



**Experience by Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network (EPN)
In East Africa/Kenia & Nigeria**

Nigeria had a low contraceptive prevalence rate. Barriers to provision of family planning services were misinformation, stock outs, and general lack of knowledge among the public coupled with major opposition by men. Nigeria's faith-based health facilities did not receive any aid in support supervision, registers and tools, outreaches and staff. Family was a sensitive topic for religious organisations and politicians.

The **solution** was to advocate for family planning with church and state authorities and to build the capacity of church leaders to advocate for family planning.

Experience description

A baseline study on contraceptive stock outs in faith-based health facilities in four countries revealed that faith-based organizations (FBOs) in Nigeria were not incorporated into the government plans. EPN therefore decided to implement the Christian Advocacy For Family Planning in Africa (CAFPA) project in Nigeria in collaboration with one of its members – the Evangelical Church Winning All – ECWA. The project sought to improve the policy and funding environment for family planning through FBOs. The project held trainings for church leaders and advocacy meetings with the Government. Advocacy with the national government led to better collaboration and inclusion of the organisation in issues of family planning and led to the establishment of a logistics management coordinating unit/state drug & distribution centre.



Other characteristics



IMPACTS

- Commitment by Plateau State to supply FBOs with FP commodities & create a budget line
- Religious leaders started advocating for family planning
- ECWA has become part of the state Family Planning team



CHALLENGES

- Government needs to be held accountable to its commitments
- Family planning being a sensitive topic within church makes it hard to talk about it
- Advocacy needs a lot of time and resources



LESSONS LEARNED

- Due to their high esteem among communities, church leaders can have a strong voice in family planning
- Building capacity of church leaders helps them to advocate for family planning both with their church authorities and among their congregation

Sector: Human Rights – Civil Society

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