Nigeria

MMMs are involved in health facilities and providing care in urban and rural areas in a number of locations in the country. Updates from our Sisters in early April 2020 included the following:

- **St. Mary’s Hospital Eleta, Ibadan**
  Sr. Dumka Michael said that measures have been taken to protect staff, including changes in duty rosters to ensure adequate safety and rest. Face masks have been issued to staff members.

  The hospital entrance gate is kept locked for general visitors. Patients have temperature screening and wash their hands with soap and water at buckets provided.

  Dumka also noted that in the community around them, ‘people are isolated in their homes and some have no one to chat to them. May God comfort them.’

- **Mile Four Hospital, Abakaliki**
  Sr. Charity Munonye reported that hospital patients and staff received education on COVID-19 prevention, signs and symptoms. Awareness-raising was done in outreach clinics (mobile clinics and Hansen’s disease). Patients were taught how to wash their hands properly and minimize touching their faces and shaking hands. Face masks were distributed to all hospital staff.

  Water buckets with taps along with soap for hand washing have been placed at strategic places in the hospital, e.g. at entrance gates and at the entrance to every unit. Staff and patients are using hand sanitizer. Rails and door handles are cleaned regularly with Jik (disinfectant).

  Visitors to the hospital are highly restricted during this time. Notices have been placed around the hospital compound informing patients and their relatives that visitors are not allowed in the wards. Infrared thermometers are used at the main hospital entrance gate and at the general outpatients’ department (GOPD).

  Patient flow at the GOPD and antenatal clinics (ANC) is much faster now because patients are attended to as soon as they come to avoid clustering. More staff have been mobilized at the GOPD and ANC. Patients are encouraged to maintain social distancing while they are being attended to.

  Social distancing is maintained in all activities. The hospital is not holding morning staff assembly.

- **Torugbene- the Creeks area**
  Sr. Ifeoma Ifedi told us that the Sisters began sensitization in January with small groups and group chat in schools, churches and in the diocese. Emphasis was placed on personal hygiene, hand-washing, social distancing, avoiding crowds, and producing local handmade sanitizer and cleaning agents.

  ‘We have no reported case of signs and symptoms of COVID-19 in our creek. We don’t have test kits but we observe precautionary measures as far as possible.’
**Itam-Family Life Centre**
Sr. Sylvia Ndubuaku described the reality in Itam.

‘We started by educating ourselves and the staff, with much emphasis on prevention. We obtained necessary materials, e.g. buckets with taps for running water, liquid soap, hand sanitizer, face masks, gloves and gowns. Almost all the staff were given off duty and told to stay at home. We visited churches, women’s forums, and other groups to educate them.

‘We are now thinking about how to get some equipment to help us diagnose cases. There is no place for testing in the state yet and we are concerned that many have it already.

‘Another concern is how to store plenty of food because many people will come to us hungry if this lockdown continues. Everything is too costly now and funds are not available for this situation.’

**Lagos-Amukoko**
Sr. Edochie Nkeiruka said that many steps were taken to prevent spread of COVID-19.

‘We made banners for health education and sensitization of the public. Intensive health education was given in schools before they were closed. Education continues in the clinic daily.

‘We opened an extra tap at the clinic entrance and all the staff and patients wash their hands there before they enter the clinic. Hand sanitizers are provided for staff and patients. Full protective gowns and trousers, gloves and face masks were provided for the staff even though the prices keep rising.

‘Due to the lockdown and ban on transportation most of our staff members who come from long distances are picked up in the morning and dropped off after work. This has not been easy because the vehicle is over-used and there
are more fuel expenses. Staff who could not get transport to a place where we can pick them up are staying at home. One of the staff has been given accommodation in the clinic because the people she lives with are afraid of her contracting the virus at work. Pregnant staff, who we feel are more vulnerable, were asked to stop work for now.

‘Patients maintain distancing from each other and they are attended to quickly to avoid congestion. People suspected of having infection and critically ill patients are referred to tertiary health institutions for further investigation and treatment.

‘We share vitamin C tablets and multivitamins with the staff to help build immunity.

‘As we continue to do our part we commend our lives to God, relying on God for protection and healing for ourselves and the whole world.’