



AMPLIFY VOICES. GAIN INSIGHTS. EMPOWER CHANGE.

PICTURE IMPACT

DIARIES IN ACTION | A CASE FROM NORTHERN NIGERIA

A first meeting with Picture Impact to discuss our picture-based diaries can seem overwhelming and well, fantastical. We will tell you that our customized diaries address information, communication and education (ICE), social and behavior change (SBC), and impact assessment for learning, monitoring and evaluation (MERL). Oh, and literacy is not required.



Reasonably, we are met with skepticism at times and a desire to hear about it in action. Our team is recently back from the field, visiting a diary that has been active in 16,000 households for a period of six months. We couldn't be more pleased to report that it is performing exactly the way we said it would.

THE PROJECT

Picture Impact was tasked by Catholic Relief Services to create a tool for households enrolled in the Livelihood Planning Process portion of Feed the Future in northern Nigeria. The goal was to help households create their own plan for diversified income and the challenge was how to have low literacy households customize their own plan. Through our user-centered design process we met the challenge by developing a 60-page picture-based diary, that fully covers the existing curriculum, reinforces additional program messages, provides interactive pages for customizable and trackable livelihood plans, and integrates key program M&E measures for future use. The diaries are supported by additional materials including a version with descriptive (“helper”) text, facilitation guides, a training manual, and training materials. To launch the diary in the field, Picture Impact designed a train the trainer model and conducted an experiential training for over 80 key program actors, including 60+ Government Caseworkers.

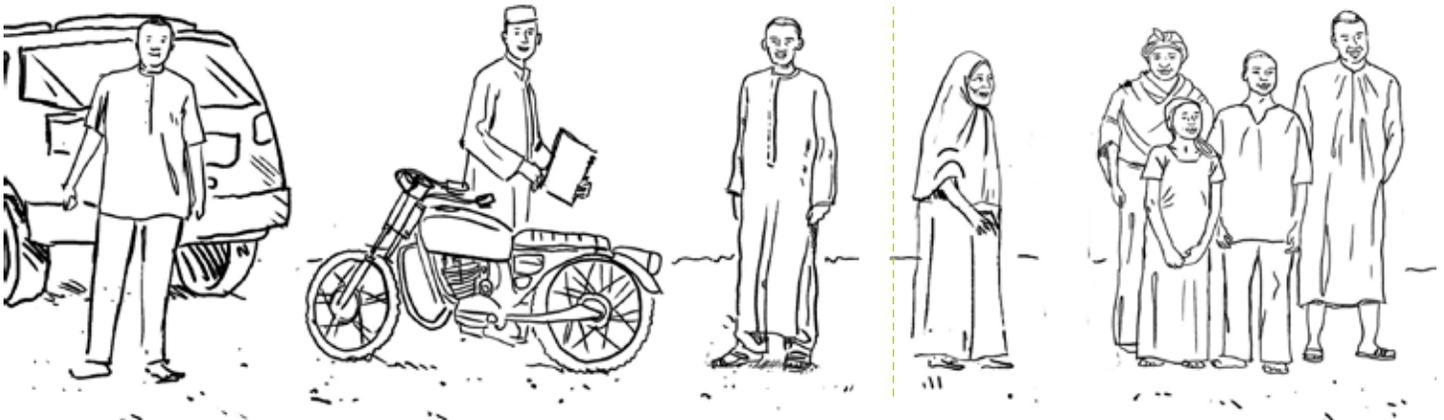
INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) AT THE HOUSEHOLD LEVEL

When you consider the realities of many rural contexts worldwide, paper is often the most appropriate technology. The diaries take concepts that are abstract and make them concrete, clarifying things for ease in understanding. The diaries provide written records so participants can look back and remember messages, goals, and actions they’ve taken. With a copy of their own information, households are able to share their experience with neighbors. Participants are beginning to personalize the program messages and mark different coping strategies, goals, and assets—applying these assets to their own situations.

“It is better [with the picture diaries], because they understand, they will see the picture and they understand the message that we are teaching them.”

“I wanted to know how to open the [family’s] eyes. Now, with this [program], I have information. It is easy to understand and also to share the information.” - Supervisor

LITERACY BARRIER



CSO PROGRAM MANAGER

GOVERNMENT CASEWORKER

SUPERVISOR

LIAISON

HOUSEHOLD

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CASE MANAGEMENT MADE EASIER

As is the case with most development programs, Feed the Future Nigeria has a cascade of actors involved. This includes community service organizations, local government caseworkers, supervisors, community volunteers (liaisons), and the households themselves. Message fidelity has increased along this cascade primarily because the diaries serve as reminder material and a written record of key messages. The diaries have eased the work of cascade members: liaison no longer have to notate for the families because each household can do so themselves; the supervisors are receiving far fewer questions and can work more effectively through the liaisons; the government caseworkers use diaries as the backbone for training community volunteers; and CSOs are able to monitor progress quickly by simply opening a diary.

“Using the Livelihood Planning diary, it becomes easier. Whereby the Liaison has her own copy and the household also has one, it’s easier for them to communicate. I think there’s a great improvement with [the diary].” - CSO Program Manager

“Sometime I go to the community and I visit a household without their prior knowledge and I say, ‘Can I see your diary?’ and when I open it and I can see, ‘Wow! They’re actually doing it, they’re marking and making progress.’” - CSO Program Manager, Sokoto





CAPACITY BUILDING

Picture Impact always designs tools by taking into account the capabilities and assets of all people involved. This leads to capacity building as our tools support and enhance the strengths of those for whom they were designed. Households are feeling more confident now because they are doing the marking in the diaries themselves. Many women in particular have realized they can “read” their diaries and conclude that their girl children can do the same work and should attend school. Caseworkers, supervisors, and liaisons who are implementing the program are incorporating program messages into their own lives and noticing positive changes and serving as powerful examples in their communities. While not a surprise, it is a delight that the picture-based diaries have such a strong positive impact.

“in the northern part of this country the education is very poor, but ... some of them, with that diary—they have not learned anything in their lives in terms of academics and the rest—after they started marking, they asked me, ‘Is it possible that I should be able to do this?’ If that is the case then I think I will have to send my children to go to school, and the other one that is not going to school, the other female, let’s put her into school.” - CSO program manager

With the diary some of the households have built their business. Before they didn’t know how to make use of their money, but with the program and diary they are able to increase their business. We are now saving in SILC groups; next week the SILC savings will be distributed, every body will use their share. I hope, to also create business for myself” - Liaison

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BROADER APPLICATIONS

This picture-based diary methodology is built on a framework from the founding team's shared mentor, Dr. Helzi Noponen. We've followed the development of this type of tool for over 10 years and are thrilled with Picture Impact's iteration of this methodology in Africa. We wonder how it might evolve over the next 10 years. Could it be used in a technical capacity for the adoption of new technology in farming? Could it be used in the United States with adults with developmental disabilities? Could it assist persons living with HIV in seeking, recording and managing their treatment? As a social design firm we are excited to explore these and many others.

For a more personal look at individual diary users see our [snapshots on success in northern Nigeria](#).



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