

# Using Agriculture to Improve Health Facility Conditions in Nigeria

In much of their activities, Ward Development Committees (WDCs) address barriers to service uptake, antenatal care attendance, facility delivery, and access to other health services. In collaboration with Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria, the Gwako WDCs have focused their efforts on repairing health facilities, with the goal of capturing high-quality data and increasing connections with patients. A major setback to achieving this goal is the funding needed for facility maintenance. Despite exploring funding avenues such as advocacy visits from influential leaders and monthly contributions from members, the Gwako WDCs in the Gwagwalada Area Council had not been able to generate adequate funds to support and sustain their activities. To expand funding sources, Gwako WDCs partnered with health workers in the Gwako Primary Health Care (PHC) Facility to acquire land within the facility for agri-business activities. Using the free PHC Facility land, the WDCs planted and grew sweet potatoes with the intention of selling them and using the proceeds to fund the ward and the facility.

After successfully harvesting over six bags of sweet potatoes, the WDC communities in Gwako used the earnings to purchase cement, blocks, sand, pipes, and other building and plumbing materials. With the help of the WDCs, the PHC facility now has unlimited running water, a renovated structure, and a raised perimeter fence. Additionally, the WDCs paid the laborers who repaired the facility walls and fixed the running water from the sales proceeds.

According to Margret Fati, Gwako PHC Facility Officer in Charge, the involvement of the WDCs in the process of facility management has led to improvements. “The coming of Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria has brought a lot of changes in our facilities. The WDCs are fully involved in the process of facility management, and this has led to an increase in facility attendance and data.”

This success story is a testament to the commitment of the Gwako WDCs to promote the uptake of maternal, newborn, and child health plus nutrition services in their ward.

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