

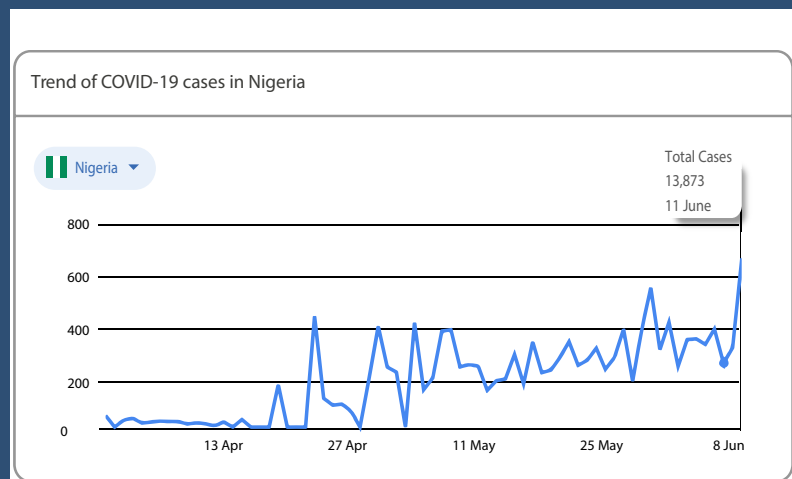
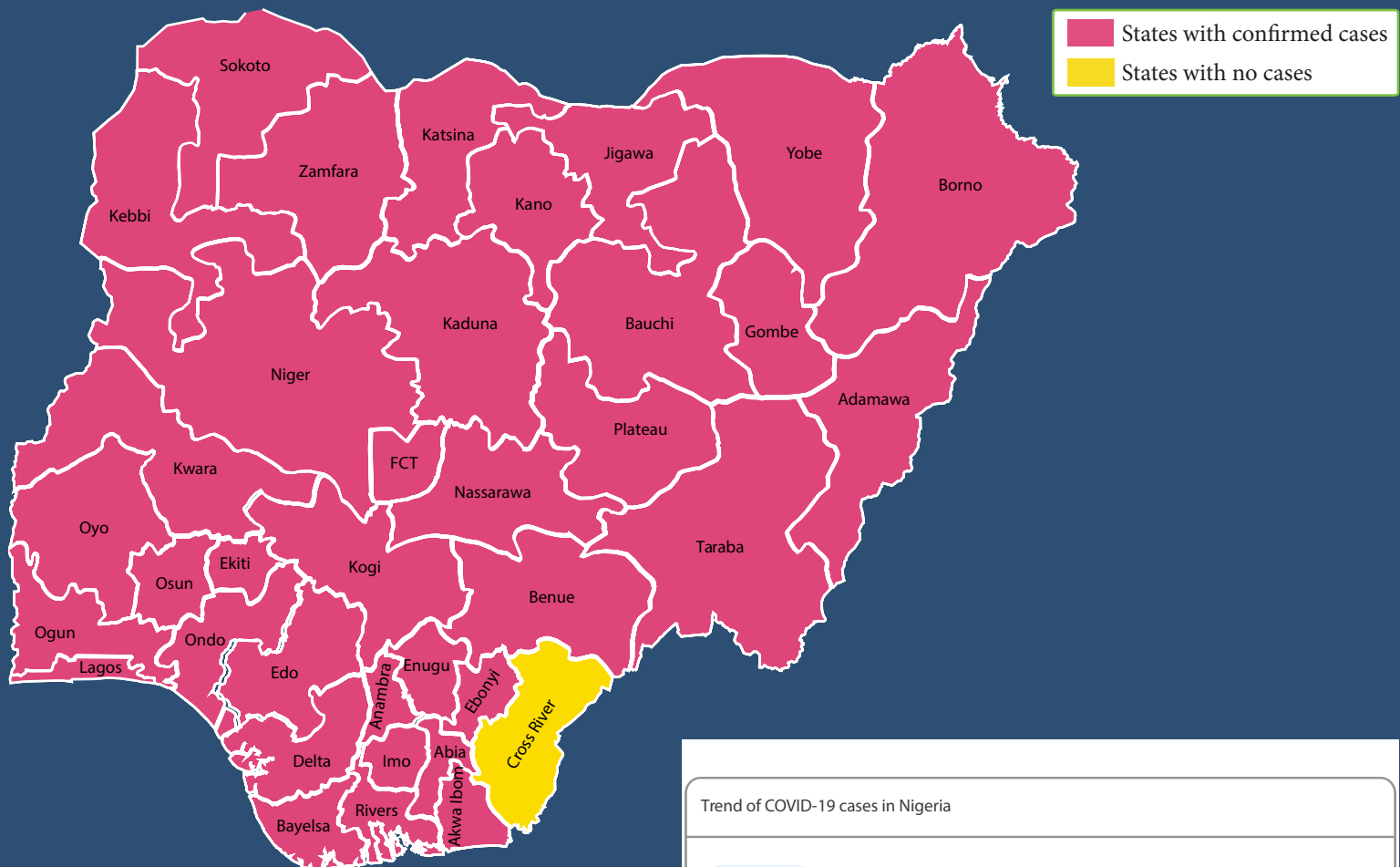


HALTING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 AND OTHER INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN NIGERIA THROUGH UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO WATER, SANITATION AND GOOD HYGIENE.

