

Wheels that Heal: Providing Mobile Health Services to Marginalized Communities, in Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria

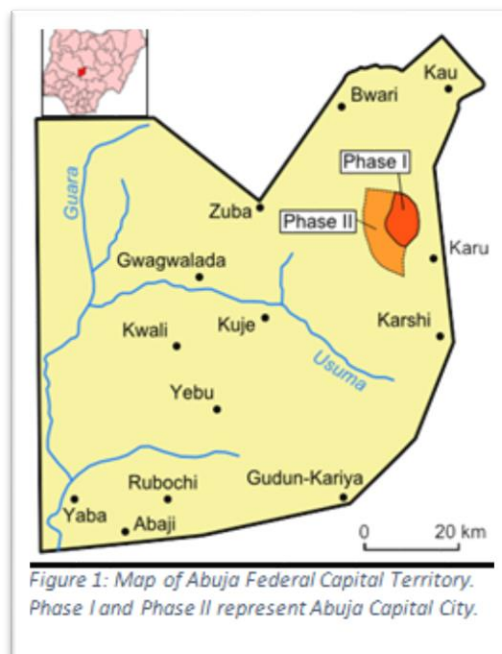
The Isle of Man Government and TLM England and Wales (TLMEW) with TLM Isle of Man (TLM IoM) Annual Progress Report, Year 1 (April 2019 to April 2020)

Project details:

Donor Organisation:	The Isle of Man Government
Implementing Organisation:	The Leprosy Mission England and Wales with The Leprosy Mission Isle of Man
Registration:	Registered UK Charity # 1050327
Registered Address:	Goldhay Way, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough PE2 5GZ
Charity Project Location/Country:	Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, Nigeria
Grant Amount 2019-2021:	GBP £99,000 (Year 1 = £49,500)

Project Goal

The overall goal of this project is to improve the quality of life of 7,845 people affected by leprosy and disabilities in the under-served communities of Yangoji and Karmajiji in the Abuja Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria, through the provision of mobile health services. Karmajiji and Yangoji communities are host to slum settlements for people affected by leprosy, people with disabilities and internally displaced persons. These populations currently face difficult situations including lack of safe water, poor hygiene and sanitation often resulting in preventable diseases. Leprosy affected persons and people with disabilities also face stigmatization and discrimination which leaves them with poor mental health. The project start date is April 26th 2019, and the end date is April 25th, 2021.



Project Progress to Date:

Objective 1: Improve overall health amongst people affected by leprosy, disability, and internal displacement and discrimination in Yangoji and Karmajiji, through the provision of quality mobile clinic outreach services.

- The Wheels that Heal project formally commenced in October 2019 with the purchase of a van to house the mobile clinic. The van was subsequently modified with ramps, steps, awnings, partitions, cabinetry and branding. Clinic furniture and an audio-visual public address system were installed, and a generator purchased to power the clinic in the field. The project acquired basic medical equipment including infrared thermometers, weighing scales, blood pressure monitors, and blood sugar testing devices. Medical supplies including medicines, patient's cards, pens, prescription forms, clinical gloves, lancets, cotton, mentholated spirit and ulcer dressing materials were also procured.
- The first Wheels that Heal medical outreach was held in Yangoji village on 18 March, 2020. It was delivered by a medical team comprising 2 medical doctors from TLM Nigeria, 2 nurses from the FCT Public Health Department, 1 pharmacist from FCT Public Health Department, 1 TLMN Project Coordinator, 1 TLMN driver/logistician, and 2 community leaders who supported with community mobilization and crowd control. There was good turnout at this initial session. A total of 252 community members were served through the mobile clinic. Four new leprosy cases were diagnosed and registered for treatment. For further details on types of ailments diagnosed, see Appendix 1 (Conditions seen and treated).
- Planning is ongoing for subsequent outreach sessions.



