



IHAVN NEWS

A NEWS PUBLICATION OF THE INSTITUTE OF HUMAN VIROLOGY, NIGERIA



GBV Survivors Utilize IHVN Seed Funds for Financial Empowerment

by Blessing Ukpabi



Vashira and her child pose for a picture with staff of New Hope Agency, the community-based organization IHVN supports to provide GBV services

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) 2023 estimates, 31% of women in Nigeria have experienced physical violence since age 15. Gender-based violence (GBV) has been defined as “any violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, girls, men and boys.

The Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) provides gender-based violence services such as HIV testing services, post-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for rape survivors mental health screening and psychosocial support screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and treatment for minor injuries.

IHAVN also provides pre-exposure prophylaxis for eligible survivors, emergency contraceptives to avoid unintended pregnancies in female survivors of childbearing age, tailored post violence care services to clients who are undergoing intimate partner violence, maintaining of an efficient referral system in supported states to

enhance referrals for non-clinical services like social support, legal counsel, and financial empowerment.

In December 2023, as part of programs to mark the 16 days of activism campaign against gender-based violence (GBV) in women and girls, IHVN provided House Hold Economic Strengthening (HHES) interventions to about 20 indigent survivors of GBV across the four supported states. In the FCT, five gender-based violence survivors received the seed fund of ₦50,000.00 each through New Hope Agency, a community-based organization to support their petty trades and increase their resilience.

A single thread that runs through the stories of the survivors is that of resilience to move beyond the pain that they have experienced to forge a new life for themselves and their children.


42-year-old Vashira Ezra shed tears of joy upon receipt of the funds. “I felt good and happy. I did not expect the one day, anybody will give me money to start anything.” Vashira, who

hails from Northeast Nigeria, but now lives in Abuja, Nigeria, decided to use the money for grain business. She bought freshly harvested guinea corn from a local market and is storing it till mid-2024 when she expects to make 70% profit from selling the grains.

“I chose the grains business because I have a passion for it. If I didn't go for grain business, I would have spent the money anyhow.

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GBV Survivors Utilize IHVN Seed Funds for Financial Empowerment



IHVN GBV Lead, Mrs. Derby Collins-Kalu presenting the seed fund to Agatha Jibrin in December 2023

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The Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN)

From the Chief Executive Officer

The Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) provides a wide range of prevention and care services to address gender-based violence (GBV). These services include, HIV testing services, post-exposure prophylaxis for rape survivors, and an efficient referral system in the Federal Capital Territory, Nasarawa, Rivers and Katsina states to enhance referrals for non-clinical services like social support, legal counsel, and financial empowerment. We also provide mental health and psychosocial support screening as well as treatment for sexually transmitted infections and minor injuries. These interventions have been integrated into the HIV prevention and treatment program with our scope expanded to respond to clients who may have GBV as the cause of being virally unsuppressed. The April to June 2024 newsletter features reports on some of our GBV interventions and other activities.



Yours truly,
Dr. Patrick Dakum
 Chief Executive Officer,
 Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria

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Cecilia Akwara displaying some fascinators she made

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corn from a local market and is storing it till mid-2024 when she expects to make 70% profit from selling the grains.

“I chose the grains business because I have a passion for it. If I didn't go for grain business, I would have spent the money anyhow.

While growing up, my parents were in that line of business, and I saw how profitable it was.”

Vashira's hopes are high that she will stabilize and expand the business from just guinea corn to other grains. In addition to selling grains, she does menial cooking jobs and hair braiding. She is optimistic that she will continue to move beyond the emotional hurt that she experienced when her partner and father of three children, abandoned her with nothing to fend for them. Another beneficiary, Rebecca Akpan, who hails from South-South Nigeria and currently resides in Abuja, used the funds to start an *akara* (bean cake) business.

“I saw that if I sell close to a primary school close to where I reside in Jikwoyi, I'll have a quick turnover. So, I bought beans, sieves, and pots, and started the business. Every day, I grind one and a half *mudus* of beans. Sometimes, I fry potatoes along with it. Sometimes, I sell up to ₦7,000.00 daily. One thing I make sure to do is make a daily thrift saving,” she adds.

