

# **NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE CORPS HEALTH INITIATIVE FOR RURAL DWELLERS**

## **(HIRD)**

### **PROFILE**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) was established in 1973 with the mandate to raise a class of patriotic, morally and physically disciplined Nigerian Youths who graduated from Universities and Polytechnics to undertake the national service. During the mandatory one year service, corps members live among and within the host communities facilitating unity and integration as well as championing community development by executing projects jointly with the people of their host communities. A major impact of these development programmes is in health care delivery. The Health Initiative for Rural Dwellers (HIRD) is another programme designed to provide timely health intervention to the large population of Nigerians in the rural areas

2. The Health Initiative for Rural Dwellers (HIRD) which is an innovation of the Director-General of the National Youth Service Corps, is expected to reach-out to core rural areas to enhance the accessibility of health care services by rural dwellers. This programme will engage corps medical personnel in the sensitization of the core rural dwellers on disease prevention, provision of first aid services, monitoring of cases and provision of appropriate referral when necessary.

#### 3. **GOAL**

The goal of the programme is to mobilize volunteer corps medical personnel to the rural dwellers who under normal circumstances will not be able to access medical attention as a result of neglect and remoteness of their location.

#### 4. **RATIONALE**

- i. The health care facilities provided by government, private and faith based organizations in the country are grossly inadequate to take care of the health needs of the populace. These facilities are either present in name or completely absent in most rural communities.
- ii. The high mortality rate often associated with rural areas is a product of the abject lack of infrastructures/facilities. Hence the low income status of the populace and the unattractiveness of the area to conventional health workers, makes many of them resort to herbal medication or attribute even mild ailments to external spiritual causes and so lose their lives or become permanently impaired.
- iii. The scheme has a crop of energetic, skilled volunteer corps medical personnel (medical doctors, pharmacists, nurses, laboratory scientists, physiotherapists, dentists, ophthalmologists, etc) who serve as intervention agents in the all the 774 Local Government Areas of the country. They are disposed to providing correct information and medical palliatives to Nigerians in every nook and cranny of the country if provided with the logistics and medical facilities.

#### 5. **STRATEGIES**

- A. Capacity building of Corps medical personnel with the assistance of partners in the health sector (public/private).

- B. Advocacy/need assessment visits to communities to find out their felt health needs and seek for their cooperation.
- C. Outreaches by team of volunteer corps medical personnel to rural communities. These volunteers will be empowered with basic amenities (vehicles, medical facilities, drugs, etc.) to reach out to identified communities at least once a week on a rotational basis.
- D. Monitoring and evaluation of the entire programme implementation.

## 6. **OUR STRENGTH**

The HIRD Programme of the NYSC has the following strengths:

- i. NYSC has skilled medical personnel (doctors, nurses, pharmacists, etc.) who are corps members that are available for the programme.
- ii. Corps members are spread throughout the Federation and are ready to carry out the visions of the scheme.
- iii. Corps members have basic intellectual capacity requiring minimum training to pass correct information and give minimum skill to rural people.
- iv. Corps members belong to a centralized organization making Monitoring, Evaluation and feedback process relatively easy
- v. All the health related disciplines are in the scheme and can be easily mobilized as national response to the issue of healthy living in the rural areas.

## 7. **JOURNEY SO FAR**

### **KWARA STATE**

The Health Initiative for Rural Dwellers was officially flagged-off in Igbo Owu community in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara state on Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2014. The programme which attracted dignitaries from all works of live in Kwara state was flagged of by the Director General of NYSC, Brig Gen JB Olawumi. The ceremony was witnessed by the representative of the Executive Governor of Kwara State, Honourable Saheed Popoola, Hon. Commissioner for Youth and Sports.

8. Following the flag off of the programme in Kwara state, the HIRD team in the state has carried out four other follow up outreaches to Igbo Owu community. The team attended to the health needs of 527 persons. 520 were treated and some being followed up, while two were referred. Cases investigated include – malaria, hypertension, typhoid, blood sugar level, arthritis, upper respiratory infection, peptic ulcer.

