

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



Abakaliki 12 December 2018

Dear Friends,

2018 is coming to an end. Its' time to send warm best wishes to all of you along with heartfelt thanks for the wonderful support during the year from all of us at AMURT Nigeria. This morning I am reflecting on my good fortune working with what must be the most wonderful AMURT Team in the world. Their dedication and readiness to sacrifice, along with their skill and kindness touch me every day. This spirit, to do the best we can for patients and everyone, has been the key to everything we have achieved. There is great joy in team work and moving together on a mission.

It's Friday morning here in Abakaliki, and the AMURT office is buzzing. Soon **eight vehicles** will be on their way, filled with doctors, health educators, family planning counselors, lab scientists, M&E staff, community mobilizers, and construction supervisors and artisans, and water project workers. **Everyday we visit the remote and neglected communities of Ebonyi State** to see patients, children and mothers, and support the community health workers and resident midwives, clinic management committees and the people in the villages. Our work is to extend quality primary healthcare services to those who need it the most. To build capacity and strengthen the communities' self-reliance, to create awareness and share knowledge to effect change..... And most important: to save lives.

50 % INCREASE IN BIRTHS and 11000 TOTAL BIRTHS

In July we passed the milestone of 10000 births since we started, and in October we reached 11000. We saw the **biggest single year growth** since the project started in 2010. The number of **deliveries assisted by AMURT rose by 50 %**. By the end of November we had already **passed 3150 births**. **Mgbalukwu Health Center**, opened 23 Nov 2017, is now well established serving Isu community and beyond in Onicha Local Government Area. **Uloanwu Health Center**, opened in Ebonyi Local Government Area in August, has had a very promising start serving an area where previously no primary healthcare services were available.

AMURT STAFF PASS 200

The increase in patronage at the health centers compelled us to recruit more medical and supporting personnel. AMURT has passed 200 staff members. **196 Health Center based staff, including 80 Community Health Extension Workers (CHEWS)**, 12 nurse/midwives and six ambulance drivers, and 37 Abakaliki based staff, including 9 doctors, 5 lab scientists, 3 health educators, and 3 M&E.

NEW CONSTRUCTION N FIVE PROJECT AREAS

Paul and Sunday, the AMURT construction team, have been super busy this year, visiting two, sometimes three project areas every day as we **partnered with the communities to expand and upgrade health centers in five local governments**. With the help of Ibiam, AMURT's community liaison in-charge, communities were mobilized and the construction work moved with speed. Ephuenyim's new staff quarters was ready in September, Mgbalukwu new staff quarter is up, with only wiring and plumbing and final touches remaining. Odeligo's new staff quarter and the main clinic building at Uloanwu are both at the roofing level. The Akparata management committee worked independently and completed the extension. The Inikiri Management Committee has started working on a badly needed additional wing. In Gmelina Health Center, the boundary wall is almost ready. Akparata and Ephuenyim are ready to be upgraded to CEMONC from January.

BIRTHS



3300 + births – 50 % increase

NEW HEALTH CENTERS



**Uloanwu Health Center
opened on 2nd August**

CONSTRUCTION IN FIVE PROJECT AREAS



**New spacious staff quarters at
Ephuenyim Health Center**

TWO NEW AMBULANCES and 400 EMERGENCY REFERRALS

As the reputation of AMURT health centers grew, the number of serious complications presenting at the health centers increased dramatically in 2018. We got **two new ambulances**, one from GMT Nigeria, our main sponsors, and one from The Presidency in Abuja. The two new health centers, Mgbalukwu and Uloanwu, now have ambulances with stand-by drivers and health workers ready to make timely referrals 24/7. As of today the number of **emergency ambulance runs has already passed 400** for the year. More than half were obstetric emergencies.

ASSISTING 40 CHILD SURGERIES

Nigeria has 86.9 million people living in extreme poverty, that's close to 50 % percent of the population. To save lives, our project areas, all remote and neglected rural areas, are in need of humanitarian aid while the development initiatives are being consolidated. For this, AMURT operates an emergency assistance fund for obstetric and pediatric emergencies so that no lives are lost due to lack of finance. The fund is made of grants from **GMT Nigeria, AMURT UK, AMURT USA, AMURT Italy, AMURT Norway**, and private donations, We assisted close to **40 children surgeries** in 2018, including six cases of hydrocephalus and/or spina bifida. In April, a post on the AMURT West Africa Facebook page about Baby Onyekachi went viral, reaching 1.3 million Facebook users and receiving 45000 comments.