Besides selling *akara*, Rebecca is also learning how to make fabric bags and has big plans to expand the business. Being busy has given her some relief from the physical and emotional abuse that she has endured and focus on carving a better life for herself and her three children.

Agatha Jibrin, another beneficiary, used the funds to start buying and selling provisions like drinks, noodles, and biscuits. She was also able to repair her faulty fairly used grinding machine which she had obtained earlier, for a second stream from grinding vegetables and grains in her neighborhood. Agatha is from one of the North-Central States in Nigeria but now resides in Abuja.

Though the pain from the neglect of her partner who abandoned her and married her cousin is still there, with counseling and empowerment, she is moving on to work and take care of her three children. “When I got the

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Over 100 Vulnerable Adolescents Gain Skills at Technology Hub

by Blessing Ukpabi

Over 100 vulnerable adolescents and young people (AYP) are accessing free digital and technology skills at a state-of-the-art novel tech hub in Abuja established by the Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria (IHVN) with funding from the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC), Nigeria.

The hub is run by Heal the Youth Foundation, a Community-Based Organization, and one hub started operations in February 2024. It offers training in information communication technology, web applications, mobile applications, web development, content creation, robotics, catering, dance, make-up artistry, nail technology, hairdressing, photography, and videography.

IHVN Technical Adviser Prevention, Care and Treatment, Mrs. Jummai Musa says that “the Tech Hub promotes the well-being of Adolescents and Young People (AYP) by offering a variety of services and resources tailored to their unique needs.

These services include, comprehensive health services, mental health, life skills training, social engagement and community building skills in a safe space to promote creativity and teamwork. The existence of the Tech Hub has expanded reach and added value to the Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) program in the community.”

Mrs. Musa adds that “the hub collaborates with an IHVN supported community-based organization to enroll eligible adolescents and young people of between 10-24 years who are HIV positive or negative and who are in-or-out of school.”

Executive Director of Health the Youth Foundation, Ms. Aji Robinson, says the hub is fully equipped with facilities to train young people in digital technology.

“We also teach them leadership, life-building skills, and entrepreneurship skills. The hub caters to those who might not have had the opportunity to learn these skills. It is located in Kurudu in Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC). Some had not touched the computer before, but now they can build websites. Some are developing codes to build mobile apps. We have seen some who have come to the hub



Young persons at the hub engage in a practical session during a robotics class



Divine O. learning photography in the photo studio at the tech hub in Abuja

unable to express themselves now doing so with confidence.”

The young trainees in the hub identify themselves as Dazzlers. Ali Ene, one of the Dazzlers, says that, the hub is a second home. “It is a home full of joy, happiness, learning and innovation. Everyone is cheerful. I am currently learning digital marketing, catering, and nail technology,” she says.

Another Dazzler, Musa Kabir says that he has gained ICT skills. “I was unable to operate the computer when I started, I didn’t even have access to one. Now I can use one. I have learned web development and coding. I have gained from the hub and I am grateful for it.

Divine O. journeys more than 30 kilometers to and from the hub. She says that at first, her mother was hesitant to allow her to go to the hub because of the distance but she was determined to learn when she was told that

transportation cost would be provided. She joined the hub in February 2024.

“My story is that I never imagined I would hold a camera but the hub has made it possible. I also did not know that I could fix nails but now I can. I also post content online from the hub on social media and have gotten more than 3,400 followers. In the next five years, after I gain a B.Sc. in Sociology, I hope to become a CEO of an enterprise that combines all that I have learned from the hub,” she says.

The hub enrolls adolescents in batches and groups them in teams with separate time slots to learn skills of their choice. It has facilities such as a library and a clinic for health awareness creation and regular checks by an experienced nurse.

National Childhood TB Testing Week: IHVN, ARFH Screen OVCs in Lagos State

by Joy Onuoha

As part of activities to mark the National Childhood TB Testing Week from 27th May to 2nd June, 2024, the USAID TB LON 3 project has conducted tuberculosis screening for orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) in Lagos, Ogun, Osun, and Oyo States.

