



IHVN NEWS

A NEWS PUBLICATION OF THE INSTITUTE OF HUMAN VIROLOGY, NIGERIA



ANRiN Project Fights Malnutrition in Children, Women in Kano State

By Blessing Ukpabi and Luret Dakum



Beneficiary, Fatima with her grandmother Hauwa'u

Fatima is eating well and healthy, I am happy that she is strong, thank you for your support," 50-year-old Hauwa'u Suliaman said, while holding her granddaughter, Fatima on her laps. Fatima is one of the beneficiaries of the Accelerating Nutrition Results in Nigeria (ANRiN) project in Kumbotso Local Government Area in Kano State. Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria (IHVN) is increasing access and utilization of basic nutrition services for children under five years in Kumbotso and eight other local government areas in Kano state. "When Fatima's mother wanted to wean her, she brought her to me. At the time, Fatima was not feeding well. She was looking ill and weak. Though she was a year old, she could barely walk. Her legs were weak," Hauwa'u narrated in Hausa language.

It was about that time that community volunteers from the IHVN ANRiN project came to their neighborhood to counsel them about nutrition for pregnant and lactating women, adolescent girls and children.

"They also gave me Vitamin A and deworming tablets, Zinc/ Oral Rehydration Solution for Fatima," Hauwa'u added. The medicine and the nutrition education received, empowered Hauwa'u to take better care of her granddaughter and the improvements were obvious for all to see.

"Some neighbors were hesitant to take the medicine; now they can see the benefits of the medicine. If a child is not feeding well, they will begin to feed well. I advise others to use these drugs given to us free from the ANRiN project," Hauwa'u said. Fatima now likes to take fresh cow milk, which is easily accessible as her grandmother rears and

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From the Chief Executive Officer

Safeguarding the health of mothers and children through the provision of basic nutrition services is the focus of the Accelerating Nutrition Results in Nigeria (ANRiN) project, which the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) implements in Kano State Nigeria.

Thousands of children under five are receiving packages to prevent brain stunting and other health challenges. This success is captured by our lead story. The edition also features reports from our private sector collaboration to fight tuberculosis as well as progress in our implementation activities across the country.



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

Happy Reading!

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sells sheep and goats.

Nutrition Focal Person for Kumbotso Local Government Area, Amina Gambo, explained that the project has been beneficial for Kumbotso indigenes. "They always appreciate the program because the drugs are free and volunteers bring it to their doorsteps. Malnutrition retards the growth of children. Any child who is stunted will not meet the expected growth of his/her age group" she added.

Zinatu Musa, a mother of three, is another beneficiary of the basic nutrition services from the ANRiN project in Bunkure Local Government Area. She has received iron and folic acid tablets as well as Vitamin A and Albendazole for her children.

"When I was pregnant, I had the problem of not feeding and eating well and I also had low blood pressure. I was told to take the drugs in the morning after I have eaten well. The drug made me stronger and improved my appetite. My blood pressure came back to normal too. I am encouraging my friends who are pregnant to also take these medicine. One of my children always complained of stomach pain but after he was given this Albendazole, he stopped complaining of stomach pains. Now he can eat food well and is healthy," Zinatu said.

IHVN ANRiN Project Chief of Party, Dr Temitope Kolade said, that more women and children are being reached daily in the community through the World Bank funded project.

"We work with community-based organizations and community volunteers in Nasarawa, Kano Municipal, Fagge, Gwale, Tarauni, Kumbotso, Dala, Bunkure and Wudil Local Government Areas to provide basic nutrition services. Because the community volunteers are familiar



Beneficiary, Zinatu Musa with her baby.



Kano State ANRiN Project Coordinator, Dr. Umar Yahuza speaking about the impact of the project.

with the neighborhoods, they go house to house to identify eligible women and children. Then, they give them the services."

'IHVN routinely conducts bimonthly town hall meetings and community outreaches as an avenue for engaging with community leaders and gatekeepers in all nine supported LGAs. This has helped improve acceptance rate for the services provided and it also serves as a forum for receiving feedback from the community which has helped improve the quality of services provided,' she said.

The services given are "counseling for mothers/care-givers of children 0-23 months of age on improved behaviors related to maternal, infant and young child feeding. The project provides fifteen sachets of micronutrient powders bi-monthly for children 6-23 months and iron-



IHVN and Kumbotso Local Government Staff pose for a picture at the state secretariat.

folic acid (IFA) tablets for pregnant women. The Institute also gives intermittent preventive treatment for malaria during ante-natal care, distributes zinc and oral rehydration solution and gives Vitamin A and semiannual deworming."

Kano State ANRiN Project Coordinator, Dr Umar Yahuza, said that the state government is committed to the project. "ANRiN Project is saving our children from brain stunting, during their first 1000 days. Because of the ANRiN project, the women do not experience stock-out of nutrition drugs, they are getting basic nutrition services at home."

