding commitment from DFID, the project is among the largest of its kind implemented by UNICEF in a single country. It is currently being implemented in six States in Northern Nigeria (Bauchi, Borno, Jigawa, Niger, Katsina and Sokoto), covering 720 schools in a region where many girls are out of schools or drop out before completing the primary cycle.

Remarkable strides

In just three years, the project has made remarkable strides in changing the landscape of education in the selected states through a number of key interventions. The first and second project evaluations showed an increase of over 60% in girl's enrolment, while attendance has risen to over 25% in the supported schools. Gender gaps reduced by about two thirds of their previous levels.

One of the concepts at work is the 'child friendly school'. The idea is simple: for children to come to school, the school needs to meet minimum basic standards such as water and sanitation, tables and benches, adequate provision of text books, safe learning environment, improved management and supervision, higher quality of education with better trained teacher and improved supervision.

Many of the schools supported by the project now have a borehole and separate toilets for male and female pupils. Because many teachers are not adequately qualified, the Girls' Education Project has also supported the development of a national school based teacher training programme to help build teachers' capacities and

skills to improve the learning outcomes of the pupils.

Another key to the project's success has been the involvement of the communities through the establishment of School Based Management Committees. Parents and community mem-

they can improve their lives and support their daughters in attending school.

Many girls that do not attend school in Northern Nigeria are sent to 'Islamiya' schools where they receive religious training from the Qur'an. The



School age girls hawking food items at a market in Bakori town in Katsina

bers get fully involved in the education of their children. They invest their resources to improve the school and teachers, and take decisions regarding the management.

Moreover, the project made it mandatory for women to be members of these committees, thus giving them a voice in the decision making process – something revolutionary in a region where women are usually not allowed to deliberate in the same forum as men.

The role of traditional and religious leaders

Traditional and religious leaders have been driving the social mobilization efforts. They have emphasized the message that educating all children is a religious duty, drawing on evidence from the Qur'an and other religious texts.

In some cases, demand has been such that the challenge is now to ensure that quality education is delivered so that the children remain in school.

Part of the objectives of the Girls' Education Project is the promotion of synergy between girls' education and poverty alleviation. This is why non-formal education centres have been developed beside each supported school to teach basic skills and literacy to women and girls who are unable to go back to school. This encourages women to undertake income generating activities so that

Girls Education Project has enabled the integration of English, Mathematics, Social Studies and Hygiene into the curriculum of Islamiya and Qur'anic schools.

Inter-sectoral collaboration in areas such as integrated early child care, health and HIV/AIDS education, school nutrition has also been critical.

Gender Policy

Not only has the project changed the lives of hundreds of girls, it has also created a new framework at national and State level to make girls' education a sustained priority in Nigeria. The adoption of Nigeria's first Gender Policy for Basic Education is one of these foundations.

The Girls Education Project has also rolled out the essential learning package which will greatly help each State to develop a comprehensive ten-year Education Sector Strategic Plan. It will also contribute to the development of a coherent system of supplies procurement and logistics and ensure transparent, equitable and timely distribution of supplies to all schools.

Beyond the six States where the project has been implemented, many other Northern States have shown interest in the scheme. The Federal Ministry has released MDG funds for girls' education and set up a new 'Task Force on Equity in Education',

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which is firmly committed to addressing gender issues in education.

The road being paved by UNICEF Nigeria to attaining gender equality in education has opened new avenues. They lead to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals on Gender Parity and Universal Primary Education. But the journey is not over. There are still significant challenges preventing all children in Nigeria from benefiting from a high quality education which would equip them with the skills to develop their country.

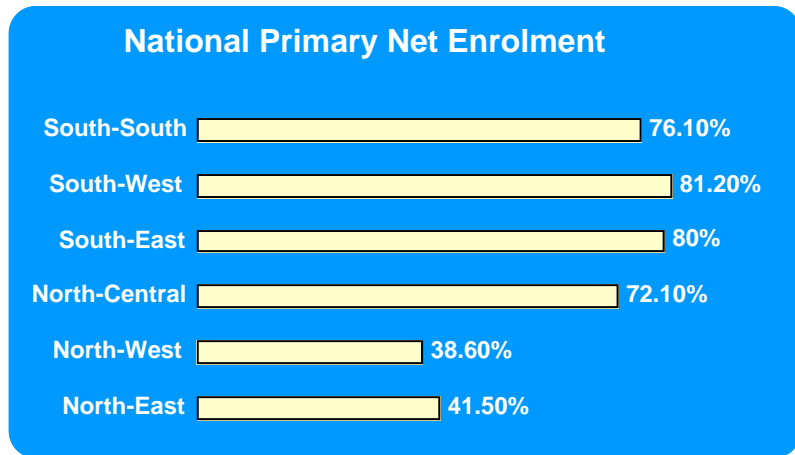
Unless there is systemic change and a consolidation of the various interventions of the Girls' Education Project, the increased demand for girls' education generated by the project could rapidly fall away. □

¹Gender Achievements and Prospects in Education, The GAP Report Part One, UNICEF.

²Children out of school, measuring exclusion from Primary Education, UNESCO, Institute of Statistics, UNICEF.

³Human Development Report 2006. UNDP.

National Primary Net Enrolment (girls) Source: 2006 Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire (CWIQ) Survey



The Girls' Education Project in brief

Implementing Partners: Federal Ministry of Education, UNICEF, UK Department for International Development (DFID), State Governments, LGEAS, Communities.

Main Objective: Achieve significant progress in Nigeria towards Millennium Development Goal 3: "to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education to all levels of education not later than 2015."

Funding: £25 million funding commitment from UK Department For International Development (DFID).

Target Areas: The project is being implemented in six States in Northern Nigeria (Bauchi, Borno, Jigawa, Katsina, Niger, and Sokoto), covering 720 schools.

Getting girls back to school: Wasila's story

Full of energy, pupils run in circles on the playground of Nadabo Primary School in the small town of Bakori, Katsina State. They are having fun in gymnastics class, where the female teacher has them exercising.

All the boys and girls are wearing white-and-green uniforms, with a long hijab (veil) for the girls – an Islamic dress code that can be seen throughout the region.