### **9. LAGOS STATE**

National Youth Service Corps in Lagos state, partnered with the Lagos state Ministry for Health, Primary Health Care Board, Omron Healthcare Ltd Nigeria and Ministry of Rural Development to Flag-off Health Initiative for Rural Dwellers on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February. Present at the flagging-off ceremony were Egan-Oromi, Itogbesa, Ojota, Ishagira and Ese-Ofin communities under Otto-Awori Local Council Development Area (L.C.D.A.).

10. The outreach programme was held at Ese–Offin community Primary School. Residents of the five communities namely Egan-Oromi, Itogbesa, Ojota, Ishagira and Ese-Ofin communities under Otto-Awori

L.C.D.A converged at Ese –offin for this exercise. However it is important to note that these communities are located on an **ISLAND**. **The only means of transportation to the nearest health care facility which is in the city is via a Canoe/Boat. Kindly find attached the pictures for more clarification on the residents of these communities’ means of transportation.**

#### **11. OUR REQUEST**

Kwara and Lagos state are just how far the HIRD programme has gone so far. This is just like dropping a pint of oil in an ocean. The health care needs of the less privileged and rural dwellers in the country is overwhelming and the NYSC, though has the human resources to reach out to them all, does not have the logistics and material resources. The focus of this programme, however, is to reach out to as many rural communities in all the States and FCT.

12. In order to promote the quality of life of people, especially the rural dwellers residing in remote communities, by taking health service delivery to their door steps, the NYSC wishes to solicit for partnership and support from individuals, organisations in the provision of logistics (Vehicles), consulting equipments and basic drugs (and medical consumables) for the treatment of the following ailments:

- a. Malaria
- b. High blood pressure
- c. Control of sugar level
- d. Eye, ear and throat
- e. Anti-biotic etc.

13. We shall be available for further discussions and can be reached on phone numbers **08037862255 or 08023511846.**

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2. [awak\\_eno@yahoo.com](mailto:awak_eno@yahoo.com)

#### **PICTURES FROM KWARA (IGBO-OWU COMMUNITY)**



**THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, BRIG.-GEN. JB OLAWUMI WITH CORPS MEDICAL PERSONNEL AT THE HIRD FLAG OFF CEREMONY IGBO OWU, KWARA STATE**



**THE  
DIRECTOR GENERAL, AG. DIRECTOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICE &  
SPECIAL PROJECTS OF THE NYSC AND THE KWARA STATE COMMISSINER FOR  
HEALTH AT THE HIRD FLAG OFF AT IBGO OWU**



**THE OLOWU OF IGBO OWU AT THE HIRD FLAG OFF CEREMONY**



**CROSS SECTION OF DIGNITORIES AND PEOPLE AT THE HIRD FLAG OFF  
CEREMONY/OUTREACH AT IGBO OWU,**



**CORPS MEDICAL PERSONNEL ATTENDING TO PEOPLE OF IGBO OWU COMMUNITY AFTER THE FLAG OFF CEREMONY.**



**MOBILE CLINIC BRANDED AND DONATED BY ROYAL HERITAGE HEALTH FOUNDATION (RHHF), ILORIN, KWARA STATE FOR THE NYSC HIRD PROGRAMME IN KWARA STATE**

**LAGOS PICTURES (ESE-OFFIN COMMUNITY)**



**HIRD DESK OFFICER/CORPS MEDICAL PERSONNEL ON THEIR WAY TO ESE-OFFIN FOR HIRD PROGRAMME**



**THE LAGOS STATE COORDINATOR,  
MR. C. AKHANEME AND CORPS MEDICAL  
PERSONNEL ON THEIR WAY TO ESE-OFFIN**



**CORPS MEDICAL PERSONNEL ATTENDING TO PEOPLE AT ESE-OFFIN**