According to the 2018 National Nutrition and Health Survey (NNHS), the prevalence of stunting in children in Kano State is 46% and only 30.3% of infants are initiated on breastfeeding within the first one hour of delivery.

"These nutrition indices demonstrated an urgent need to provide nutrition specific and sensitive interventions. IHVN is leading in the delivery of these services in Kano State. We don't have any challenges in collaborating with IHVN to achieve ANRiN objectives," Dr Yahuza says.

IHVN started offering these nutrition services after being chosen as a Non-State Actor (NSA) to support the Kano State Government in May 2021. As at December 2021, IHVN has provided 239,304 women and 536,065 children with nutrition services through the ANRiN project.

WIDOW LIVING WITH HIV IMPROVES IN HEALTH, GAINS TRADE

By Lawrence Wakdet

Mrs Joy, a widow in Bori, Rivers State Nigeria, had many worries. Her most pressing one was for money to feed her daughter, Faith, and herself. Both her and her daughter tested positive to HIV after her husband died in 2011. Though they had begun receiving HIV medications in 2013, they were not adhering to their HIV medications neither were they going regularly for scheduled hospital visits.

Joy's counsellors at the CDC supported hospital, Pope John Paul (PJP) Catholic Hospital at Bori were also concerned about their poor adherence to treatment. The Pediatric Intensified Case Finder at PJP Catholic Hospital, Ms Gloria Macfellan, said that they tracked Joy through calls and visits and constantly counseled her to take her HIV medications. Their efforts, as well as an intervention by the Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) program, restored her to care. She narrates that, "we were advised to take our drugs. I also met officers from the Perpetual Succor for Women and Children Initiative (PESWAC) in 2019. They gave me 17 pieces of ankara clothing to do business with. I did not pay a dime to them."

With the fabrics from PESWAC, a Community-Based Organization supported by Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) through CDC funding, Joy started trading in fabrics. She also heeded the advice by the CBO to join a village Savings and Loans Association. This helped her

to save while growing her business.

"I am happy that today, I can feed my daughter and pay her school fees from the profit I make from my shop. Faith is in JSS1. She always takes first position in her class," Mrs Joy said proudly. Faith's health has also improved. After two years of constant medication, both mother and daughter are virally suppressed and healthy. Faith now attends school regularly and her last viral load test result was 46 copies/ml.

Joy encourages others to adhere to treatment and commit to building their businesses with the help provided through the Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) program.

"I thank IHVN and the CBOs for coming to my aid during my difficult moment," Joy stated while happily showing off her wares in the Bori market in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State.

IHVN OVC Technical Advisor, Mrs Jummai Musa, said that the OVC program ensures that psychosocial support, education, health and nutrition, household economic strengthening, as well as legal and social protection services are provided to vulnerable children and families.

"We equip households to be resilient in the face of socio-economic and emotional consequences of HIV/AIDS. Our work ensures that orphans and vulnerable children are safe, schooled, stable and healthy. This is only possible and sustainable when their caregivers are empowered," she said.



Mrs Joy L. at her shop in Bori Market



Pediatric Intensified Case Finder at PJP Catholic Hospital, Ms Gloria Macfellan, documenting the outcome of tracking defaulting clients

Joy is one of the 14,696 caregivers being empowered through the OVC program implemented by IHVN.

CEPHEID, IHVN Discuss Partnership

By Luret Dakum



IHVN Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Patrick Dakum (2nd left), IHVN Chief Operating Officer/Managing Director, Dr. Charles Olalekan Mensah (1st left) engaging with Dr. Grace Macaulay (4th left) during her visit to the IHVN Campus.



UK CEPHEID Senior Director, Medical Scientific Affairs and Strategy, Dr. Grace Macaulay having an interactive session with staff of the institute on the Gene Xpert machine.

To discuss partnership on the use of Gene Xpert machines for the diagnosis of tuberculosis and cervical cancer, the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) has met with

UK CEPHEID Senior Director, Medical Scientific Affairs and Strategy, Dr. Grace Macaulay, at the IHVN Campus in Abuja. Dr Macaulay was welcomed by IHVN Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Patrick Dakum,

and the Chief Operating Officer, Dr. Charles Olalekan Mensah and a team of experts to discuss the utilization of over 500 Gene Xpert machines which the Institute supports for quality research and disease diagnosis.

During the visit and tour of IHVN laboratories, the team considered possibilities of using the Gene Xpert machines to diagnose more than 30 diseases as well as possible technological improvements to address power supply challenges. They also deliberated about the prospect of establishing a CEPHEID branch in Nigeria and ways to maximize Gene Xpert machines to reduce turnaround time of tests from three weeks to two hours.

