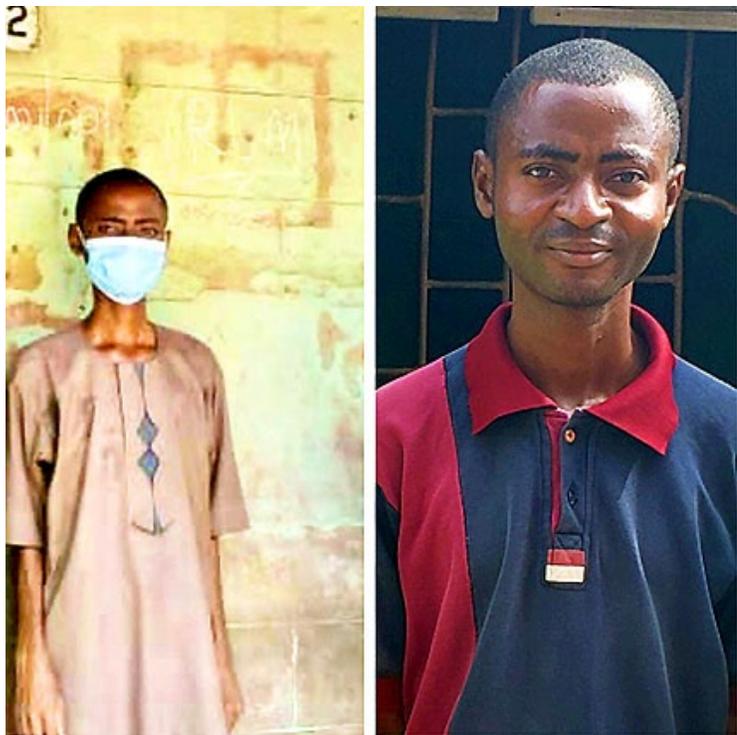


Community Mobilization Accelerates Tuberculosis Case Finding in Nigeria

Dare's Story

Breakthrough ACTION, the United States Agency for International Development's social and behavior change flagship project, is accelerating tuberculosis (TB) case finding in Nigeria using various strategic social and behavior change (SBC) approaches that address health inequities. One such approach is community mobilization through community volunteers. The volunteers can reach thousands of communities identified as TB hotspots with TB messages, screening, and access to treatment.

During one community mobilization activity, the Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria team met Dare, a 29-year-old man from North-East local government area (LGA) of Ibadan, Oyo State. His initial reaction was to ignore the mobilizers directed to his apartment; it took the intervention of concerned neighbors to persuade him to come out for screening. Once a vibrant young primary school teacher, Dare had become a shadow of himself. He was pale, lean, and jobless due to the illness. With no job, coupled with the cost of unsuccessful alternative therapies like traditional medicine, his financial situation worsened.



Dare, on left, when he was diagnosed with TB on October 7, 2021. On right, Dare is thriving in December 2022. He completed his medication for TB in April 2022. Photo credit: Breakthrough ACTION

Dare reluctantly accepted the help offered by the Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria team, and he received a voucher to undergo a free chest x-ray at the Directly Observed Treatment Short-course (DOTS) clinic. The x-ray highly suggested pulmonary tuberculosis. With a confirmatory sputum test at the DOTS clinic, the providers immediately started Dare on TB treatment. His aunt supported him during the initial treatment period until he was strong and confident enough to go to the DOTS clinic unaccompanied for his medications and complete his treatment.

Dare has recently secured a teaching job at another school and is on his way back to financial stability. During a recent follow-up visit by the Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria team, Dare, who is now hale and hearty, has become an advocate, spreading TB sensitization messages in his community using himself as a case study. He advises people who show signs and symptoms suggestive of TB to go to the hospital and get tested. He says,

“Such a person should not hide it out of shame, as they would be doing themselves a disservice and causing more harm. I would have lost my life but for the mercy God showed me by sending Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria workers to me.”

Through community-level demand generation for TB services in Akwa Ibom, Bauchi, Benue, Cross River, Kano, Nasarawa, Oyo, and Plateau States, Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria has referred 185,989 presumptive cases for TB testing, out of which 152,679 completed their referrals between October 2021 and June 2023. In addition to providing community referrals for services, this strategic SBC approach addresses the underlying causes of health issues (e.g., gender, stigma, harmful norms) by engaging individuals in dialogue at the household and community level and through mass media, social media, and the National TB Call Center.

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