Figure 1: Mobile Clinic Van

Objective 2: Increase ownership and skills of Yangoji and Karmanjiji government health workers and leaders, for sustaining initiated services through demonstration of mentoring and skilful partnership working.

- The government and the target communities have quickly started to demonstrate a sense of ownership of the project. Prior to commencing the delivery of services, advocacy and planning meetings were held with the FCT Health Secretariat, community health workers assigned to the target wards, village chiefs and religious leaders of the two target communities to discuss roll out of clinic services in their communities. Community mobilization and sensitization was also held across the target communities prior to the outreach programme, as part of measures to generate patronage.
- During the planning meetings, the TLM Nigeria team and the FCT Health Secretariat team identified and made contact with two government health facilities to which referrals would be made from the mobile clinic. These are the University Teaching Hospital, Gwagwalada Abuja, and the Federal Medical Centre, Jabi Abuja. Discussions are ongoing about referral pathways for specialized services like eye care and mental health care. The FCT public health department assigned three health staff (two nurses and a pharmacist) to support the initial outreach and have committed to continuing this support.
- The community leaders demonstrated strong support for the initiative by announcing the outreach to members of the community during community meetings and religious services. The Yangoji village leader helped to identify a site where the truck would be parked and the clinic set up for easy access by community members. The community also delegated two community mobilizers to sensitize community members to attend the medical outreach. The community mobilizers helped with set-up and close-up of the mobile clinic, and handled crowd control during the medical outreach.

Objective 3: Empower people affected by leprosy, disability, internal displacement and discrimination with information promoting improved mental health-seeking behaviour and inner-wellbeing.

- A mental health first-aider has been appointed and 23 staff of TLM Nigeria received a three-day training on basic mental health and inner wellbeing in December 2019. The mobile clinic outreach has so far provided basic counselling services for community members that reported symptoms of mental distress. Further training on the use of mental health screening tools and on management of mild cases of anxiety, depression and stress is proposed for June 2020, following which the mental health and inner well-being services will be expanded. TLM Nigeria is also working with Gede Foundation, an NGO that provides mental health services in Abuja, to set up referral pathways for mental health services for the target communities.



Figure 2: Mobile Clinic set up in Yangoji



Figure 4: Community members waiting to be seen

Additional photographs are included as Appendix 3.

CHALLENGES FACED & MEASURES TAKEN

- The main challenge encountered by the project has been the outbreak of coronavirus in Nigeria. This led the government to declare a total lockdown in Abuja at the end of March. The TLM Nigeria team has temporarily suspended medical outreach services while they conduct a risk assessment. The outcome of the risk assessment and the corresponding risk mitigation measures will determine what services can continue to be offered without exposing staff and patients to undue danger. TLMEW will communicate any proposed changes to the Isle of Man Government and secure approval prior to implementing them.
- The van took longer than expected to procure and outfit as a clinic, leading to delays in commencing actual service provision. The project workplan is being adjusted to account for these delays. These adjustments will also include any changes proposed in the updated risk mitigation plan as mentioned in the above bullet.

LESSONS LEARNED:

- The response to the outreach session has confirmed the need for basic medical services to be brought closer to the target communities. Although there are a number of healthcare providers within travelling distance, vulnerable groups are unable to access these services due to financial and physical barriers. The mobile clinic has the potential to significantly improve health status for these populations, not just by delivering healthcare but also through health education messaging.
- The participatory approach to planning the project has proved to be key to successful delivery of medical outreach sessions. The collaboration with the government and the community promotes local ownership, which will help to ensure long term sustainability of the service.

PLANS FOR YEAR TWO

In year two of the project, the following activities are planned:

Service Provision: The project proposal provides for weekly mobile clinic outreaches to the target communities over the next year. Services will be expanded to include mental health counselling and

eye care. Skin camps for the detection of new cases of leprosy are also proposed for year two. Services will resume after TLM Nigeria has in place an updated project risk assessment and mitigation plan which addresses the COVID19 pandemic and concludes negotiations with the government health authorities to continue service provision during the lockdown.