Gender Based Violence Survivors Access Free HIV Services

By Tong'ret Lot and Rehoboth Makan

To eliminate AIDS by 2030, one of the barriers to HIV prevention to be overcome is gender-based violence (GBV). The Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2018 reports that 38% of women aged 15-49 in Nigeria have experienced physical or sexual violence.

Ms. A, a 36 year old Gender Based Violence Survivor in Abuja has experienced intimate partner violence. Though she provided the basic needs of clothes, food and rent for her boyfriend, he repeatedly beat her up. He was beating her when a team from Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) supported center run by DIADEM Consults with funding from US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), visited the brothel where she works. They offered her free HIV testing and counseling services. When she tested negative, she was offered Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) after counseling and she started medication to prevent HIV due to the risks in her profession.

"I learned about PrEP first and even now the PrEP medication is in my bag. The medications are very good. I have been enjoying it because, last time I had a condom break and the person was HIV positive. I was very scared so I had to run immediately to the One Stop Shop," she said, referring to the neighborhood center supported by IHVN to provide HIV services to key populations.

At the One Stop Shop, Ms. A did not just get answers to questions about HIV, she got free PrEP. Through counseling, she felt empowered. "I feel stronger now because I know people I can run to, even the case I used to have before with my boyfriend, he no longer beats me," she said. Today, she tells her peers about free treatment for HIV.

"My advice to them is that whenever somebody is abusing them, they should report it, they should open up and talk about it because if you don't talk about it, you may end up being killed. Another thing is that when your condoms burst, don't just

keep quiet because you are scared about what people will say.

Collect Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) or even begin PrEP if you are negative so that even if the condom tears, you don't need to fear again," she said.

Ms. U, another Gender Based Violence Survivor in Abuja, also advises her people who have been exposed to HIV to get tested for HIV and access Post Exposure Prophylaxis(PEP).

"If you are HIV positive, it is not the end of the world, you can be placed on treatment and live a healthy life. All HIV services are free. I was exposed to HIV due to a HIV positive partner. I came to the center for a test and they placed me on PEP for a month. After a month, I came back and they conducted another test and the result still came out negative," she said.

Ms. U had almost lost her eye during a bout of violence. With counseling, health support and linkage to legal services, she is better now.

"I am no longer afraid. The advice and medicine they have been giving me here has not failed so that is one of the reasons that gives me confidence to keep coming to the One-Stop-Shop," she said.

Mr. J, was referred to the one-stop-shop center when a friend noticed bruises on his body. After a HIV test, he was encouraged to begin treatment immediately when he tested positive.

"I was scared because I don't have a job and I don't know where to get money to pay for the drugs," he said. Mr. J was however relieved that HIV test and treatment is free

The counseling he received encouraged him to adhere to his treatment as well as prevent the spread of HIV.

"When I started taking the drugs, for the

first two days, I wasn't myself, I felt pity for myself. But from then till now, I am okay. Before, the Doctor said my viral load was over 3000, which means it was high but with the last viral load they did for me, I was told that the viral load is gradually going down, now it is less than 20," he said. Mr. J today advises those suffering Gender Based Violence to come out and seek for help.

"I know thousands of persons who are being violated and there are some that go



Mr. J at the One Stop Shop receiving drugs



Ms. U undergoing routine health checks at the One Stop Shop

through rape but they are just scared to say it.

I was threatened that I will be killed if I told anyone. Here at the One Stop Shop, they counseled me and gave me the necessary services free," he said.

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PHOTO GALLERY



L-R: Association for Reproductive and Family Health (ARFH) Project Coordinator HIV, Mr. Oladeji Adeyemi; IHVN Chief Operating Officer and Managing Director, Dr. Charles Olalekan Mensah; ARFH Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Mrs. Kehinde Osinowo; and Director Finance and Administration, Mr. Joseph Majiyabe; and IHVN Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Patrick Dakum during a courtesy visit to the IHVN Campus.



IHVN Chief Executive Officer, Dr Patrick Dakum, at News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) studio in Abuja to create awareness about the Institute's activities.



IHVN Chief Operating Officer/Managing Director, Dr Charles Olalekan Mensah, lending his voice for a social media campaign to mark International Women's Day 2022.



Staff of the Prevention, Care and Treatment Department and Program Coordinating Unit celebrating their first position in the office Christmas decoration competition



IHVN Chief Executive Officer, Dr Patrick Dakum commissioning a Creche/Early Learning Center to promote a family-friendly work environment for staff.



IHVN Staff, Ms Ritnen Gomwalk and Mr Samuel Uruakpa at an event to launch the National HIV Self-Testing and Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Communication Strategy.

IHVN Commemorates World TB Day 2022

By Ritnen Gomwalk

To mark World Tuberculosis Day 2022, the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) has conducted screening for tuberculosis as well as sensitized the public on the symptoms of TB, where to get tested and then treated for the disease.

