The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) with support from MacArthur Foundation organized One-day Training for Civil Society on Budget Tracking. The Training aimed at enhancing the capacity of Kaduna state’s civil society groups with holistic knowledge and skills to effectively monitor and report maternal health budget in the state. The meeting drew about 20 participants from various civil society organisations in the state. After exhaustive deliberation on various thematic issues, we the participants:

Recognised that maternal and child health remains paramount to the well-being and progress of any society, and several policies, frameworks and guidelines have hitherto been initiated to improve maternal and child health in Nigeria.

Also, recognised that appropriate budget tracking improves service delivery, exposes corruption and mismanagement, empowers civil society to demand accountability, and builds constructive Executive-Legislative-CSOs working relationship on maternal health service delivery.

Further recognised that budget tracking involves critical comparative and contrastive analysis of budget actual and performance during the fiscal period; budget monitoring encompasses step-by-step follow-up of every action taken on a particular budget line item; budget reporting provides constant feedback on adherence and compliance to budgetary provisions, enhances accountability and maximises effective use of resources, promotes participation, provides good guidelines for future planning, and enhances development at all levels.

Expressed concern over lack of appropriate consultation prior to policy pronouncement, leading to policy mismatched, misconception and wrong projection on maternal and child health budget in Kaduna state.

Also, expressed concern over the readiness by relevant institutions to make budgetary processes fully opened and transparent; and the capacity and credibility of some civil society to passionately and effectively track and report maternal health budget.

Further expressed concern over weakness in budget tracking by civil society on maternal, immunisation, infant and under-5 health; though Family Planning is presently receiving attention.

Noted that holistic approach to budget tracking process involves identification of key maternal health issue and relevant stakeholders; critical observation of current legislation and policies; personal capacity building for appropriate data collection and utilisation; proactive data gathering, analysis and utilisation to inform policy decision.
Also noted that while our primary focus and concern in maternal health budget tracking and reporting are resource utilisation, program or project execution, value for money, and benefit delivery impact, we understood that effective tracking and reporting takes cognizance of fundamental information such as budget statistics, human resource for health, numeric projections, discrepancies, existing population, available facilities, relevant health care institutions, demand and supply for health services

Further noted that effective tracking and monitoring of budget by civil society involves measurable objectives, monitoring indicators, data capture strategy and analysis, and feedback mechanism to relevant stakeholders

Understood that potential challenges in budget tracking process such as information accessibility, language technicality, poor response, bribery and follow-up can be mitigated through persistent advocacy, constructive working relationship with relevant stakeholders, networking, courtesy and diplomacy, and personal understanding and use of relevant documents

Committed to engage required tools like revenue report by government, project documents, budget, government audited accounts, reports of governments monitoring committees, and due process in public procurement, in effective monitoring, tracking and reporting of budget

Also committed to adopt and utilise relevant tracking methods such as advocacy to government authorities, adhoc project monitoring, tracking via reporting, third party tracking in holistic reporting of maternal health budget’s performance

Will effectively engage available and credible platforms like relevant institutions, media, programmes, conferences, communities in reporting maternal health budget’s performance for an improved maternal and child health in the state.

Signed:

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  I Care Women and Youth Initiative
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- Hauwa Hassan
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