Training: Several capacity building activities are planned for year two. These include training sessions on leprosy detection and treatment for government health workers, partnering hospitals, and community health assistants; mentoring of government health workers on identification, first aid and referral systems for common mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and stress; identification and training of Mental Health First Aid Community Health Assistants, and training of all project stakeholders on safeguarding and feedback mechanisms. The project will also facilitate the establishment, training and resourcing of patient self-care groups in Yangoji and Karmajiji.

Sustainability planning: In the second year, the project team will work with the government, community stakeholders, disability peoples organisations, leprosy peoples organisations, and church partners to develop a sustainability plan for the mobile clinic services. This plan will outline plans to secure funding to support the staffing, resourcing and maintenance of the clinic after the current project ends. The Director of Health Services at the FCT Health Secretariat has requested TLM Nigeria to consider expanding the reach of the mobile clinic to include other marginalised communities in the FCT. This is a good indicator of the value placed on the partnership by the government and is an encouraging sign that they are keen for the mobile clinic service to be sustained. Discussions on this will continue.

Publicity: With permission from the Isle of Man Government, TLMEW proposes to share information regularly on the progress of the project with the people of the Isle of Man whose generosity has made this project possible. TLM Nigeria has produced a short video on the project, which will be sent along with this report. The video will be featured on the TLM Isle of Man Facebook Page, and will be shown along with photographic coverage of the activities of the mobile clinic during presentations at Churches on the Isle of Man in the coming months, when gatherings are allowed again.

FINANCE EXPENDITURE COMMENTARY

TLMEW received the sum of **£49,500** from the Isle of Man Government as the first tranche of grant funding for this project on 17/05/2019, and has so far disbursed the sum of **£86,100** as advance project funds to TLM Nigeria for project implementation. The balance of the advance funding was contributed by TLMEW and TLM IoM.

Out of the two-year project budget of **£144,036**, the sum of **£71,203**, amounting to **51%** of the budget, had been spent as at the end of year 1 (March 2020). Spending appears to be on track, but may slow down if the number of outreaches held or the number of patients seen reduces during the coronavirus lockdown. A summary financial report is included as Appendix 2.

CONCLUSION

The Wheels that Heal project started off well after the initial delays in procuring and outfitting the mobile clinic van. TLM Nigeria has demonstrated good capacity to implement the project and has established a strong partnership with the government health authorities, which bodes well for sustainability. The target communities have also enthusiastically welcomed the initiative and are showing a strong sense of ownership and commitment. The COVID19 pandemic is a major threat to the continuity of the mobile clinic outreaches. TLMEW and TLM Nigeria are working together to put in place risk mitigation measures that will allow services to continue and expand in the second year of implementation.

Appendix 1: Conditions seen and treated

S/N	DIAGNOSIS	NO. MALE	NO. FEMALE	TOTAL NO.
1.	Fungal Dermatitis	13	11	24
2.	Malaria	50	39	89
3.	Leprosy	2	2	4
4.	Hypertension	6	6	12
5.	Urinary tract infection (UTI)	0	2	2
6.	Upper resp. tract infection	5	0	5
7.	Upper and Lower Limb Ulcers	26	28	54
8.	Taeniasis	3	1	4
9.	Trauma	1	0	1
10.	Diabetes Mellitus	1	0	1
11.	Eye Problems	10	11	21
12.	Gastro Enteritis	4	0	4
13.	Tonsillitis	1	0	1
14.	Constipation	1	0	1
15.	Pelvic inflammatory disease	0	14	14
16.	Soil Transmitted Helminthiasis	12	3	15
	Total Patients	135	117	252