Get the latest Nigeria COVID-19 figures at Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (ncdc.gov.ng) and World Health Organization (covid19.who.int)

The current outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic across the world, and with an alarming increasing number of cases in Nigeria, highlights more than ever the need for the Nigerian government, at all levels, to take urgent action to expanding access to sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene services. Clean water, decent sanitation and good hygiene together form the foundation that underpins almost all of the sustainable development goals, and are indispensable in current efforts to prevent the spread of the pandemic.

NIGERIA – COVID-19 affected states



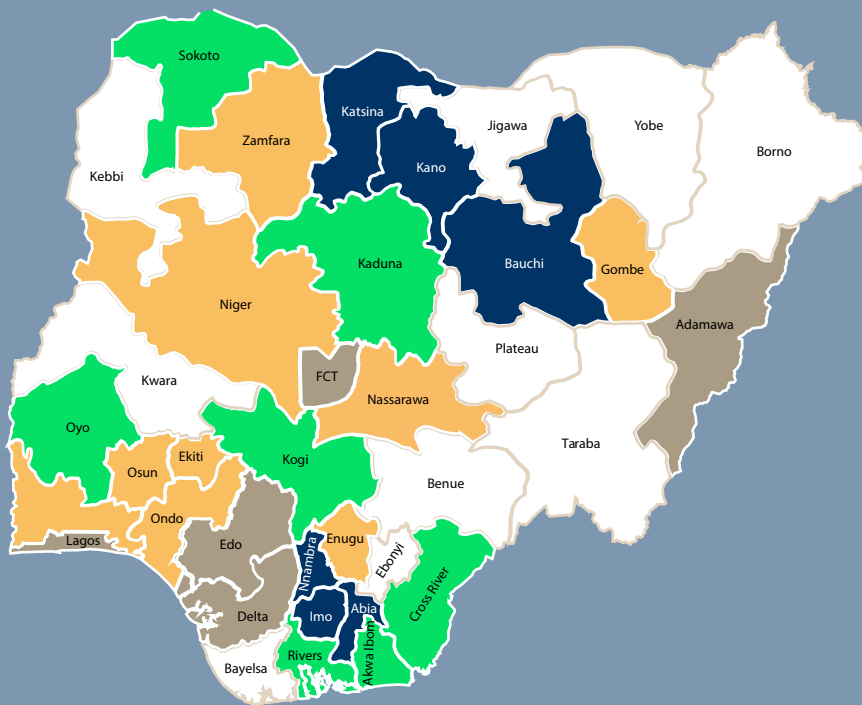
Nigeria is now experiencing growing community transmission of COVID-19 with Lagos – the economic capital of the nation, and Abuja – the Federal Capital Territory, recording the highest cases.

The Crisis

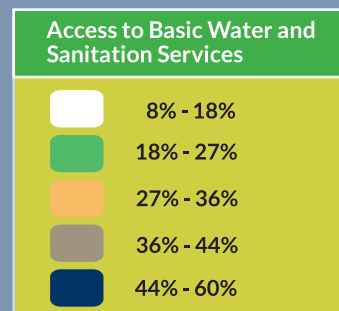
Handwashing with soap and clean water is one of the simplest and most effective disease prevention methods available, and is the first line of defence against highly contagious diseases, including the novel corona virus (COVID-19). However, despite evidence of the effectiveness of good hygiene practices as the first line of defence in the prevention of infectious diseases, about 60 million people (32%) in Nigeria lack access to basic water supply services and 150 million people (79%) lack basic handwashing facilities with soap and water.

Worse still, about 70,000 children under 5 die every year from diseases caused by the nation's poor levels of access to clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene services. Furthermore, only 7% of schools and 5% of health facilities in the country have combined basic water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities. Levels of access to water, sanitation and hygiene service in rural communities are even far more worrisome, making this segment of the population far more vulnerable.

States most at risk due to poor access to water, sanitation and hygiene



While the whole population remains at risk because of massive community transmission, states with lower access to water, sanitation and hygiene services are more likely to become hotspots for the coronavirus disease. Urgent WASH intervention is particularly crucial in these more vulnerable areas.



WaterAid's position

The current outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic across the world, and with an alarming increasing number of cases in Nigeria, highlights more than ever before the need for the government to fast-track the implementation of concrete activities laid out in the National WASH Action Plan for the revitalisation of the water, sanitation and hygiene sector. This includes leveraging on the [Clean Nigeria: Use the Toilet](#) campaign to drive and champion handwashing with soap and water as a key hygiene behaviour crucial to preventing the spread of COVID-19. The effectiveness of the messaging on handwashing with soap and water to curtail the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria is highly dependent upon government adoption of the right policies and investments for reversing the current water, sanitation and hygiene statistics that represents the reality for millions.

All stakeholders must recognise and commit to prioritising access to clean water and decent toilets as a basic human right, and must intensify efforts to ensure the provision of these services at this most critical time when they have proven to be crucial in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, more than ever, there is need for partnerships, collaboration and urgent action to build resilient water, sanitation and hygiene systems.

Governments, the private sector, multilateral / bilateral institutions, development agencies, civil society and the public all have a role to play if Nigeria is to control and overcome COVID-19, prevent the next pandemic, and build sustainable, resilience services that can deliver health and dignity for all.

¹National Outcome Routine Mapping of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Service Levels (WASHNORM 2018)

Written by: Kolawole Banwo and Oluseyi Abdulmalik with support from Blessing Sani and Evelyn Mere.

© WaterAid Nigeria 13 April 2020 *[Updated 11 June 2020]