

REPORT OF THE 2-DAY STAKEHOLDERS' SENSITIZATION AND CONSENSUS BUILDING MEETING AND ORIENTATION OF EMBASSY TEAM MEMBERS

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The Stakeholder Sensitization and Consensus Building Meeting, along with the orientation session for EMBASSY Team members, held on Wednesday, January 17th and Thursday, January 18th, 2024 at the Grand Serene Hotel in Iyaganku GRA, Ibadan, achieved remarkable success. The event saw the participation of 45 stakeholders, representing diverse entities such as Government institutions including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Women Affairs, Oyo State Hospitals Management Board, Oyo State Primary Healthcare Board, Oyo State Agency for Persons with Disabilities as well as healthcare workers' training institutions like the Department of Nursing of the University of Ibadan, the Oyo State College of Nursing and Midwifery and the Oyo State College of Health Science and Technology all in Ibadan, Other stakeholders like religious and community leaders as well as community birth attendants and leading media practitioners in the State were involved in the 2-day meeting.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE ACTIVITY:

During the event, Mr. Obatunde Oladapo, the Executive Director of PLAN Foundation, delivered a welcome address focusing on the EMBASSY Project while explaining that the project aims to eliminate multiple barriers to sexual and reproductive health services for young girls and women with disabilities in Oyo State, Nigeria. Mr. Oladapo emphasized the significance of the project and advocated against the marginalization of persons with disabilities thereby underscoring the importance of ensuring accessibility and inclusion in the provision of all healthcare services.

The business sessions featured renowned facilitators, Dr. Titilayo Odetola, Head of Department of Nursing, University of Ibadan; Dr. Patricia Ogunmola, seasoned community health practitioner and Nurse and Mr. Siji Ganiyu, former Provost of the Oyo State College of Health Science and Technology who led discussions on topics such as "Mainstreaming Disability into Reproductive Maternal Neonatal and Child Health Service: Gaps and Prospects for a More Inclusive Response," "Providing Optimum Sexual and Reproductive Health Services: Taking Women with Special Needs into Consideration," and "Integrating Disability and Inclusion Education into Training of Community Healthcare Workers."

LESSONS LEARNED:

- **Inclusivity in Maternal and Child Health Services:** Recognizing the importance of incorporating persons with disabilities into academic considerations for a more inclusive healthcare system.

- **Identifying Gaps in Maternal and Child Health Services:** Understanding existing gaps, including inadequate facilities, insufficient medical supplies, poorly trained staff, and deficient referral systems.
- **Benefits of Inclusivity:** Acknowledging the potential benefits, emphasizing the necessity for accessible maternal and child health services, adequate health budgeting, and comprehensive healthcare provisions.
- **Public Awareness and Discrimination Elimination:** Advocating for public awareness to eliminate discrimination and stigmatization related to disabilities, with a focus on breaking down barriers and improving healthcare-seeking behaviors.
- **Empowering Women through Education:** Recognizing the importance of educating vulnerable women on how, when, and where to access care to prevent delays and complications leading to maternal or neonatal morbidity or mortality.
- **Healthcare Provider Training:** Emphasizing the need to train healthcare providers at all levels to be aware of the special needs of women with disabilities, with a focus on improving knowledge, attitude, and practice.
- **Ensuring Reproductive Health Services for Persons with Disabilities:** Affirming that women with disabilities are entitled to reproductive health services, urging the government and stakeholders to fulfill their responsibilities in reducing maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality.

These lessons underscore the importance of inclusivity, awareness, education, and comprehensive healthcare provisions for women, especially those with disabilities, to ensure their reproductive health rights are met and maternal and neonatal mortality rates are reduced.

RECOMMENDATION:

Stakeholders recommended the inclusion of the Ministry of Justice, Media, and NCDA as crucial stakeholders due to their pivotal roles in the implementation of the project.

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS:

Nil