IHVN partnered with the Association for Reproductive and Family Health (ARFH) to provide integrated services like free weight checks, HIV testing services, and free tuberculosis services for street children. During the three-day activity, 626 children were sensitized and screened for tuberculosis in Powerline Community in Agege Local Government Area (LGA), Olodan Community in Ajeromi LGA as well as Gbethrome and Zongo communities in Badagry LGA.

in Lagos State. Out of the total number screened, 69 presumptive tuberculosis cases were identified and evaluated across the three (3) LGAs. The screening was done using the



Badia community residents participating in a community tuberculosis outreach Apapa LGA, Lagos State

WHO four symptom screening checklist on the presence of cough, fever, weight loss and night sweats.

After the exercise, there was free group transportation to the x-ray facility where their radiographs were taken and other relevant tests conducted. Senior Program Manager, Community Programs, USAID TB LON 3 Project, Dr Abiola Alege said, "finding missing children with TB is a very herculean task as the symptoms in them may be elusive and require

a high index of suspicion. Thus, all hands must be on deck by all partners working with children so that all vulnerable children will have access to the TB preventive and curative services they require. Hence, this collaboration is a step in the right direction."

Director, Technical Programs, USAID TB LON 3 project Dr Olugbenga Daniel, noted that, "The collaboration with ARFH was quite strategic and

designed to improve TB case detection among this vulnerable groups of children. Systematic TB screening helps in early detection, enabling timely treatment and preventing the spread of the disease.

This proactive approach is essential for improving health outcomes, reducing TB transmission rates, and enhancing the overall well-being of these vulnerable children."

IHVN Partners PCRC to Conduct Medical Outreach

by Joy Onuoha

The Institute of Human Virology (IHVN) USAID TB LON 3 project has collaborated with the Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC) Zone 2 Command Headquarters in Onikan, Lagos state to organized a medical outreach. More than 220 police officers and their families, residents in the community and school children were screened using the WHO4 screening checklist.

A mobile chest x-ray van was also on ground for diagnosis of tuberculosis. Participants also benefitted from free blood pressure checks and tuberculosis screening.

A total of 223 people were screened, 16 presumptive cases were recorded and five tuberculosis cases identified.

The Chairman of PCRC Zone 2 Command Headquarters, Alhaji Bashiru R.O Balogun



People participating in the outreach which provided free blood pressure checks and tuberculosis screening

said that the partnership is of great benefit. "I'm happy that the turnout is huge, thank you IHVN for working with us and I believe it will be a collaborative effort going forward".

The USAID TB LON 3 is poised towards ensuring a TB free society. Through community implementation and collaborative partnership, the Project is building a sustainable functional network



School Children in attendance posing with the free exercise books they were given.

targeted at curbing the spread of tuberculosis. It provides rapid tuberculosis case finding, improved treatment outcomes, and strengthened monitoring and evaluation.

Photo Gallery



Executive Director International Research Center of Excellence (IRCE) Professor Alash'le Abimiku, with members of her staff hosting a delegation from the Federal Ministry of Health - Special Advisers Dr. Dayo Adedewe, and Mojoyinoluwa Adebajo.



IHVN Senior Program Manager, Dr. Temitope Adetiba with KNCV staff sensitizing pupils of Badawa Primary School, Badawa Tsauni, Nasarawa LGA, Kano at a tuberculosis screening activity in commemoration of the National Childhood TB Testing Week in the state.



Executive Director International Research Center of Excellence (IRCE) Professor Alash'le Abimiku being interviewed by journalists from Science Magazine Jon Cohen and Science Writer, Abdullahi Tsanni.



Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) CEO, Dr. Patrick Dakum, and staff welcoming the Director and National Coordinator of the National Tuberculosis and Leprosy Control Program (NTBLCP), Dr. Labaran Shehu to the IHVN Campus on a courtesy visit.



Gbagalape Village Savings and Loans Association members working on their community vegetable farm in Nyanya, Abuja.



