

Options in Nigeria

What we do

Options has worked in Nigeria over the last two decades as a trusted and locally embedded partner to both the national and state governments, with an operational footprint in 18 of the 36 states, including the Federal Capital Territory.

Drawing on our extensive expertise and local networks, we work with government and partners to improve Nigeria's health sector performance, with a focus on achieving universal health coverage.

Our focus is on:

- ▶ **Improving the quality** of reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH).
- ▶ **Strengthening health systems** governance, stewardship and accountability mechanisms to support local advocates to hold government to account on their commitments.
- ▶ **Collaborating with the government** to design context specific, sustainable, health financing solutions that provide financial protection for Nigeria's citizens, in particular women and girls.
- ▶ **Accelerating social change** by building powerful coalitions and galvanising social movements to challenge gender inequality, reduce stigma and enable women and girls to make informed choices about their bodies and future.
- ▶ **Bringing together stakeholders** at all levels of the health system, including governments, civil society, and health service providers, to deliver programmes that improve access to high-quality, well-financed and equitable health services.

Our Impact

Health financing

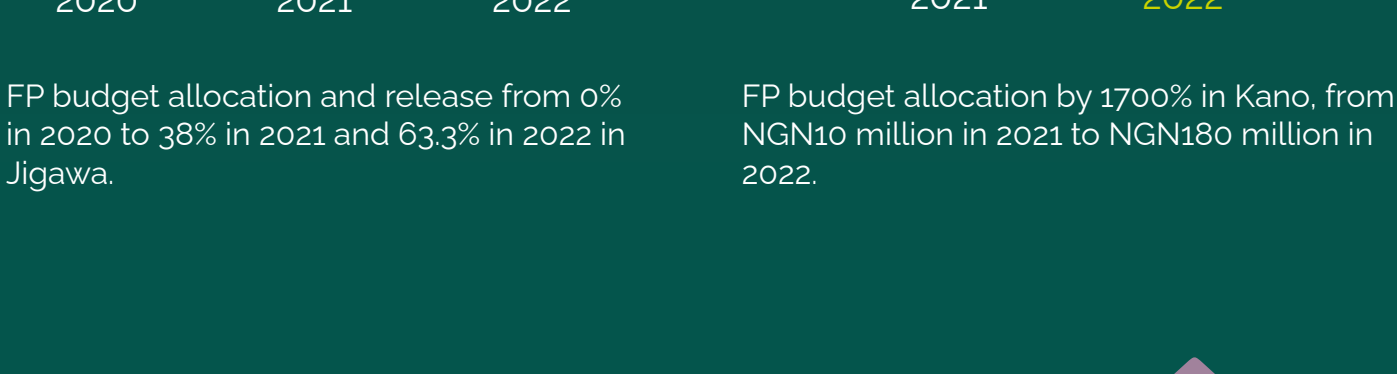
We support governments and civil society organisations (CSOs) to design and implement tailored health financing solutions. These contribute to expanding access to health care through advocacy, capacity building, revenue mobilisation and operationalisation of state health insurance schemes.

Increasing domestic financing and generating evidence to inform targeted interventions

We work with sub-national governments across multiple states to prioritise family planning (FP) and sexual reproductive health (SRH) in annual budgets, and to identify opportunities for increasing domestic financing. This involves developing and implementing evidence-based policies and plans to address the unmet need for contraceptives of women and girls, particularly among the poor, youth and people living with disabilities.

In Kano, Jigawa and Bauchi states, we have worked with the government to conduct health financing diagnostics and analysis to generate evidence on the return on investment for FP/SRH and opportunities to expand the fiscal space. The findings from Kano and Jigawa were used to develop an investment case to advocate for creating an FP budget line in the two states.

This work increased:



FP budget allocation and release from 0% in 2020 to 38% in 2021 and 63.3% in 2022 in Jigawa.

FP budget allocation by 1700% in Kano, from NGN10 million in 2021 to NGN180 million in 2022.

It also led to the creation of a budget line for FP commodities in Kano, of NGN100 million, which increased to NGN200 million in 2023.



Increased facility funding

Recognising that the COVID-19 pandemic challenged primary health care facilities' ability to provide safe and quality maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) services, we supported advocacy efforts for their continued funding in Lagos, Bauchi and Niger states.



Integrating family planning into health insurance schemes

We supported the Jigawa State government to design and launch its first social health insurance scheme, including its benefit packages, monitoring and evaluation systems and operational guidelines, and to ensure that the scheme covers FP/SRH services in 2020. We also worked with the government to launch its Basic Health Care Provision Fund programme which pools funds to also provide coverage for the most vulnerable and poor in 2021.