Behind the school gate, another group of children congregates. They are not wearing uniforms. Many of them carry large trays on their heads as they wait to sell goods such as bread and peanuts to their more fortunate peers.

Jamila, 12, is one of the less privileged ones. She is standing among the working children and every day, she goes door to door selling vegetables. It has been four years since she had to quit school.

"I dropped out in 2003 when I was in class two," says Jamila. "I left because I didn't have a school uniform. My mother wanted me to work to make some money so that hopefully one day we can afford the uniform again."

Jamila is one of many girls from poor families who have been forced to abandon their education in Northern Nigeria.



Jamila (centre) sells food to housewives. She dropped out of school because her family could not afford her uniform

Like Jamila, 10-year-old Wasila remembers the shock she felt when her parents asked her to leave

school a year ago. "My parents asked me to drop out and work so that I can support them," she recalls. "I was not happy and didn't like it, so much so that I almost felt I had a fever."

Fortunately, Wasila didn't miss out on school for too long. Through the Girls' Education Project, free learning materials have been distributed in more than 700 schools in Northern Nigeria, lifting a big financial burden for families like hers.

"While she was out of school, I heard that her school had gotten materials including books and school bags, and that attracted my attention, says Wasila's father, Sani Hudu, who also has six other children. "I decided to send her back to school."

When Wasila returned to school, she was greeted with a spacious and comfortable learning environment.

"It's clean everywhere," she exclaims about her school, which has been reconstructed

by the State Universal Basic Educa-

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The little Amazon

The story of a little girl's determination to attend school

When we first met Saratu, our vehicle was turning the lonely road into Wurmawa community in Danmusa LGA of Katsina State; we sighted her at the junction. She was in a white and green gown wearing a head scarf, dragging her bicycle. She had just closed from school in Danmusa town and would have to drag her little bicycle six kilometres to her village, Wurmawa. She had a flat tyre.

Ten year old Saratu Bello is one of the two girls from Wurmawa who attends the Danmusa Pilot Primary School. A primary four pupil, Saratu and her class mate, Aisha were selected and transferred from the village school to the Pilot school on merit. Pilot schools normally admit brilliant and promising pupils from primary four and groom them for three years to gain admission into secondary schools.

Many girls forfeit their admission into such pilot schools due to the long distances they have to cover just to get there. Among those children out of school who live in rural areas, girls are often the most deprived. A considerable number of all out-of-school girls in Nigeria do not attend school because the schools that they have access to are just too far away from their homes.

Not many parents would allow their daughters cover 12 kilometres daily, Monday to Friday, to access school, and on foot!

Saratu, however, is a lucky girl. Her parents not only allow her to do so, they encouraged her by providing her with a rusty old second-hand bicycle, which she rides to school. When it breaks down she just pulls it along. Within her frailty lies the strong-will of an Amazon, a will to conquer ignorance and acquire education.

We took her and the bicycle in our vehicle and proceeded to Wurmawa community where a meeting of the School Based Management Committee was to hold. As we entered the village other children noticed her and chanted "GA Sare, Ga Sare" to welcome her (meaning 'here is Saratu, here is Saratu'). On alighting from the vehicle, a little boy offered to take the bicycle home for her. It seems that Saratu and her bicycle have become quite popular in the town where she lives.

Saratu's mother, Madam Amina, said their support for Saratu's education was inspired by the Girls' Education Project. She and her husband now appreciate the value of girls' education and even though they are a poor family, they want to see Saratu through school.



*Saratu with her new mountain bike.
Inset: a year ago with the old rusty bike
she used to get to school.*

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Aisha and Saratu going to school on their new bikes.

© UNICEF Nigeria/2007/Nwosu

...That was a year ago

Now Saratu and her friend Aisha both own brand new mountain bikes. The girls received the bicycles from a kind benefactor moved by their story and the strong will and determination displayed by these girls in the lengths they go to just to be able to attend school.

We go to visit Saratu at home. The compound speaks volumes of the family's level of poverty and their vulnerability to some of life's harsher strokes. Yet in the midst of this, Saratu is not deterred. "I hope to become a teacher one day", she tells us.

Saratu still has to cover a distance of 6 kilometres every day just to get to school – and another 6 kilometres to get back home. This is no easy feat, especially on the desert sands of the arid community in which she lives. But at least, with her new bike, she now has one less thing to worry about.

Saratu remains just as determined to finish her education. There can be no doubt about it; she is still the strong little girl, the little Amazon, we met a year ago. □

Did you know...

- ◆ UNICEF identifies remote geographic location as one of the more significant obstacles preventing some children from starting or finishing school.
- ◆ In developing countries, 30 per cent of rural children are out of school compared with 18 per cent of those in urban areas.
- ◆ In Sub Saharan Africa, over 80 per cent of children not enrolled in school live in rural areas. In Nigeria, 76.5 per cent of children out of school live in rural communities.
- ◆ Children in rural areas are likely to have to travel much further to reach the nearest school.

An imam's call for girls' education



Imam Liman Aliyu (centre) speaks to a gathering of fellow Imams and other members of the community in Tureta, Sokoto State.

On Fridays, the Tureta central mosque is a magnet to many communities who come for worship and the activities of a big market day. But for some time now, the Friday Jumu'at sermons have had a little something extra added on.

Tureta is one of the many Local Government Areas in Sokoto State with a very low level of education among its people and in particular its women. This rural community has very conservative beliefs in relation to women's roles and rights, and even Islamic education for their women is delivered via young boys who receive the lessons from their instructors and then pass it on to the women at home. Girls are typically married off at a very early age and although they

are allowed to briefly attend Qur'anic school, their mothers' demand for their help with the household chores gives them very little time to learn much in the schools.

Liman Aliyu is the chief Imam of Tureta town and we first met him at a sensitization forum being held to support girls' education. We were pleasantly surprised to hear him supporting the message of the girls' education project by quoting extensively from the Qur'an and other Islamic writings. It was even more remarkable to discover that he preaches this message from his pulpit every Friday after the Ju-

mu'at sermons. Imam Aliyu also tries to sensitise his audience on HIV/AIDS.