USAID TB LON 3 project conducting screening for tuberculosis and other health checks during a medical outreach at the Zone 2 Command Headquarters. More than 400 people were screened at the outreach organized in collaboration with the Police Community Relations Committee.

Stakeholders Commit to Integration of TB&HIV Services

by Blessing Ukpabi

More than 200 experts from the Federal and State Ministries of Health, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and funders have reaffirmed their commitment to prioritizing the integration of tuberculosis (TB) and HIV programs across the 36 states of the country and the Federal Capital Territory.

This commitment was reinforced during a five-day National Boot Camp hosted by the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) in Lagos State. The camp focused on discussing the integration of TB and HIV services to enhance healthcare delivery under the Global Fund Grant Cycle 7.

The experts reached a consensus to harmonize service delivery and reporting across TB and HIV implementers nationwide, with plans to evaluate progress at three and six-month intervals.

Dr. Aderonke Agbaje, IHVN Director of Programs - Special Projects, emphasized, "Integration increases the impact of interventions. It makes us more effective in implementation. As a Principal Recipient of the Global Fund Grant Cycle 7 project, IHVN is working under the leadership of the Directorate of Public Health, National Tuberculosis, Buruli Ulcer and Leprosy Control Programme (NTBLCP), National AIDS and STD Control Program (NASCP), and the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) to bolster Nigeria's response to the epidemics of tuberculosis and HIV in the public and private sectors and the community."

The Boot Camp featured engaging break-out and brainstorming sessions on the treatment and care cascade for HIV and TB, monitoring and evaluation requirements, and TB/HIV health and non-health product management.

Additionally, guidelines and standard operating procedures were developed for HIV Testing Services among presumed pregnant women outside conventional health facilities. Key attendees included the Director of Public Health, Dr. Chukwuma Anyaike; the Director of Health Planning, Research, and Statistics, Dr.

Chris Isokpunwu; Representative of the Health Commissioners Forum, Hon. Commissioner of Health for Kwara State, Dr. Amina M. Ahmed El-Imam; and representatives from the Global Fund, PEPFAR, USAID, UNAIDS, UNODC, the Network of People Living with HIV

(NEPWHAN), and the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM).

These leaders called for collective action and the support of all stakeholders in achieving TB and HIV integration and building sustainable and resilient health systems.



IHVN Chief Operating Officer/Managing Director, Dr. Charles Olalekan Mensah and Director of Public Health, Dr. Chukwuma Anyaike at the Booth Camp for stakeholders in Lagos State



IHVN Project Director GF Nigeria TB-HIV Reach, Integration and Impact Project (N-THRIP) Project, Dr. Olayemi Olupitan participating in discussions at the meeting



IHVN Director of Strategic Information, Mrs. Fatu Murtala-Ibrahim, Deputy Director Laboratory Services, Mrs. Petronilla-Jean Ozumba, Director of Programs -Special Projects, Dr. Aderonke Agbaje and Senior Program Manager, Dr. Temitope Adetiba discussing at the Booth Camp



A cross-section of stakeholders at the booth camp

IHVN Sensitizes FCT Communities on Gender-Based Violence

by Luret Dakum

The Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) has sensitized Iddo Padda and Gwagwa communities in the Federal Capital Territory on gender-based violence.

The sensitization program involved advocacy to community leaders, a road walk within the community market and health checks.

IHVN Senior Program Officer Prevention, Care and Treatment, Mrs. Derby Collins-Kalu says that the Institute in collaboration with New Hope Agency, a community-based organization, organized the activity in these communities to prevent gender-based violence and rape.

“The program reports we are getting from the community shows a high rate of gender-based violence, especially rape for minors. We work with health facilities to sensitize women during immunization. Rape is the most common in these communities.

We presented these findings to the community leaders. The sensitization activity is to tell the people what is happening in their community and stimulate behaviour change in the areas of rape. We also want to educate people about rape and to tell them the services available to someone who has been raped in the health care center.”

Mrs, Collins-Kalu explains that timely presentation for persons who experience rape makes the difference.



