

Coaching Leads to Improved Data Reporting & Data Use for Decision-Making

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Background

The Challenge Initiative (TCI) supports Rivers State to improve the quality of data generated and reported by the state by coaching service providers, health information officers (HIOs), and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) officers at facility and local government area (LGA) levels monthly. Coaching provided by TCI involves one-on-one practical sessions with the target audience using different approaches to build the skills of not only the individual but teams on how to enhance their data collection, reporting and data for decision making to ensure quality service provision. TCI's coaching can be **proactive**, that is initiated by TCI based on observed needs, as well as, **on-demand**, which is requested by the target audience.

What Was the Situation Before TCI

Rivers State Primary Healthcare Management Board, Rivers State Ministry of Health and TCI conducted the following activities related to data quality and use: Monthly Primary Health Care Data review meetings, Quarterly Health Data Consultative Committee meetings, and Quarterly Feedback and Data Use meetings.

From these activities, the following issues with the State data were uncovered:

- High levels of data discrepancy,
- Poor data communication between the facility staff and LGA M&E officers,
- Human computation errors, and
- Use of notebooks in place of the Nigerian Health Management Information System (NHMIS)/DHIS 2 online software

Inconsistencies in data reporting were also evident when comparing routine service statistics compiled by the Reproductive Health (RH) supervisors in the Program Management Information System (PMIS) with data elements extracted from NHMIS/DHIS 2 platform for the same month. For example, during the review of the family planning register at Agbonchia Model Primary Health Centre in December 2018, 43 new family planning acceptors were reported on the PMIS, while only three were reported on the DHIS 2 platform. As a result of this finding, the State recognized the need for ongoing capacity building for frontline staff who handle data.

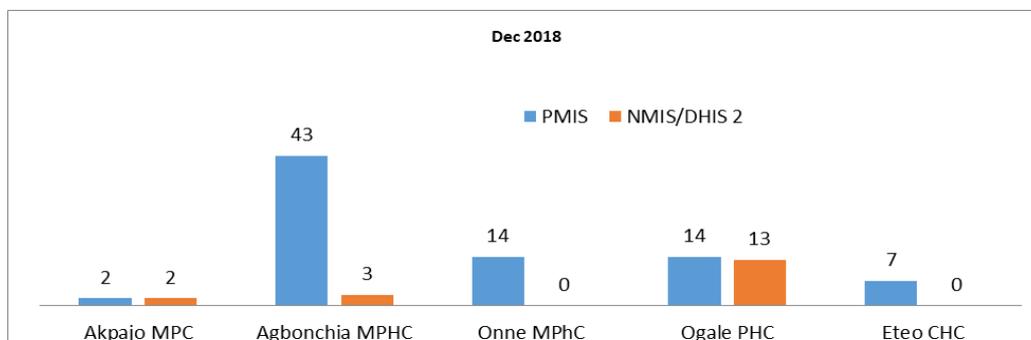


Fig 1: Discrepancy between data of New Family Planning Acceptors reported on DHIS 2 platform and data captured on PMIS in five demonstrations facility in Eleme LGA. Source: DHIS 2 and PMIS.

Changes Facilitated by TCI's Coaching Approach

TCI's Technical Support Lead for RM&E facilitated a meeting between the State RM&E team and the State Planning, Research, and Statistics units to discuss the 'identified issues' and introduce them to TCI's coaching strategy as a sustainable way for resolving these issues and other health data-related issues that may arise.

To bring this strategy to life, TCI Technical Support Lead for RM&E with the State RM&E team and the State Planning, Research, and Statistics units:

- Developed a coaching plan targeting each cadre of staff that capture, process and use data at all levels in the State.
- Mapped out the various health facilities by degree of identified issues, distance and LGA.
- Identified a pool of coaches from among the best LGA M&E officers and staff from the Planning, Research, and Statistics department at both the State Ministry of Health and Primary Health Care Management Board and provided a training of trainers to introduce them to the coaching approach and [various proven interventions](#) to help service providers, HIOs and M&E officers at facility and LGA levels.
- Rolled out the coaching plan in 25 demonstrations facilities across six LGAs in the State, which meant that the pool of coaches was paired with State officers and assigned a facility to coach RH supervisors, LGA M&E officers, service providers and HIOs on the use of NHMIS data tools, harmonization and data validation.