Mallam Aliyu feels that aside from the fact that he is a member of the local government girls' education project steering committee, it is also his religious obligation to talk to people about these important issues. And coming from a mallam of his standing, his frank, hard hitting messages on girls' education and on HIV/AIDS are not only creating awareness but they are making people stop and think. Many young people in the community regret not having gone to school and many of them wish that there had been someone like Liman Aliyu to tell them about the importance of education much earlier.

Mallam Aliyu has also instructed other Imams to include the girls' education message in their Friday sermons. Sometimes, by the time project officials get to a community, the girls' education message is already there before them, courtesy of Imam Aliyu.

As a result of Liman Aliyu's efforts for the girls' education project, there has been an increase in the number of girls transiting to secondary school in Tureta local government. Last year, twenty girls in the area went to secondary school; before the project was implemented, this number was only five. □

(Continued from page 3)

tion Board. Thanks to the Girls' Education Project, it was also equipped with water pumps, as well as separate latrines for boys and girls. Teachers also benefit, receiving extra training.

The importance of education, for example, is that one can become someone like a medical doctor who can help women deliver babies safely," says Wasila, who studies hard and has become the top student in her class. She takes her education seriously, knowing that, like Jamila,

there are still many girls in Nigeria who do not have the second

chance that she has received.

Wasila's good marks in school bring a rare smile to her father's face. He struggles to support his seven children with a small pension.

After school, Wasila likes to read to her father and show him what she has learnt at school. Next to them is Wasila's little brother. With her encouragement, he is trying on his sister's blue UNICEF school bag. On the top of the bag, a slogan in the Hausa language reads clearly, 'Take me to school'. □



Wasila puts up her hand to answer a question in her English class at school.

Promoting inclusion of physically challenged pupils

Twelve year-old Ladidi Moses is an outstanding pupil at Gwada Central Primay School in Shiroro local government of Niger State. She excels in class and comes top at every examination. Ladidi dreams of a bright future but she knows that in order for her dreams to come true, she will have to continue exercising the strength and perseverance that got her to where she is now.

As a child, Ladidi suffered from poliomyelitis and the disease left her unable to walk without crutches. For the past five years, school has been a struggle as her disability has made it difficult for her to attend classes.

Since enrolling at Gwada Central, Ladidi has had to cover the daily 800 metres distance from her home to school on crutches.

Ladidi's shining example of perseverance was recognized by both the school and the local education authorities in Gwada Central. Her exemplary performance in a class of 50 pupils, and in a community that does not encourage female education, prompted her teachers to present Ladidi for recognition at an interactive session that was part of a review of the Girls' Education Project.

After the visit, UNICEF presented Ladidi with a wheelchair to help ease her difficulties and to encourage her and her family to continue to support her interest in education. The gesture has not only made movement within and outside the school more comfortable for Ladidi but it has also boosted her morale and self confidence.

She dreams of going to higher institu-

tion and pursuing a career in medicine. "I want to be a doctor", she says but she knows that it is a long road to travel and that it will not be easy, least of all because her family is poor. But, she is determined, "I would have loved to proceed to boarding school in Minna but my parents cannot afford it so I will go



Ladidi Moses in her wheelchair on the school grounds of Gwada Central Primary School in Niger State.

to the Day Secondary School in Gwada", she said.

Ladidi acknowledges that she has already surmounted the biggest obstacle in her journey to success. "I have been able to prove both at home and at school that I am capable of facing any challenge. I was very shy when I started coming to school but not anymore", she added.

Ladidi's influence has inspired two

other physically challenged pupils. Suwaiba Abubakar, 9, and Haftsatu Danladi, 10, are also pupils of Gwada Central who have been affected by poliomyelitis. Ladidi's accomplishments at school have helped pave the way for them.

UNICEF presented all three girls with wheelchairs in a ceremony attended by members of the school based management committee, the local education authority and other officials. UNICEF presented an additional ten wheelchairs to physically challenged pupils in different primary schools in three focus local government areas of the state.

Ladidi's story and the presentation of the wheelchairs by UNICEF is helping shape the education of physically challenged children in Niger State. Project officials have reported an increase in enrolment, attendance and performance of physically challenged pupils in the focused areas. Some students who had dropped out of school are returning, hoping the assistance of the project will help make attending school easier for them.

Ladidi can now join other kids at break time; moving around the fields, playing and cheering football games. Social interactions between her and other pupils have improved significantly.

"My favourite subjects are social studies, primary science and English language. And I love football."

At home, Ladidi helps with the chores but says: "I would love to read at home too but I don't have books. I would love to have more books to read." □

Community builds for girls' education

After a grueling two-hour journey on a rocky desert path, we arrived at Dagwarga Ubandawaki, a rural community in Sokoto State. Normally, we would go to see the village head first but this time we headed for the school premises, attracted by a group of men working on a building construc-



School based management committee members of Dagwarga Ubandawaki building a library for the school.

tion. It was obvious it was not a gov-

ernment project because the men were using local mud bricks.

We were greeted with warm smiles as the men stopped work to welcome us. They told us the school's management committee decided to build a school library because community members wanted their children to have a reading room where they could keep their texts and other books. In addition, the head teacher had no office so they decided to also build a head teacher's office. This would also provide a place to keep school records.

As we spoke with the builders, we discovered that they were not hired labourers; they were members of the community volunteering to construct the buildings.

We were amazed at their display of commitment. They told us that the main reason for their lukewarm attitude towards children's education in the past was because pupils did not learn much in school. So instead,

they engaged the children in farming activities.

The introduction of the girls' education project has been enlightening, they said. "We now understand that as parents we owe our children a good education and that it is right we contribute to this in cash and kind."

Since the school was built, over 14 years ago, it has had only a block of three classrooms and two teachers. Before the girls' education project was implemented, this was adequate as very few pupils came to school, especially girls. There were only 70 girls enrolled and attendance was lower during market days. There are now 212 girls at the school - a 200 per cent increase in girls' enrolment. This is a positive improvement although it means classes are now overcrowded. Two more teachers have been posted to the school.