In Jigawa, we successfully advocated including FP in the health insurance benefit package and have been supporting the Jigawa Contributory Health Management Agency (JICHMA) to implement the scheme, especially in the areas of strategic purchasing as well as monitoring and evaluation.

Developing publicly available tools and approaches

Through the Evidence for Action (E4A) – MamaYe programme, we developed a **Health Budget Advocacy Toolbox**, which includes training modules, guidelines and tools. This can be adapted to specific contexts, enabling it to be used beyond the countries where we work.

This has led to 11 State Led Accountability Mechanisms (SLAMs) using the Toolbox to generate evidence and engage state governments to increase their commitment to MNCH goals

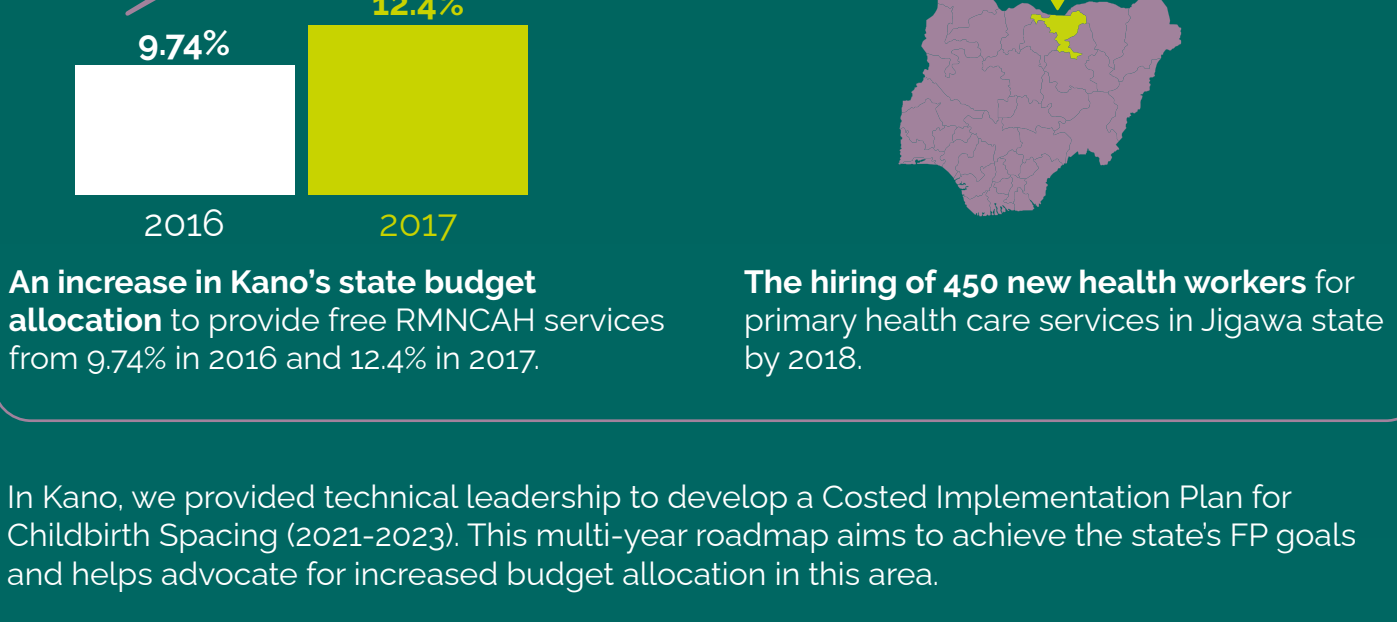


Health system governance, stewardship and accountability mechanisms

Sustainability is at the heart of our approach to providing technical assistance. We focus on strengthening health system governance, leadership, and accountability structures at the national and sub-national levels to support government ownership for providing access to health services for women and girls, and transparency in how health resources are used.

Increasing state-level accountability

To increase accountability and transparency, and advocate for improving the delivery of and access to RMNCAH services, we worked with existing CSO platforms to establish State Led Accountability Mechanisms (SLAMs) in nine states (Jigawa, Kano, Gombe, Ondo, Bauchi, Kaduna, Yobe, Niger and Lagos).



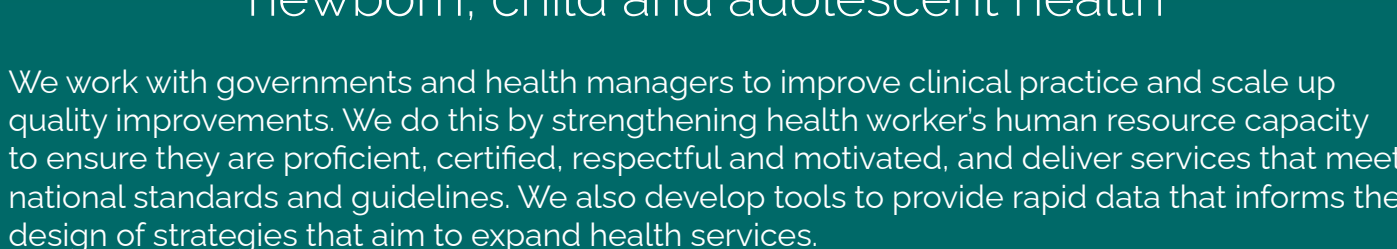
An increase in Kano's state budget allocation to provide free RMNCAH services from 9.74% in 2016 and 12.4% in 2017.