Appendix 2: Financial Report Summary

Description	2-Year Budget	Expenditure Yr 1	Variance	Variance %	Comment
Buy mobile clinic bus, renovate and buy insurance	£56,531.00	£53,170.53	£3,360.47	6%	Completed
Purchase medical equipment for mobile clinic	£11,367.00	£10,071.05	£1,295.95	11%	Specialized equipment yet to be purchased (including for eye-care and ulcer debridement)
Leprosy detection (biannual community skin camps to screen leprosy & NTDs)	£3,426.00	£0.00	£3,426.00	100%	Planned for year 2
MDA and MDT provision	£321.00	£0.00	£321.00	100%	Planned for year 2
Treatment given for leprosy complications (reactions & ulcer care)	£857.00	£305.59	£551.41	64%	Ongoing
Provide treatment and complication management to people with disabilities	£749.00	£0.00	£749.00	100%	Services in Karmajiji DPO village will commence in Year 2
Distribution of L-PEP	£1,071.00	£0.00	£1,071.00	100%	Planned for year 2
Site selection within Yangoji & Karmajiji with Government / community leaders	£128.00	£126.32	£1.68	1%	Completed
Site preparation and disinfection	£214.00	£221.05	-£7.05	-3%	Will likely require additional funds
Demand creation through community mobilization	£514.00	£0.00	£514.00	100%	Planned for year 2
Organise joint training sessions on leprosy & other health service provision	£1,820.00	£0.00	£1,820.00	100%	Planned for year 2
Organize health services initiation & sustainability planning & review sessions	£1,028.00	£0.00	£1,028.00	100%	Planned for year 2
Collaboration with government health care providers (allowances)	£5,396.00	£284.21	£5,111.79	95%	Ongoing activity
Encourage community leaders to take a role in the running of the mobile clinic	£600.00	£0.00	£600.00	100%	Planned for year 2
Facilitate MHA and CHA face-to-face sessions with clients on mental health	£1,670.00	£0.00	£1,670.00	100%	Planned for year 2
Train self-care groups on inner-wellbeing & safeguarding	£771.00	£0.00	£771.00	100%	Planned for year 2
Provide high quality mental illness first aid and referrals (Cost of referral)	£546.00	£0.00	£546.00	100%	Planned for year 2
Support SCGs with ulcer care materials to manage & prevent worsening disabilities	£1,028.00	£143.16	£884.84	86%	Ongoing - materials are procured as needed
Appoint mental health first aider (1 person at 20% FTE / month)	£15,074.00	£2,147.37	£12,926.63	86%	Charged from January 2020
Doctor's costs (1 person at 30% FTE / month)	£13,096.00	£1,636.98	£11,459.02	88%	Charged from January 2020
Salary costs for Finance Officer at 10% FTE / month	£4,206.00	£922.88	£3,283.12	78%	Charged from October 2019

Project Officer's Cost (1 Person at 30% FTE)	£13,096.00	£1,636.98	£11,459.02	88%	<i>Charged from January 2020</i>
Project Driver's Cost (1 Person at 50% FTE)	£2,024.00	£284.21	£1,739.79	86%	<i>Charged from January 2020</i>
Monthly maintenance of mobile clinic (Fuel / Servicing)	£1,542.00	£252.63	£1,289.37	84%	<i>Ongoing activity</i>
Annual project Review	£642.00	£0.00	£642.00	100%	<i>Planned for Year 2</i>
Annual Financial Audit	£535.00	£0.00	£535.00	100%	<i>Planned for Year 2</i>
Annual project monitoring by TLMEW and TLM IOM	£3,000.00	£0.00	£3,000.00	100%	<i>Planned for Year 2</i>
End of Term Evaluation	£2,784.00	£0.00	£2,784.00	100%	<i>Planned for end of Year 2</i>
	£144,036.00	£71,202.96	£72,833.04	51%	

Appendix 3: Additional Photographs



Registration of patients in progress



One of the Nurses taking the vital signs of a patient



Dr. Saminu carrying out a sugar level test on a patient



Dr. Amanda attending to a nursing mother



Drugs being dispensed



Patients waiting to receive drugs