Last year, for the first time in its history, the school celebrated the graduation of its primary six pupils. □



CONTRIBUTION OF DFID TO GIRLS EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

In many developing countries and in the international arena, DFID and UNICEF often combine forces to help deliver improvements for the livelihoods and rights of children; Nigeria is no exception to this partnership.

Nigeria's education system requires a major transformation, but the critical problem is poor governance: ineffective use of resources

and institutional fragmentation. DFID, the UK government development agency, aims to strengthen the Nigerian Federal and State government management of policy, services and resources to achieve universal basic education (UBE) and gender parity: both key Millennium Development Goals.

The problem of low participation of girls in schooling in many poor northern areas of Nigeria is being addressed by UNICEF, which DFID funds through the Girls Education Project (GEP) in 6 northern states. GEP addresses this issue through a range of community awareness activities, provision of inputs to 720 schools/communities and improved state and

local management of education provision. Findings of a recent review revealed that UNICEF has been successful in supporting improved girl participation rates in targeted areas and managing the effective provision of resources.

DFID recognises that achieving universal basic education and getting all girls enrolled and learning in schools is a long term challenge and requires a similar long term commitment. As the current 3 year phase of the Girls' Education Project comes to an end, DFID and UNICEF are exploring options on how best to jointly continue operations. □

Good Practices



Alh. Zakar Saleh, Sarkin Fulani, representing the Emir of Hadejia, poses with pupils in Kazaure after enrolling them.

Jigawa State supports girls' education

With the renovation of 18 blocks of classrooms; the production of 20,000 continuous assessment sheets; the purchase of seven vehicles for monitoring, the procurement of N114 million worth of science equipment for schools in Jigawa State and the training of over 4,000 teachers in collaboration with the Nigeria Teachers' Institute and UNICEF, the girls' education project in Jigawa State has received tremendous impetus.

The launch of a school enrolment drive at the Mayaki Girls Islamiya primary school in Kazaure, Jigawa State, was a further demonstration of the State Government's commitment to education, particularly girls' education.

The girls' education project coordinator in Jigawa State, Hajiya Sa'ade Kachalla, reported an improvement in girls' enrolment in the State. She attributes this to the efforts of a group of women that go from house to house daily to check on parents whose children do not report for school.

A nomadic fulani enrolls 22 daughters in school

A nomadic Fulani, Mallam Abubakar Bube of Karaya community in Rafi LGA of Niger state has enrolled all his 22 daughters in a nomadic primary school supported by the Girls' Education Project. Mallam Bube, who is also the School Based Management Committee chairman of the nomadic school, said he understood the value of education of the girl-child and wanted to demonstrate to his community by this example.



Mallam Bube with his 22 daughters

Mother and daughter go to school

It's a quiet Sunday in the Muslim community of Babban Kufai in the Northern Nigeria state of Katsina. While students at the local primary school enjoy their day off, more than 80 women are crammed inside one classroom, busy learning how to read and write, many for the first time in their lives.

Among them is 45-year-old Hadiza Adamu. She got married when she was only 13 and never had the opportunity to go to school. Having missed out on schooling for so many years, Hadiza and other women like her now appreciate education and value it above anything else.

"I feel like I've been cheated," says Hadiza. "That's why I am now making sure that my children go to school daily. I also encourage my neighbours to send their children to school. Considering the importance of education, I would not like anyone close to me to miss out on it.

"Without it, development is not possible," she adds.

Two years ago, adult literacy classes did not exist in this community. The number of students enrolled in school was half of the current level. However, since the Girls' Education Project began in the village in 2005, the whole community has embraced education – something that many here consider a revolutionary change.

"In the past, many women were not interested in literacy. But now, they are showing interest," said Adamu Sani, Hadiza's husband. "They study their books until they fall asleep at night."

At home Hadiza shares the household responsibilities with her husband's other wife. Her two children, Alawiyyah, 13, and Yusuf, 8, go to

an opportunity to promote the importance of education and encourage more women to join the literacy class.

She is also an active member of her community's school-based management committee. The group meets regularly to discuss strategies for increasing enrolment and providing quality education.

It is the first time in village history that the women have been allowed to participate in the same forum as men. And as a result of their persistent efforts, girls have been banned from hawking or working during school hours in the Hausa and Fulani communities. This ensures that all girls can stay focused on their schooling.

The Education and empowerment of women and girls is at the heart of the Girls' Education Project. In Hadiza's community, the literacy class now has nearly 100 women who attend regularly and the number of girls enrolled in primary school has doubled in just one year. There are almost as many girls in the classes as boys – another revolutionary change.

"Development has come to our doorstep," says Mr. Sani. "And our only choice is to embrace it wholeheartedly."

The community of Babban Kufai obviously recognises that an investment in education – especially of their girls – is one of the best investments they can make in their development. □



Hadiza walks her children to the same UNICEF supported school she attends in their village of Babban Kufai in Katsina State.

the same school where she attends her adult literacy class.

Hadiza uses her attendance at community congregations, such as naming and wedding ceremonies, as



Hadiza (far right) participates in the school based management committee.

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What is a Child Friendly School?

A Child Friendly School is one that provides:

- ◆ A Safe and learning conducive environment.
- ◆ Community involvement in school management.
- ◆ Access to water and sanitation with separate and adequate toilets for boys and girls.
- ◆ Improved supervision and management.
- ◆ Good teaching with well trained teachers.
- ◆ Adequate and gender sensitive learning and teaching materials.
- ◆ Free education for all the community.

Integrated Islamiya schools boost girls' enrolment

Girls in class at the Nurul Islamiya school in Cheledi.

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It is a sunny evening in Cheledi town in North Eastern Nigeria. In one of the two classrooms at the Nurul Islamiya School in Cheledi in the Kirfi Local Government Area of Bauchi State, about 100 enthusiastic pupils aged between 6 and 16 are cramped in a classroom whose space ideally should accommodate not more than 30 pupils. Some of the pupils cannot find space on the benches in the class. They squat on the floor. The weather is characterized by windy, hot air, the kind you would expect to find in this part of Nigeria in April. Oblivious to these inconveniences, the pupils have their eyes fixed on the blackboard, fully concentrating on their English lesson.

