A children’s playroom at the Children’s Specialist Hospital in Ilorin, Nigeria, is having tremendous success at attracting HIV+ mothers and children, increasing the numbers of adult and pediatric patients enrolled into care and treatment.

The playroom is the result of a collaborative partnership between the USAID-funded Prevention Organizational Systems AIDS Care and Treatment project (ProACT), a project led by Management Sciences for Health; the Kwara State Government of Nigeria; and local non-governmental organization the Well-Being Foundation. The Well-Being Foundation provided N150,000 (about $1,500 US) for the renovation and installation equipment including a television and video-compact disc recorder. MSH arranged for a recent donation of toys from schools in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

This latest initiative is part of ProACT’s ongoing partnership with Nigeria’s Kwara State Government to reduce the spread of HIV & AIDS in the state, while providing treatment and care to those already HIV positive. In February 2009, ProACT launched HIV & AIDS services at Children’s Specialist Hospital, Ilorin, and established the children’s room one month later. By July 2010, 91 pediatric patients were enrolled into care at the hospital (a 62.5% increase from February), eight are receiving antiretroviral (ARV) treatment.

Since the June 2010 recruitment of a National Youth Service Corps volunteer to run the playroom, monthly client patronage of the room has grown to 2,044 – with 1049 children and 995 mothers/care-givers recorded in September.
Faudiyat Adulfatai, a mother who uses the space on clinic days said “the room is so neat and the volunteers are so caring, we really enjoy being there. We especially value the lessons on HIV and healthy-living.”

Mrs. Oluwatoyin Saraki, the wife of the Kwara State Governor, who founded the Well-Being Foundation, noted that the playroom “assists HIV-positive mothers and their children who now feel more comfortable when they visit the weekly clinic, and it serves as a haven for those recovering in the hospital.”

The playroom is just part of a family-centered care platform developed at the hospital, which was implemented in recognition of the special needs of families living with HIV & AIDS.

An estimated four million people are living with HIV & AIDS in Nigeria, second only to South Africa in terms of the global infection burden. Women bear a disproportionate share of the burden, and there is a significant level of transmission from HIV-infected mothers to their infants.

ProAct is a five-year Associate Award funded by the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) under the USAID-funded Leadership, Management and Sustainability Award Nigeria. [2]


Links
[1] javascript:HandleLink('cpe_0_0','CPNEWWIN:NewWindow%5Etop=10,left=10,width=500,height=400,toolbar=1,location=1,directories=0,status=1,menubar=1,scrollbars=1,resizable=1@http://www.msh.org/global-presence/proact.cfm');
[2] javascript:HandleLink('cpe_0_0','CPNEWWIN:NewWindow%5Etop=10,left=10,width=500,height=400,toolbar=1,location=1,directories=0,status=1,menubar=1,scrollbars=1,resizable=1@http://www.msh.org/projects/lms/WhereWeWork/Africa/Nigeria.cfm');