Fig 2: TCI Technical Support Lead for RM&E coaching LGA M&E officers on coaching plan for their respective LGAs at TCI Rivers hub office at the Primary Health Care Management Board. Photo credit: Sam/TCI.

This proactive coaching approach was used to build the skills of 64 government officials -- 2 RH supervisors, 6 LGA M&E officers, 28 service providers and 28 HIOs -- on different aspects of data quality which included data harmonization/validation procedures, data consistency, timeliness of data reporting, data capturing and computation as well as use of NHMIS data tools. Practical hands-on sessions were used to ensure this capacity transfer and strengthening.

Just after receiving three months of coaching, the results from the demonstrations sites reveal significant improvements in data management, including: Improved timeliness of reporting, reduction in data outliers, consistency in reporting, availability of data for decision making and improved use of NHMIS data tools. So far, 55% of the health facilities that received coaching have shown 100% improvement across data quality determinants while the remaining 45% are showing signs of improvement. One example of improvement is the consistency between reporting systems as exemplified in Figure 3 below.

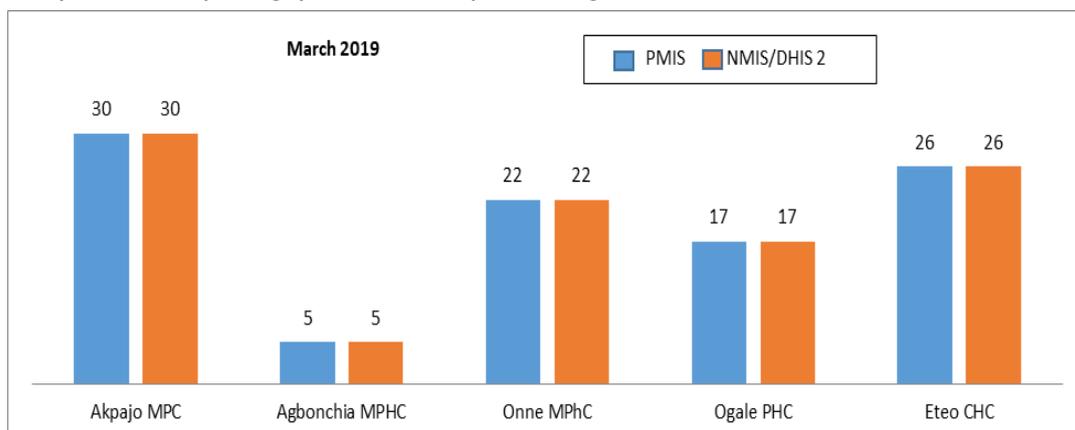


Fig 3: consistency in New Family Planning Acceptors data reported on DHIS 2 platform and data captured on PMIS in five demonstrations facility in Eleme LGA. Source: DHIS 2 and PMIS

Why Is This Significant

As a result of this noteworthy stride in data management, the State has recognized the need to expand and scale-up this coaching approach to other health areas beyond the review of family planning indicators to ensure quality data for decision-making in the State. The Director of Planning, Research and Statistics at the Primary Health Care Management Board described the result of the coaching as a remarkable achievement to the State. He further reiterated that this technical assistance coaching approach is changing the narrative related to strengthening capacity for health data in the State and there is need for its replication in all facilities so that there will be an all-round improvement: *“...It is very important to the State that, TCI has been very supportive to the State by providing quality assistance to us and indeed, we have seen a reasonable improvement in the quality of our data. I will like to put it on record that, TCI is helping us to strengthen all other areas that are outside their programmatic area [of family planning] because they have been helping also to look at how well we are doing in other health area, such as malaria, OPD, immunization, ANC data. Thus, they are providing an opportunity that we cannot avoid to miss.”*

The coaching approach has been replicated in a few non-TCI supported LGA following the coaching of two LGA M&E focal persons. This has increased the pool of coaches from which the State can pull from, which will help the State to sustainably carryout this coaching approach for improved data quality, management and use into the future regardless of TCI's involvement.