A few years ago, this kind of scenario would have been thought impossible in an Islamiya or Qu'ranic school in Nigeria, usually established for the sole objective of schooling the children in Arabic literacy and helping them to memorize the Koran. However, the introduction of the Girls Education Project, which has as one of its strategies the integration of English, Mathematics, Social Studies and Hygiene into the curriculum of these schools, has

changed all that.

The Nurul Islamiya School in Cheledi is one of the many Islamiya and Qu'ranic schools where integrated education has become a feature of life, with the introduction of the Girls' Education Project

"Our school was established in 1982 entirely through community efforts," says Mallam Adamu

“**Formal and religious education can go hand in hand**”

Abubakar, 40, and head teacher at the school since 2005. "When the school started, we were using the Kirfi Cheledi Central Primary School as a temporary site but UNICEF has supported us with cement and zinc which we have used in erecting these two classrooms you see," he says.

The school also benefited from UNICEF's support in the areas of water, sanitation and hygiene, with the erection of two separate toilets for boys and girls as well as a borehole. "The existence of these facilities enable us to put into practice what we teach the pupils in the class concerning hand washing and personal hygiene for a healthy living," says Abubakar.

The Nurul Islamiya School has witnessed

increased enrolment since it embraced Integrated Qu'ranic Education.

"Parents are cooperating with us by sending their children to school, particularly girls. We now have 450 pupils compared to less than 200 before the introduction of the project in 2005."

While the increase in girl pupils is a positive development, the downside is that classroom accommodation has now become a serious challenge. The two classrooms cannot adequately accommodate the number of students now enrolled.

As in many other communities across Northern Nigeria, there has been a positive change in attitude towards formal education.

The head teacher of the Nurul Islamiya School in Cheledi attributes acceptance of the integration of the core subjects into the school's curriculum to the realization that the future of the children will be compromised if they are denied formal education. "As far as we are concerned, the two types of education are not contradictory. The two can go hand in hand," says Abubakar. □



Class in session at the Nurul Islamiya school in Cheledi.

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Girls' attendance increases with sanitation in schools



Zilfa'u Sada (centre) and her friends wash their hands after using the toilet facilities at their school.

Zilfa'u Sada is one of only two girls currently attending the sixth grade at Unguwar Makera Primary School, in Katsina State. Only two out of the sixteen girls enrolled in primary one made it to the sixth grade, compared to 18 boys. The other fourteen girls dropped out.

This is a common trend in primary schools in Northern Nigeria. Several factors are responsible for this. Poverty and early marriage are some of them; the lack of toilets and water facilities in the schools is another.

Ninety percent of the 120 schools, currently supported by the Girls' Education Project in Katsina State, did not have toilets and water at the in-

ception of the project in December 2004. Unguwar Makera, the school Zilfa'u attends, was one of such schools. Girls are particularly affected by this situation. In the words of Zilfa'u, "boys find it easier to go behind a tree or some bush to ease themselves during school hours. As a girl, you feel too shy to do so because you need privacy."

The only option left for girls was to walk back home to use the toilet. Some of them never return to school the same day. "My elder friends don't come to school when they have their monthly period and because of that, they gradually stop coming to school at all," explains Zilfa'u. With the intervention of the Girls' Education Project, separate blocks of toilets for boys and for girls as well as a borehole are provided to each of the 120 schools. For the girls of Unguwar Makera Primary School, life has changed.

As for Zilfa'u, her excitement

is clear: "We don't need to go home to ease ourselves anymore and this has encouraged us to come to school regularly now. We also have privacy because our toilets are different from those of the boys. We have been taught to wash our hands after using the toilets through the School Environmental Health clubs."

Her remarks are corroborated by Ibrahim Lawal, the Head Teacher of the school: "We underrated the impact of a toilet," he says, adding that since the toilet blocks were built by UNICEF, girls' attendance has improved. □



Zilfa'u Sada demonstrates proper hygiene practices outside the school's toilet facilities.

Children from Borno State Speak Out on Education

The children interviewed below are from Adam Mustapha School, in Kaga LGA, Borno State. It is one of the schools supported by the Girls' Education Project in the State...

Amina Mohamed, 11 years old, class 6.



"It is important for children to go to school because they will have education and know how to read and write. I want to work hard and be a scientist because they can go to the sky and see the sun and the moon. Education is important for girls because girls have more knowledge than the boys. When the prizes are given, the girls always come first. Some

children don't go to school because they don't have money or because their parents don't care. They will be poor because they are not educated."

Aisha Baba Adamu, 10 years old, class 6



"I am the 6th child in a family of nine children. When I was in class 5, I stopped coming to school because my mum asked me to help look after my little sisters while she had to go to the farm. One of my sisters is 2 years old, the other is 3. This year, she has someone to help her at home and the 3 year old goes to the nursery. I am very happy that I do not have to miss school again. I like to go to school because I learn to read and write. Those who are not in school will become housewives because they do not get education."

Amina Hashimu, 9 years old, class 5.

"I think that it is important to get knowledge, because when you are knowledgeable, you can become a doctor, a teacher, a soldier or a civil servant. Those who are not in school will become illiterate and their future is bad. Some parents do not send their children to school because they themselves did not go to school and are not educated. Girls should be educated so that they can help other females, for example they can assist in maternity labour if they become nurses. We need more teachers and teachers should teach well."



Gajimi Mustapha, 10 years old, class 6

"It is not good behavior not to go to school. A boy that goes to school can read. I would like to become an 'astronaut' to visit the sun. It is more important for girls to be in school because most girls don't go to school. We could improve our schools with swings, table-tennis, skipping ropes and football pitch. We need socks and tennis shoes to play football."



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Responds to Flood Emergency

Hundreds displaced by floods in Ogun and Lagos States get assistance

Continuous rainfall caused a major flood in Ogun State at the end of July. Many houses and bridges along the river bank were washed away, rendering occupants of over 260 houses homeless. About 472 families were displaced. The State Government responded immediately to the situation, organizing a camp for affected persons at the State Technical College, Oke-Iba, in Abeokuta, the State capital. By



One of the female rooms at the Lagos camp with Long Lasting Insecticide Nets donated by UNICEF.

