



DRASA
Health Trust

| Equipping Community Health Champions to Detect and Contain Infectious Diseases

A Report on DRASA's Strengthening Community Knowledge and Response on Infectious Disease Prevention (SCKaR-IDP) Project

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Project Partners



Government Partners



**LAGOS STATE
MINISTRY OF
HEALTH**
(LSMoH)



Lagos State
Primary Health Care Board



**LAGOS STATE HEALTH
RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEE (LSHREC)**



SCKaR-IDP in Numbers

2,089 People

Number of Health
Champions

2 Locations

Locations: Somolu and Ajeromi -
Ifelodun Local Government
Areas, Lagos State

11 months

Duration: June 2023 - May 2024

About DRASA Health Trust

Dr. Ameyo Stella Adadevoh (DRASA) Health Trust is a public health nonprofit organization building a network of Health Champions to prevent disease and save lives through education and training, community engagement, emergency planning, and policy change. DRASA was founded in honor of the late Dr. Ameyo Stella Adadevoh (DRASA), who identified and contained Nigeria's first Ebola patient in 2014. She gave her life to prevent millions of others in Africa's most populous country from contracting this disease—an incident that highlights the importance of having a strong, prepared, and responsive health system to protect health workers and communities. As such, we are committed to preserving this legacy by protecting public health, prioritizing health security, and improving the control of infections, which are key to our overall development as a nation.

Our core model, reflected across all our programs, is to invest in developing and equipping Health Champions, who do the required work in their circles of influence and work with us as we strengthen Nigeria's health system together at every level. From cultural and religious leaders in communities to health workers in hospitals, health and security officials at our borders, decision-makers in government, and youth influencers in schools, we design and implement training curricula, community outreaches, as well as emergency planning and simulation exercises, to train, build capacity, and support them to identify, prevent, and respond to health emergencies. We continue to lead activities that promote public health. One such is our community health and hygiene program activities, aimed at keeping communities safe from infectious diseases.

The Power of Community-Based Surveillance

Before the SCKaR-IDP project, there was limited information on the knowledge, attitudes, and infectious disease prevention practices among targeted groups in the two Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Lagos State. Community-based public health surveillance and sensitization are vital components of disease prevention and control as they enable the identification of emerging health threats, facilitate the early detection of outbreaks, and inform data-driven decision-making.

DRASA ensures accurate and timely information about disease outbreaks can be gathered, allowing for swift responses, by getting local communities to participate in public health emergency preparedness and response. We do this by transforming residents into community Health Champions who promote healthy practices and identify suspected infectious disease cases. This community-led approach allows us to foster trust and cooperation between health authorities and community members, ensuring that interventions are culturally sensitive and

effective. Ultimately, this collaborative approach is working to save lives, reduce morbidity and mortality from infectious diseases, and promote health equity by harnessing local human resources to address diverse community populations' unique needs and concerns.

"I have learned many things, especially about the importance of cleanliness in the market. I have also learned about carefully checking the kind of cow meat we buy, how to inspect the meat properly for any visible signs of diseases, and what we can do when we discover that the meat or the animal is infected. I also learned that we need to call the local health officers to inspect the animals or the meat so that we do not buy infected meat that would spread diseases in the community."

—Akinleye Wasiu,.

Secretary, Butchers' Association of Achakpo Slaughter Slab at Ajeromi Ifelodun Local Government Area (LGA) of Lagos State, Nigeria.

About SCKaR-IDP

Strengthening Community Knowledge and Response on Infectious Disease Prevention (SCKaR-IDP) is a community-based surveillance and behavior change project aimed at building the capacities of key groups (market women, service workers, transport workers, artisans, and youth) on infectious disease prevention and detection in the Somolu and Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGAs of Lagos State. The aim was to develop the key group members into Health Champions equipped with knowledge and resources for identifying and reporting visible signs and symptoms of infectious diseases, enabling them to take appropriate actions to protect themselves and prevent the spread of diseases in their communities. By the end of the project, 2,089 community dwellers in these locations were trained on personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, waste management, food safety, and other infectious disease prevention practices. Empowered with their new knowledge, these Health Champions are now

supporting community health education, disease detection, and reporting to the local health authorities and played a very active role in the 2024 cholera outbreak, which affected their two communities in Lagos State.

"I have seen a lot of changes now. My environment used to be a very dirty one before now and when you try to advise them [neighbors], they are always stubborn, but now they understand that cholera kills people, clean their gutters regularly, clean the toilets, and even check their septic tanks for fear of the government coming to close the compound. Even the children in the compound now wash their hands more regularly. I have seen a lot of positive changes."

—Kehinde Omolade,.

A Traditional Birth Attendant and Local Herb Seller at Alayabiagba ward in Ajeromi-Ifelodun Local Government Area of Lagos State.