The hiring of 450 new health workers for primary health care services in Jigawa state by 2018.

In Kano, we provided technical leadership to develop a Costed Implementation Plan for Childbirth Spacing (2021-2023). This multi-year roadmap aims to achieve the state's FP goals and helps advocate for increased budget allocation in this area.

Strengthening organisational capacity

We worked with the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) to develop an Organisational Capacity Assessment tool that helped to strengthen federal and state governments' stewardship and coordination roles and supported an effective and evidence-based HIV and AIDS response.



Improving quality of care in reproductive maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health

We work with governments and health managers to improve clinical practice and scale up quality improvements. We do this by strengthening health worker's human resource capacity to ensure they are proficient, certified, respectful and motivated, and deliver services that meet national standards and guidelines. We also develop tools that inform the design of strategies that aim to expand health services.

Developing participatory and digital solutions to address preventable maternal and child deaths

In Kaduna state, we provided pivotal support to introduce and implement community maternal and perinatal death surveillance and response (c-MPDSR), which engaged communities in discussing and taking action to prevent similar deaths occurring in the future. As a result:

- ▶ **Men encourage and support their wives to go to primary health care centres for antenatal care and facility-based births.**
- ▶ **Drivers of the communities' National Union of Road Transport Workers' transport pregnant women to health facilities.**
- ▶ **Members of a community-based organisation screen for blood transfusions** and can identify blood donors during emergencies.

In Lagos State, we pioneered a digital MPDSR system with the Ministry of Health, facilitating electronic data collection and analysis in all of the states' secondary and one tertiary health facilities.

In Bauchi and Niger, we worked directly with the state-led MPDSR Steering Committees and partners to undertake SWOT analyses to improve the states' MPDSR action plans.

This action-driven MPDSR approach has led to practical improvements, including:

- ▶ **The procurement of transport incubators** to enable newborns to receive emergency care during transportation.
- ▶ **Health workers training birth attendants** to recognise early signs of pregnancy complications for timely referral and an improvement of referral systems for emergency obstetric and neonatal care.

We also developed a mobile app for our quality-of-care assessments that measures the health system's readiness and availability of maternal, FP and immunisation services. The app collects data and produces automated scorecards, facilitating a transition from paper-based tools.

The app has been used by more than 950 supported facilities across six states.

Promoting gender equality and social inclusion

We pioneer rights-based approaches to strengthen women's movements, reduce unsafe abortion and end female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). We have:

- ▶ **Spearheaded Africa's largest movement to end FGM/C** through the The Girl Generation Programme (2013-2018), which had over 900 member organisations. We now lead on phase II of the programme, which aims to accelerate positive changes in social attitudes toward ending FGM/C, and to contribute to a significant reduction in the practice in focus countries by 2025.
- ▶ **Reached 130,371 girls in Nigeria** with adolescent SRH information and services.
- ▶ **Trained 44 media organisations** in Lagos State on inclusive gender and social inclusion reporting for COVID-19.

Our commitment

We are committed to working with the Nigerian federal government, states and partners to accelerate progress towards universal health coverage through a responsive, holistic, patient-centred approach that supports the country's efforts to decentralise its social, health systems and transition away from aid. We continue to contribute towards building resilient and equitable health systems, by leveraging transformative innovations at scale, working collaboratively with partners, including the vibrant private sector in Nigeria, and enhancing citizen participation and accountability mechanisms.

Contact

Dr. Ufuoma Festus Omo-Obi, Regional Director, West & Central Africa: u.OmoObi@options.co.uk
Options New Business and Partnerships: newbusiness@options.co.uk

options.co.uk @OptionsinHealth Options Consultancy Services Ltd

Options Consultancy Services is a global team of experts and innovators tackling some of the world's most pressing health challenges. Over the last 30 years, we have worked in more than 50 countries to provide ideas and technical know-how that enable our partners to build a path to lasting change. We are a health systems organisation that understands reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health service delivery. We lead emerging work on the sustainable use of renewable energy in health, shock resilient and climate sensitive infrastructure, and reducing the health system's own direct carbon footprint to build a greener future.

Published June 2023