August 1st, the camp was hosting 187 persons, among them 66 children and 75 women.

According to the General Manager of the Ogun State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), Mr. Odule, the training received from UNICEF enabled them to implement the contingency plan efficiently. Government supported the victims by providing blankets, towels, food and water. UNICEF gave technical support for the management of the camp and provided Long Lasting Insecticide Nets, drugs and equipment for the camp clinic. UNICEF also assisted with

de-worming and vaccination against measles for the children.

The camp officially closed on the 14th of August, 2007 after the flooded areas dried up and people were able to return to their houses. Four people that had nowhere to go were rehabilitated by the Red Cross.

The excess water released into the Ogun River and its tributaries also caused a flood in Lagos State, compounding the woes of communities already suffering from the effects of blocked drains and waterways. A provisional camp, sheltering about 600 displaced persons was set up at Ikosi Primary school. As of August 10, there were 167 children in the camp of whom 64 were under five. As in Ogun State, support given by UNICEF for the establishment of Lagos State Emergency Management Agency and the relevant training for emergency preparedness and response paid off as collaborative efforts were made to help the victims of the flood.

The State Government provided beddings, toiletries, stoves, clothing, food and cooking utensils from its already pre-positioned stock of essential materials. Eighteen makeshift bathrooms were put in place and toilets in the school were upgraded. Two boreholes were dug to provide adequate water supply. UNICEF helped with the reorganization of the camp, vaccination and de-worming of children, provision of Long Lasting Nets, drugs and other medical supplies.

In addition, UNICEF made arrangements for the supply of two School-in-a-box kits, mats for Early Childhood Care and some exercise books. UNICEF also provided recreational facilities and assisted in organizing health, hygiene and educational talks for adolescents and mothers. In September, the camp moved from the temporary site to another site in Isheri to give room for the start of the school

session. The State Government continues to intensify efforts to complete building a more permanent habitation in Ikorodu for affected people.

UNICEF in partnership with the Red Cross and the State Emergency Managing Agency reaches 22,000 displaced by floods in Anambra State



UNICEF partnered with the Red Cross to reach areas left inaccessible by the floods in Anambra State.

In mid-September forty-two communities in Anambra West and East Local Governments Areas (LGAs), were hit by the floods which displaced an estimated 22,000 persons. Some were reported to have drowned. Schools, houses, health centres and churches were submerged by the flood. The high waters made it particularly difficult for emergency services to reach the large number of people that were affected. For weeks, movement to the affected communities was only possible by canoe while some communities remained inaccessible



A mother holds her baby as she waits for assistance at one of the camps in Anambra State.

even by boat. Distribution of relief was done by the Red Cross and by the State Emergency Managing Agency (SEMA)— a challenge as only boats and canoes could be used to bring life saving items.

As farm lands had been destroyed and only few tubers of yam and potatoes had been salvaged there was severe food shortage in the affected communities. The displaced persons complained of cold, lack of food and sleeping materials such as mats and blankets. Even though many families were absorbed by relatives and neighbours, the pressure on existing resources was high. In addition, the lack of clean water left most of the displaced persons exposed to dangers of water borne diseases.

As early as September 26, a team from UNICEF Enugu Field Office delivered a truck of items for distribution by the Red Cross and SEMA to the Deputy Governor. They also discussed response to the emergency with Government officials. Among the supplies provided by UNICEF was Calcium Hypochlorite for the treatment of water, tarpaulin for shelters, drugs and health kits, 1200 Long Lasting Insecticide Nets. Two days later, UNICEF staff made another trip to the affected areas to ensure that the items were being distributed to the displaced persons. UNICEF also facilitated a coordination meeting with all institutions involved.

To meet the educational needs of the many children who could not attend schools because school buildings were submerged, UNICEF provided five 'school-in-a-box' kits for about 2,400 children and worked towards engaging teachers from affected schools to continue education in the emergency situation. UNICEF also gave financial support to the Red Cross to conduct a more comprehensive assessment of the situation.

On the 3rd of October, it took the Red Cross three hours to reach two communities that had been left inac-

Baby girl born in Bauchi camp

When she gets pregnant, the potential mother's prayer and expectation is that when the time comes for her to bring her bundle of joy into the world, she will be able to do so in a safe environment. She hopes to be able to deliver her baby either at home or in a health facility with qualified health workers attending to her at that critical moment of birth. To an expectant



UNICEF Chief of Field Office in Bauchi, Mohammad Jalloh, holds a baby girl born during the floods in a classroom at one of the camps. The girl's mother, Tabawa Abdullahi, (far left) looks on.

mother, such hopes cannot be considered unreasonable expectations.

For 20-year-old Mrs. Tabawa Babangida Abdullahi however, these expectations turned out to be a luxury out of her reach when she was forced to deliver her baby in a classroom last August, after being displaced from her home due to the havoc caused by the floods that swept through her community.

The floods drove Mrs. Abdullahi out of her home in the middle of the night to a classroom at the Government Comprehensive Secondary School Misau Camp in Misau Local Government Area of Bauchi State, North Eastern Nigeria, where she inevitably delivered Fatima, her daughter and second child.

To fulfill UNICEF's mandate of taking care of children and women in emergencies, like Mrs. Abdullahi and her baby, UNICEF has provided various relief items to the displaced people in the camp, including long lasting mosquito nets and food in the form of beans, rice, garri, palm oil and sugar.

She related her experience to us:

"When the rain started, we were sleeping. We were awakened by the sound of water rushing into our room. When my husband and I realized that the water kept on coming in the more we tried to bale it out of the house, we took our two-year-old son, Hassan, and fled to this place. I was nine months pregnant with Fatima.

