



Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Board

HIV Free NW/SW Project

Health Fares: Increasing Community Participation in Health Care and Services Uptake

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Introduction

In the quest to improve uptake of services, the Local Capacity Initiative (LCI) project designed tailored strategies to encourage community involvement in health related activities. The birth of this concept is attached to the fact that most community members saw health facilities as government property. Hence, it didn't matter much whether or not health facilities were understaffed, unclean and unequipped. This therefore was a big hindrance to the usage of the facilities as most potential users went home frustrated by the low or complete absence of needed service delivery. For instance, there are times when some clients went to the health facilities with eye problems, toothache, mental problems etc. only to be referred to very big hospitals in the region. Just the idea of the referral was already so great a burden on the client.



LCI Strategy in Bridging the Gap



Uptake of Free HIV Screening in Benade Health Fare by Community Members

With the thought of community health challenges and the various barriers to health services uptake at facilities in various communities; an innovative approach towards bringing healthcare closer to the people saw the conception of health fares in 2015. The approach consists of using health fares to rally, sensitize and offer free and rare consultations to the masses. These LCI funded Health Fares were organized annually in carefully selected places



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in all the 5 Health Districts of program implementation. Health Areas selected to host any health fare are usually done following their accessibility, facility services uptake, as well as the number of communities that make up the health area. Before such an activity takes place, the management committee does extensive sensitizations and mobilizations for a massive attendance by all communities.

The Impact of Health Fares on Service Uptake



Cross Section of Pregnant Women (PW) for ANC 1 at Berabe Health Fare

Through intensive sensitizations and mobilizations, the health fare grounds have always been flooded by persons with different kinds of needs from various communities. At each health fare, the community members benefited from several health services at no charge. For instance, apart from general consultations, the participants benefited from various health talks in their mother tongue which eased understanding. The health talks included Clubfoot and its treatment in health facilities, HIV and AIDS prevention and control, Antenatal Care (ANC), Eye Diseases, Malaria, Diabetes, etc. This health fares brought in hundreds of pregnant women who had never attended ANC clinics in the past. For instance, 45 PW attended the Berabe Health Fare for

ANC 1; an attendance that Berabe Integrated Health Center had never recorded in a month. Meanwhile, some health fares like the case of Benakuma and Benade saw a massive attendance of the elderly, the LCI team ensured they were well catered for by their team of health experts from the Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Board (CBCHB). These experts gave health talks and free consultations for Eye and Mental Problems among others. Interestingly, all the stakeholders of each community took the lead in all consultations especially VCT to stand as the example for their community members to follow.



Paramount Fon of Berabe Sets the Pace through HIV Screening at Berabe Health Fare

Conclusion

The District and Health Area Management committees are expected to be able to have followed the footsteps of the LCI who have organized this activity for twice so that they can organize the same activities in the future and seek only technical assistance from the LCI. This community based organization of the health fare shall also be fully funded by the community through mobilizations and donations from the elites of the community.



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