



Improving Routine Immunization Service Delivery in Kano State through eLearning

The ability of a health system to deliver quality health services to the people who need them, is dependent on its health workers. To deliver high quality health services, health workers must receive regular training and continuous education to endow them with the necessary technical competencies and skills.

Bilkisu Rabi Ahmed is a Ward Technical Officer (WTO) at Giginyu Health facility in Nassarawa LGA in Kano. She provides routine immunization (RI) services at her health center and also organizes immunization outreaches for settlements with low RI coverage rates, especially in the rural areas. For Bilkisu and her fellow health workers in Kano state, retraining and applying basic knowledge about Routine Immunization has been a major challenge. Previously, the Kano State Primary Health Care Management Board (KSPHCMB) organized 'in-class' training programs and refresher courses to update their RI knowledge but they became irregular due to budgetary constraints.

"I left school several years ago and I have been conducting routine immunization for over 30 years now. In the course of my work, it is easy to forget little details. Getting recent information about new procedures and developments in RI has also been a challenge because trainings are not conducted frequently." -Bilkisu

eHealth Africa worked with the Kano State Primary Health Care Management Board (KSPHCMB) to develop an e-learning format based on the knowledge management framework developed by the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA). eHA then digitized the content and uploaded it onto the Kano Connect platform. The content consisted of short online courses, texts and presentations on RI in Hausa and English audio formats, which users could access using their Kano Connect phones, at their convenience. The eLearning platform was piloted among 57 health workers in three local government areas of Kano state—Fagge, Nassarawa and Gabasawa—for a period of two months. After three months of utilizing the platform, Bilkisu had gained so much new knowledge about RI, that was helping her to deliver better immunization services particularly during immunization outreaches in the community.

"The courses, particularly the cold chain and logistics modules, were so helpful. I learned so many things that have helped me during my outreach planning—so many little details that I had forgotten or dismissed as unimportant. I refreshed my knowledge about transport methods and the requirements for vaccine carriers to be used for short and long distances."

Bilkisu was particularly elated that the learning content was also available in Hausa. This has made it very easy to cascade the knowledge to other health workers in her facility and to caregivers in the communities that she works in.

"The best part of the eLearning application is that all the courses are in Hausa and they are in audio. In some of my communities, mothers and caregivers cannot read or understand English. Sometimes, after immunization sessions, I call the mothers together and play some of the Hausa audio courses for them. This makes it easy for them to understand and they often ask me a lot of questions"

She has completed all the modules on the eLearning platform and recently was awarded a certificate of completion with 19 other health workers, by the Executive Secretary, Kano State Primary Health Care Management Board (KSPHCMB). With the enormous benefits that she has gained using the eLearning platform, Bilkisu is now an advocate for more health workers to be enrolled onto the platform.

"With just courses on RI on the eLearning platform, I have learnt so much. I hope that soon, the platform will be expanded to other thematic areas and all the health workers in Kano state. This will greatly improve the delivery of health services to our people."

Following the success of the eLearning platforms and testimonials like Bilkisu's, eHealth Africa and KSPHCMB are working to include courses on other thematic areas like maternal and child health, and nutrition. eHealth Africa is also developing data-driven, cost-effective methods to improve health delivery systems in Africa.