There were no window shutters or doors, and so mosquitoes had quite a feast on us. It was a very cold night and I could not sleep. My husband fell sick the next morning and went to the hospital. Before he came back, I had delivered a baby girl. She is a very healthy and cute baby. We thank God for giving her to us, regardless of the way she came." □

cessible by the floods. A total of 28 communities, though still submerged and only accessible by canoe, were reached by the Red Cross and received relief items. SEMA provided 10,000 Insecticide Treated Nets (ITNs) as well as funding for the distribution of relief aid. The State

Ministry of Health also gave some Insecticide Treated Nets and organised immunization activities to vaccinate about 3,500 children aged 6 months to 5 years against measles and polio and gave them Vitamin A supplementation, with UNICEF technical support.

Floods displace families in North East of the country ...UNICEF Responds

Following heavy rains which swept through the ten states supported by the UNICEF Field Office in Bauchi, over 100,000 persons are believed to have lost their homes, hundreds of acres of farmlands, crops, livestock and other valuable property. Water sources were polluted, schools, places of worship and bridges were destroyed. Many people were also reported dead. Plateau was one of the worst hit with 56,571 persons estimated to be affected and over 100 deaths reported. In Bauchi, 12 LGAs were inundated and an estimated 31,000 persons displaced, mainly women and chil-



Families displaced by the floods take stock of supplies provided by UNICEF at a camp in Misau local government area of Bauchi State.

dren. Five persons were reported dead.

Yobe, Adamawa, Borno, Jigawa, Nasarawa, Taraba, Gombe and Kano were equally affected by flooding and thousand of families' had to leave their homes or lost part of their property. However, only Bauchi, Borno and Plateau States established camps to cater for displaced victims. In Yobe State, where an estimated 18,312 persons were affected, the three camps temporarily

set up in Damaturu at the outbreak of the flood were soon closed down.

UNICEF Field Office in Bauchi quickly responded to this emergency, assisting the State Emergency Management agencies in assessing the situation. UNICEF paid visits to Government officials in Plateau and Bauchi to discuss the situation and determine the magnitude of support required. UNICEF provided relief materials to displaced persons in the camp. A total of 3,604 people –including over 2000 children- were sheltered in the two camps in Plateau State while 271 people were living in the four camps set up in Bauchi State. UNICEF provided mattresses, Insecticide Treated Nets, blankets,

UNICEF staff visited the camps in Plateau, Bauchi and Borno States and gave de-worming tablets to children and pregnant women there.



Children displaced by the floods in Bauchi State.

They also gave them health talks on Sanitation and Hygiene.

Observing that water, sanitation and hygiene conditions were particularly poor in camps in Plateau, UNICEF provided two Ventilated Improved Pit latrines each and two hand pump boreholes to the Pilgani and Yashi camps in Plateau State. Until then, the main sources of water supply in the camps were open wells and rivers and open defecation was practised in nearby bushes by the people living in the camp - creating a risk of water borne infection.

"We spent over \$100,000 on the flood emergency in the five states of Bauchi, Borno, Plateau, Gombe and Yobe," says Mohammad Jalloh, UNICEF Assistant Representative in Bauchi. "This money was spent on procurement of relief materials and training of State teams for needs and rapid assessment in the 10 States of our zone".

Response from State governments has been significant: Bauchi State provided support to the tune of 201 million Naira to its 21 LGAs while Plateau State government provided relief materials worth 31 million Naira. Other States provided similar support. □

UNICEF Nigeria: Highlights



UNICEF calls on Northern Governors to address child survival challenges



UNICEF Representative in Nigeria, Mr Ayalew Abai, addressing the Northern Governors'

UNICEF was one of the special invitees at the Northern Governors forum, held on August 30th in Kaduna, bringing together the newly elected Governors of 19 Northern States.

In his presentation, UNICEF Representative in Nigeria, Mr Ayalew Abai, highlighted the challenges posed by child survival and the work of UNICEF in supporting the Accelerated Child Survival and Development (ACSD) strategy.

The Representative demonstrated that despite some improvements, most health, education and poverty indicators are worse in the North than in the South. He said the ACSD Strategy could significantly reduce child mortality in a relatively short period of time by using low cost and effective interventions delivered through integrated health packages.

UNICEF introduced the strategy in Nigeria in 2006.

A communiqué was issued urging UNICEF to work closely with all States and local Governments to realize the Millennium Development Goals on health, girl child education and girls' rights protection.

FRCN, NAPTIP and UNICEF conduct a national campaign against child trafficking

The Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) has launched a three month intensive campaign on child trafficking linked with birth registration. The campaign, which started on October 1st, is to raise awareness and educate the public on child trafficking and child economic exploitation as well as improve birth registration for all Nigerian children with a view to eliciting action by all stake-

holders.

More than 21 hours of prime network airtime will be devoted to this campaign which will use a mix of programme formats to convey key messages informing the public on issues related to child trafficking and birth registration.

Children living on the streets in Lagos produce their radio programme

UNICEF has supported the Child-to-Child network and Radio Nigeria, to mobilise, counsel and train 45 street children in basic media skills and radio production techniques so they can poignantly and with minimum support tell the stories of their lives, their fears, frustrations and hopes for the future.



Children living on the streets of Lagos record a programme in the FRCN studio as part of a UNICEF supported training workshop.

The training resulted in the production of 'Voices from the street', a 13 episodes series, broadcast to more than 60 million listeners of Radio Nigeria from September to November 2007.

The project has helped the children, who are exposed all forms of abuses, find meaning and dignity in life. Efforts were made by Child-to-Child Network and UNICEF at reconciling them with their parents and sending those who could not go back home to rehabilitation centres for street children.

Cross border Child Trafficking Sensitization Campaign with Benin Republic

UNICEF has supported a cross-border sensitization campaign on the ills of child trafficking in three communities along the Benin/Nigeria border in August 2007. This activity was conducted jointly by Nigeria and Benin Republic as part of their cooperation agreement against trafficking in persons.

The campaign, which lasted for three days and included a rally and interactive sessions, was aimed at creating awareness on the harmful effects of child trafficking and the existing laws

against it. Participants included border law enforcement officers, community leaders, transport workers and members of the communities.

A community watch group was established to monitor the situation while community leaders pledged their support in the fight against child trafficking.

Launch of National Integrated Early Childhood Development policy

A national policy for the Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) was launched on October 8 by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The policy aims to ensure a good start in life for all Nigerian children under the age of five through the provision of adequate health care, nutrition, access to safe water and sanitation, early learning, psycho-social stimulation and protection.