ODELIGBO HEALTH CENTER 4th BIGGEST HOSPITAL IN EBONYI STATE

Odeligbo Health Center, after last year's upgrade to Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Center,(CEMONC) is now stablished as one of the four busiest hospitals in Ebonyi State. **Over sixty cesarean sections** were done successfully. The wards are filled up **averaging around twenty patients on admission** every night. Behind this success is the hard work and quality care of the dedicated staff, Dr. Clifford, Midwives Kelechi and Uchechi, OIC Helen and everyone on the Odelgibo Health Center staff.

SOLAR BLOOD BANK INSTALLED IN AMURT OFFICE

With the increase in patient load, the demand for life saving blood transfusions became a pressing daily concern. Scientist Daniel, the AMURT HOD Lab, and his competent lab team saved many lives through emergency transfusions in the health centers. Special appreciation to the many AMURT staff, who donated blood to save lives. In December we were able to install a central **Solar Blood Bank**, imported from India, at the AMURT office in Abakaliki. We will now build a steady supply of blood through a volunteer blood donor program in partnership with local student organizations.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 11 MORE HEALTH WORKERS

Community participation is at the heart of AMURT's strategy. Over **80 % of the health center staff come from the project areas**. This creates a local identity and adds to community confidence, easier communications and better understanding. Currently we have **22 young women and one young man working as trainees** in the health centers, learning on the job. They all did very well in exams conducted this week. In 2018 we were able to give **scholarships to 10 of the most dedicated and talented trainees**. They now attend the School of Health Technology to become qualified health workers. The total number of health workers currently studying on AMURT scholarships is sixteen

SAFE WATER TO 34 VILLAGES

The AMURT WASH Team drilled and installed **16 new boreholes** in the first half of 2018. The beneficiaries were five villages in Izzi LGA, six in Onicha LGA, three in Ebonyi LGA, pluss two health

LIFE SAVING SURGERIES



Baby Onyekachi had surgery for hydrocephalus



Baby Chimamanda had surgery for spina bifida

SCHOLARSHIPS



10 new scholarship students in September

center boreholes, Ephuenyim and Uloanwu. In August we embarked on a major **partnership with Rotary Club of Abakaliki**, financed by the Rotary Clubs of Cupertino, California, USA, and the Rotary Club of Casalmaggiore, Viadana and Sabbioneta, Italy. We have **completed 18 boreholes**. Another eighteen are scheduled for the first quarter of 2019, making a total of 36 for the project with Rotary

FAMILY PLANNING COUNSELING and UPTAKE INCREASES

The family planning and health education team made great strides in 2018 as the uptake of family planning commodities among the rural women rose. Chinwendu did a great job with dozens of village meetings discussing the advantages of child spacing with women and men in villages in all the project areas. Nora and Eugenia, along with family planning focal persons in each health center, concentrated on providing counseling and support for the women with special needs, through home visits and personal care. .

HEALTH WORKERS TRAINING PROGRAMS

To upgrade the quality of care Chinwendu and Eugenia conducted trainings in all the nine health centers to give health workers new skills and perspectives. Topics covered including: Therapeutic Communication, and Safe Practices Creating a Therapeutic Environment. For the Patients Quick Recovery.

HEALTH RALLIES IN ODELIBGO and MGBALUKWU PROJECT AREAS

Chinwendu followed up the success of the health rallies in previous years with programs in the villages surrounding Mgbalukwu and Odeligbo Health Center. As Odeligbo Health Center receives a majority of its patients from beyond the project area, the health workers made visits to markets and playgrounds to create awareness about family planning, the importance of early presentation, and the hazards of reliance on local herbs. Through music and dance, along with the posters and handouts, the outreach efforts attracted a good response.

MATERNAL HEALTH PROMOTERS

One of the unique features of AMURT's primary healthcare strategy is the role of village maternal health promoters. In 2018, supported by health workers from the health centers, they monitored pregnancies, both facility and home deliveries and took the lead in promoting child spacing in over 180 villages. Their presence creates an effective grassroots network that is crucial to achieve results in maternal and child health. Ogonna and Chike from the AMURT M&E team supervised the work.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT REACHES AKPARATA

A new Economic Empowerment Group was started in Akparata, with a grant from Souter Foundation. We now have seven cooperative revolving credit groups up and running. 15 widows and women who are sole breadwinners from the villages in Akparata project received support to start a business to support themselves and their children.

We look forward to build new partnerships, reach more communities, improve the quality of care and save more lives in 2019.

You are all welcome to join us in this work.

Best wishes to all,

Dade Dameshanande

Project coordinator



WATER & SANITATION



FAMILY PLANNING



Training of health center family planning focal persons

HEALTH EDUCATION



Odeligbo health center staff on health education outreach in Ikwo

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