Project Goals

In line with Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 6, our project aimed at ensuring that at least 2,000 people living in the Somolu and Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGAs in Lagos State, Nigeria, became Health Champions with improved knowledge of personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, and infectious disease prevention, with a 60% increase in knowledge score of these topics by the end of Q1 of 2024.

SCKaR-IDP Activities

- Advocacy visits and meetings were conducted to engage with stakeholders from key government institutions, including the Lagos State Ministry of Health (LSMOH), Lagos State Health Research Ethics Committee (LSHREC), and Lagos State Primary Healthcare Board (PHCB), in the project.
- Mapping and data collection tools were developed and reviewed to facilitate baseline and endline assessments of key groups in each ward of the two LGAs.

SCKaR-IDP Activities

- Training and onboarding meetings were held for field officers and project volunteers, including LGA health officials such as Environmental Health Officers, Community Informants, Health Education Officers, Community Health Extension Workers (CHEWs) and Disease Surveillance and Notification Officers (DSNOs) to prepare them for project implementation.
- Introductory and advocacy visits were conducted with the identified community and key group leaders to introduce the project, co-design the community participation approach, gain acceptance, and encourage community ownership.
- A baseline Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) survey was deployed as a pre-intervention assessment among a subset of key groups in selected communities to understand existing knowledge and behaviors.
- Community trainings were organized to equip Health Champions with skills to conduct visual surveillance for signs and symptoms, notify and report suspected cases, and promote infectious disease prevention methods.
- An endline KAP survey was conducted to measure knowledge change and assess the impact of the intervention on community members.

Key Outputs

- One training curriculum on infectious disease prevention was developed.
- 15 key groups were reached across the two LGAs.
- 37 community and key group leaders were engaged.
- 779 key group members were assessed on their knowledge, attitudes, and practices for infectious disease prevention at baseline and endline.
- 2,089 key group members trained on infectious disease prevention in Somolu and Ajeromi-Ifelelodu LGAs.
- 100 community training sessions were conducted.
- 2,208 hand sanitizers were distributed.
- 2 active online communities established, providing Health Champions with infectious disease information, connecting them with the local health authorities, and serving as a platform for case detection, reporting, and referral that is integrated with the existing LGA and state structures.

Key Outcomes

- Increased knowledge, attitude, and practices (KAP) on hygiene, environmental sanitation, and infectious disease prevention among key group members of Somolu and Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGAs. At the end of the project activities, over 90% of community members knew how infectious diseases can spread, the common signs and symptoms, as well as how to prevent them.
- Overall, there was a 43.2% increase in knowledge of infectious diseases among the community dwellers.
- Community-based surveillance was strengthened in the 2 LGAs, as evidenced by the fact that within 3 months, our Health Champions reported 25 infectious disease cases to the local health authorities using the coordination and reporting platform we developed.
- 3 months after our engagement, 25 Health Champions provided support to the local government to respond to the cholera outbreak that affected their communities.

Impact

- 2,089 key group members of Somolu and Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGA have become Health Champions working to promote good hygiene and sanitation practices, detecting and reporting infectious diseases in their communities, and supporting and strengthening their local health systems.



Testimonials: Voices of Health Champions

“When we see anyone coughing persistently, we advise them to go to the hospital to get checked instead of visiting a chemist because, while it might seem like an ordinary cough, it could be something worse. The same applies to diarrhea as well, as it is one of those common diseases that can cause a lot of harm to people. For some things that we normally disregard, we have now learned that they are serious issues that we need to pay more attention to in our community.”

—Alhaja Bamidele Omotayo, Iya Oloja Ashogbon Market

“From this program, I now understand things I didn't even know before. We need to maintain good hygiene in our business environment and at home. Also, if you feel sick, it is best to go to the hospital and complain to a doctor rather than self-medicating, as this can lead to further complications.”

—Rahimi Arowolo, food seller

“From now on, as the Iyaloja of this market, we will make sure to infuse hygiene and health talks into our discussions during the committee and association meetings because, for us to run our business successfully, good health is needed

—Princess Aderolakemi Olaiya Jagunmolu Awelewa, Iyaloja of Adebayo Market, Bariga.

Lessons Learned and Next Steps

Our SCKaR-IDP journey has yielded valuable lessons. First, post-implementation monitoring and support for step-down have been crucial in ensuring the sustainability of the project outcomes. This has enabled us to address emerging challenges and reinforce positive behaviors. Additionally, continued engagement, education, and disease notification through our two online community platforms have played a vital role in maintaining community momentum and encouraging active participation alongside the local health authorities. These have facilitated real-time information sharing, timely disease reporting, and ongoing health promotion, ultimately contributing to a more informed and resilient community. By integrating these strategies, we have created a robust framework for community-led health initiatives, which we will replicate and scale to more communities across the country.

Check out the highlights from our SCKaR-IDP community health program [here](#).
You can also read our Health Champion stories [here](#).

Advocacy Visits





Community Engagement