With UNICEF's support, the policy was jointly developed by the line Ministries which include Education, Health, Information and Communication, Agriculture and Water Resources, Women Affairs, Finance, Environment, Housing and Urban Development, National Planning Commission as well as development partners.

Kano and Lagos State Ministries of Health, Japan Embassy and UNICEF commission Vaccine Cold Rooms

New 'walk in' vaccine cold rooms were commissioned in Lagos and



UNICEF Assistant Country Representative, Lagos State Commissioner for Health and Japan Embassy Minister Commissioning the new walk-in cold room for Lagos State

Kano States on September 19, and October 4, 2007 respectively by the State Ministries of Health, Japan Embassy and UNICEF. A total of four such cold rooms were procured with Japanese funds for Nigeria for the States of Lagos, Kano, Rivers

UNICEF Nigeria: Highlights

and Borno for storage of vaccines at State and Local Government level.

Other cold chain equipment funded by the Government of Japan and procured through UNICEF to the 36 States of the Federation include 172 vaccine fridges, 40 freezers, 237 vaccine cold boxes for transporting vaccines, 1,300 geothermal vaccine carriers, 155 ice-lined refrigerators for ice-packs, 5,000 ice packs.

The Government of Japan has been one of the major donors of UNICEF's polio eradication and immunization programme in Nigeria with a total donation of N4.56 billion since 2000. Last June, Japan doubled their annual donation with a contribution amounting to N1.16 billion.

Engaging media in reporting on children's rights

During two training workshops and an advocacy meeting for journalists and media executives in the South West Zone, UNICEF Lagos Field Office has urged the media to keep abreast of current happenings in the area of children's rights, issues concerning discrimination against women and emergency situations such as avian influenza. Over 100 media personnel attended the events.

Meanwhile, in the North East Zone, 29 media chiefs took part in a workshop on highlighting children and women issues in programming. They made a firm commitment to produce and air more quality programmes that focus on issues of child survival, development, protection and participation.

High level advocacy meeting with eight Northern State Governments

The sixth high level advocacy meeting of Secretaries to State Governments and Honorable Commissioners from eight Northern States, the FCT and UNICEF officials of Kaduna Field Office, held in Kebbi State on September 3, 2007. The meeting was attended by 61 participants from the eight States of the North-West zone (Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Niger, Sokoto, Zamfara).

The meeting's main objective was to advocate at high level for the promotion of children and women's rights and all issues relating to their well-being. The forum encouraged the passing of the Child Rights Bill by March 2008, noting that only Kwara out of all the states in the zone has passed the Bill. It urged all States to continue to encourage girls' education.

Enugu State pledges support to UNICEF

On September 20, 2007, Executive Governor of Enugu State, Barrister Sullivan Chime, signed the outstanding 2007 Programme Implementation Agreement which is part of the joint UNICEF and Government programme of cooperation. The signing ceremony took place as the newly appointed UNICEF Assistant Representative of Enugu Field Office, Ms. Pelucy Ntambirweki, paid a courtesy visit to the Governor. "We are committed to protecting the lives of the children and women of Enugu State, commented Barrister Chime. My government is open to all ideas that will positively enhance their lives".

Birth Registration Campaign

Following the launch of a national Birth Registration Campaign in July 2007, UNICEF Lagos Field Office supported a five-day birth registration campaign in Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo and Osun States in September 2007. The public awareness campaign, which included drama presentations and messages from various stakeholders, highlighted the need for a more aggressive effort in birth registration through the establishment of more registration centres.

F.C.T., UNICEF and Unilever launch hand washing campaign

A Hand Washing in Schools campaign aimed at promoting hygiene among pupils and their families has been launched by UNICEF and Unilever Nigeria Plc in conjunction with the Federal Capital Territory on October 25. The launch is part of activities under a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2005 between Unilever & UNICEF Nigeria. In the agreement, Unilever Nigeria has provided N78.6million over a three-year period for UNICEF to implement a Hand Washing, hygiene education and environmental sanitation project in 222 primary Schools across Nigeria (6 schools per state) as part of UNICEF's Child Friendly Schools Initiative with the Federal Government of Nigeria.

Ninety NYSC peer educators trained on HIV/AIDS

UNICEF undertook capacity building of 90 National Youth Service Corps members in Owerri, Imo State, in October 2007. Implemented since 2002, the project is a national initiative aimed at encouraging the country's youth to practice healthy behaviour for reproductive health and the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

The Corps members received Orientation and Master Trainer's refresher training to equip them in sharing knowledge on HIV/AIDS with their peers in the commu-

nity schools to which they have been assigned.

The training covered a number of critical issues relating to HIV/AIDS transmission and prevention and dealing with the impact of the disease on communities and families.

UNICEF/WHO Representatives commend First Lady & Sultan of Sokoto



UNICEF Representative in Nigeria, Mr. Ayalew Abai, with the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji (Dr.) Sa'ad Abubakar III.

UNICEF Representative, Mr. Ayalew Abai and the World Health Organization (WHO) Representative, Dr. Peter Eriki have commended First Lady, Hajia Turai Yar'Adua, for her commitment to the immunization programme in the country.

The Representatives met with the First Lady in Birnin Kebbi, on 26 July 2007, shortly before she flagged off the July 2007 Immunization Plus Days (IPDs) in the town.

The UNICEF Representative, Mr. Abai, expressed gratitude to the First Lady for the importance she attaches to child survival and women health issues, noting that her commitment will make a lot of difference in achieving results.

The Representatives, Mr. Ayalew Abai and Dr. Eriki, also paid a joint courtesy visit to the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji (Dr.) Sa'ad Abubakar III in his palace on 27 July 2007. They expressed appreciation for the support the Sultanate has given the immunization programme in the country.

They said UNICEF and WHO would continue to support Sokoto State and the entire country in the implementation of its health policies and programmes. They appealed to the Sultan to continue to mobilise his followers for the immunization programme and other child survival interventions.

Girls' Education Project

Achieving Gender Equity in Primary Education



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