



**SUMMARY**

## Improving Maternal and Child Health in Underserved Rural Areas of Nigeria through Implementation Research

*Proposed by the Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED) in association with the Primary Health Care Development Agency (PHCDA) and the Intervention Council for Women in Africa (ICWA)*

## **INTRODUCTION**

With high rates of maternal, newborn and child mortalities, maternal and child health (MCH) is of paramount concern for policy makers in Africa. In order to contribute to the improvement of MCH in underserved communities in Nigeria, the Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED) in association with the Primary Health Care Development Agency (PHCDA) and the Intervention Council for Women in Africa (ICWA), will implement an 18 month research project entailing knowledge generation, proposing and testing innovative MCH care approaches, and promoting knowledge translation and scale-up.

## **WHAT THEY WILL DO**

The objectives of the project are three-fold. First, the project will generate knowledge through research by assessing the factors that influence access to MCH and the characteristics of the delivery of MCH in rural communities. Second, it will enhance the use and availability of services, addressing the social factors that prevent rural women from using MCH services. Finally, it will liaise with policy makers in order to translate the research and intervention outcomes into policy applicable at a larger scale.

## **HOW THEY WILL DO IT**

The project will be carried out in the local government areas (LGAs) of Okpe in Delta State, Nigeria. Both quantitative and qualitative data related to health and socio-cultural traditions will be collected through a cross sectional survey in health facilities with a focus on MCH issues, focus discussions, and participant observation. Descriptive statistics will be used to define availability, accessibility, affordability and acceptability of MCH. Key intervention activities to improve MCH will be implemented in the three most disadvantaged communities of the targeted LGA through community-based participation strategies and through delivery of key services. A step-wise and multi-pronged approach will be adopted to increase the likelihood that the findings generated by this action research will be utilized in policy making and to scale-up the outcomes in Delta State and other parts of Nigeria.

## **EXPECTED RESULTS**

The project will produce policy-relevant evidence about access to MCH and determinants of this access in vulnerable rural areas in Delta State. The results of this project will be published and the best practice case studies of the interventions will be documented to inform policy. The project will also lead to the strengthening of CPED's capacity to promote and support the scaling up of MCH interventions.