Women of Iddo Padda Community participating in a road walk through the community market to raise awareness about gender-based violence



A community member receiving free health checks during the sensitization activity

“This event is part of a broader effort to sensitize the community about the realities of gender-based violence. IHVN has been educating residents on recognizing signs of rape, understanding the available care pathways, and emphasizing the importance of timely medical intervention. Immediate medical attention is critical to prevent the transmission of HIV, manage potential pregnancies, address sexually transmitted diseases, and mitigate the emotional trauma associated with rape.”

New Hope Agency GBV Program Manager, Ifeoma Okonkwo says that “Our collaboration with IHVN has been instrumental in bringing awareness to the community. Engaging with the public has brought a noticeable increase in community participation and willingness to discuss GBV issues.” Mrs Okonkwo lamented the culture of silence in the society that makes people hesitant to speak about gender-based violence.

“Most of the cultures are very abusive, I also believe that if we can sensitize our communities, they will speak out.”

Women who received testing services during the sensitization program expressed appreciation for the activity. Sekinah Ilasu says, 22-year-old house wife. “I am grateful for this initiative to tell women to speak up about Gender Based Violence because a lot of people in our community today are facing violence from their husbands and they are afraid to speak up because it will only make the situation worst.”

Another participant, a petty trader, Zainab Daro, called for participation of men in sensitization programs too. “I wish our husbands were here to hear this so that those who beat their wives can know that it is bad and stop,”

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TB Advocate Mobilizes Mother, Children to Access TB Services

by Joy Onuoha

When Ms. Prisca Peter, a 34-year-old single mother residing in Lagos State, Nigeria, started feeling ill in November 2023, she went to the nearby chemist to buy over-the-counter drugs including cough syrup. She took the medications but it did not alleviate the weakness, fever, loss of appetite, drenching

night sweats, constant cough, and drastic weight loss she experienced.

Her condition deteriorated such that she was unable to walk or continue her work as a cleaner in a hotel. The Good Samaritan who came to her rescue was Mr. Sunday Michael, a

TB survivor and advocate. Sunday was diagnosed and treated for tuberculosis in Ori-Okuta Primary Health Center Ikorodu LGA, and he referred her to the same facility in January 2024.

Mr. Michael said, “I noticed she was coughing

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Mr. Michael said, "I noticed she was coughing badly, I asked her some questions and noticed she had almost the same symptoms I had, so I decided to take her to the health center I went to for my treatment and proper care."

Supported by USAID TB-LON 3 Project which the Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria (IHVN) implements. IHVN supports screening and treatment for 2,197 facilities in four states.

At the hospital, Prisca was screened for tuberculosis and identified as a presumptive



USAID TB LON 3 Consultant, Dr. Adebola Lawanson counseling Prisca Peter during a community visit by the USAID TB LON 3 Project Team



Prisca Peter and her children pose for a picture

TB case. Afterward, her sputum was collected for evaluation, and she was diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB) disease. She immediately commenced treatment and took her medications as prescribed. "Immediately I was told that the sickness could be cured, I didn't doubt it. I was tired of buying over-the-counter medications and still not getting well. I thought I would even die. I even wondered who would

care for my children if something happened to me," she said.

The USAID TB-LON 3 project also conducted contact tracing which involves identifying people exposed to an infected person. Her four children aged 12, 10, 8, and 5 years were screened for TB and they were all identified as presumptive tuberculosis cases. Upon evaluation of the samples, two of them tested positive for tuberculosis and have been placed on treatment while the other two are receiving free tuberculosis prevention therapy with support from the USAID TB-LON 3 project. USAID TB LON 3 Community Mobilization Advisor, Dr. Alege said, "Survivors of TB are a key part of our demand creation model as they're often able to convince newly diagnosed persons who are yet to start treatment through their experiences.

This model has been largely successful as the survivors' point of view is usually more relatable to clients. The survivors on the other hand are more than willing to support healthcare workers in gratitude for saving their lives. Over time, TB survivors are also engaged as community volunteers to support those whose livelihood might have been negatively impacted by the disease condition."

Prisca and her children are recovering. "If I was to pay money for the treatment, I wouldn't have been able to afford it. I want to thank your organization for the free treatment. I also want

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