



## IMPROVING STUDENTS PERFORMANCE THROUGH LEARNING SUPPORT AND EXTRA COACHING

*Foundation Year Programme students have a higher chance of passing their exams if they receive intensive coaching and learning support, especially in English Language.*

### **The Challenge**

In response to the shortage of trained female health workers in the rural areas of northern Nigeria, Women for Health established a Foundation Year Programme (FYP). The purpose of the FYP was to recruit women from rural areas and improve their educational attainment to the level required for them to succeed in nationally accredited health training courses. However, some of the students enrolled had even poorer levels of education and capability that previously expected and when they were first invited to write entrance exams for admission into the FYP, many of them were found to be weak in several subjects, have difficulty in understanding the questions and therefore had great difficulty providing answers.

It appeared that the major problem for these students, including in Zamfara, was their poor grasp of the English language, especially because English was not the language spoken at home or within their communities. Moreover, it may have been a number of years since they left secondary schools. This posed a significant challenge for the students and held them back academically during their Foundation Year.

### **The Response**

To address these challenges the Women for Health programme put in place a raft of learning support and coaching strategies to improve the English language of the students:

- Teachers provided extra evening classes in English language after class hours to which all students were invited
- Weaker students were monitored closely and support provided as soon as a student was seen to be struggling

- These students were encouraged to participate in peer reading and group discussions organized by the school with stronger students leading the groups
- Monthly and quarterly formative assessment was used to monitor student progress and provide rapid feedback
- The tutors were trained in effective teaching skills and methodology and encouraged to implement what they had learned
- As the students' exams approached they were engaged in a six weeks intensive extra coaching lessons which was a revision of their classwork and took place every weekend, Friday, Saturday and Sundays for four hours each day.

### **The Results in Zamfara**

- 38 Foundation Year students were presented for the weeding class for School of Nursing and Midwifery Gusau and passed. Four were admitted into the Nursing program and 34 admitted into Midwifery Program.
- During the weeding exams all four students admitted into nursing passed and 22 of the 34 students were admitted into midwifery
- 26 Foundation Year Programme students from 11 LGAs sat the Community Midwifery examinations and 17 passed. Five of these took the first five places out of the 140 candidates from all 14 LGAs who presented for the exams.

FYP Students who sat for pre weeding exams	38
FYP Students admitted into Nursing weeding class	4
FYP Students who passed Nursing weeding class	4
FYP Students admitted into Midwifery weeding class	34
FYP Students who passed Midwifery weeding class	22
FYP Students admitted into Community Midwifery weeding class	17

***Table: Exam Results for Foundation Year Students in Zamfara***

## Lessons Learnt

- Bridging programs are effective in developing the capacity of students not previously exposed to effective learning atmospheres.
- Intensive extra coaching lessons can prove very successful, especially for weak students.
- Peer group learning plays a role in developing confidence of students to learn
- Using effective teaching methods helps tutors to improve the learning of their students.



**Tag Words:** Learning support, peer group learning, effective teaching methods

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