IHVN provided free screening for tuberculosis at Kuchingoro, along airport road in Abuja. The Institute also participated in different events organized by the National Tuberculosis and Leprosy Control Program (NTBLCP), including a road walk within the Abuja metropolis, a community outreach at Mabushi and a Ministerial press briefing. At the press briefing, the Federal Minister of Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire enlightened the public on the symptoms of TB and government activities to end TB.

In Nasarawa State, the Institute in partnership with the State Government, Breakthrough Action Nigeria and KNCV sensitized residents during a road walk. IHVN Nasarawa State Manager, Dr. Yakubu Sambo called on stakeholders to continue to invest resources to end tuberculosis. "It is important to commemorate TB Day every year to provide an avenue for discussion on the disease especially in Africa which has the highest tuberculosis burden in the world," Dr Sambo said. IHVN staff also participated in a radio program to educate the public on tuberculosis transmission, screening and treatment. In Rivers State, IHVN participated in an event to draw attention to the need for joint efforts to end tuberculosis.



IHVN Staff participate in a road walk organized by the National TB Leprosy Control Program (NTBLCP) to mark World TB Day in Abuja.



People in Kuchingoro community in Abuja turn up to be screened for tuberculosis during an outreach organized by IHVN on World TB Day, 2022.



Stakeholders join IHVN staff and government representatives in a walk to mark World TB Day in Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria.



L-R: Katsina State Logistics Officer, Abdullahi M Bello; IHVN Katsina State Program Manager, Dr. Tangkat Hosle; IHVN TB/HIV Focal Person, Dr. Saddiku Sorondinki; Katsina State Tuberculosis Leprosy Control Program (STBLCP) Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Hassan Abdullahi.

A highlight of the event was the presentation of an award of honour to IHVN for being a torch bearer of tuberculosis control in the state. Government and partners like IHVN have contributed to the identification and notification of over 8,000 tuberculosis cases in the state in 2021.

Basic signs to look for in tuberculosis include, cough of two weeks' duration, weight loss, fever and night sweat. The theme for World TB Day 2022 is "Invest to End TB, Save Lives" with slogan "Give More, Do More, End TB Now" to draw attention to the financial gap hindering the fight against tuberculosis, and to encourage everyone to work together to end tuberculosis.



Acting Commissioner of Health and Permanent Secretary, Rivers State Ministry of Health, Dr. Ndidi Chikanele Utchay, presenting a Tuberculosis Torch Bearer Award for the Institute to IHVN Rivers State SURGE Project Director, Dr. Olayemi Olupitan.

Pacesetters Students Visit IHVN Campus By Rehoboth Makan

Students of Pacesetter's College Guzape Abuja have embarked on an excursion to the Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria (IHVN) Campus in Abuja to expand their knowledge about the Institute and receive guidance on career choices.

The students, from SS1 and SS2 classes of the school were taken on a tour of the building and interacted with a multi-disciplinary team of IHVN professionals from different departments. They also visited the research laboratories at the campus.

The team led by the School's Head of Excursion, Mr. Henry Uba, said that the excursion to IHVN will further enhance the students' knowledge when choosing a



Students from Pacesetters College, Guzape, Abuja arrive the IHVN campus on an excursion.

career.

One of the students, Eric Ohene, said that the excursion to IHVN was very educational and enjoyable. "The visit opened his eyes to several career paths. My experience at IHVN was fun,



IHVN Director Strategic Information, Mrs Fati-Murtala Ibrahim interacting with students from Pacesetters College during a departmental tour

interesting, and educational. I learned a lot about how to work after employment, but the most interesting thing was visiting various departments in the building," he said.

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Private Sector Collaboration Takes TB Services to Communities

hospitals to treat TB patients and over 16,000 patent medicine vendors and community pharmacists to screen their clients for TB symptoms. Because of this initiative, we have about 58,219 TB patients diagnosed and treated for TB in the private health sector as of 2021," Dr Ali said.

One of the Private Patent Medicine Vendors, Mr Peter Audu, trained by the Leprosy Mission of Nigeria (TLMN), a sub-partner to IHVN, says that his capacity has been built to screen his clients for tuberculosis and refer them to health facility as appropriate.

"We are close to people and people patronize us even more than clinics. People come to us first to buy medicines. They openly tell us their challenges. With the knowledge I gained from the training, when a patient comes to my shop, if he is coughing, I ask more questions, when I discover that it is more than two or three weeks that the cough has persisted, I use the referral form with me to refer them to a health center," he said.

Mrs Veronica Ogunyebi, who manages Alheri Ifeoluwa Medical Center, a private health facility in Masaka, says that all clients in their out-patient department are

screened for tuberculosis.

"We are partners in this tuberculosis program. We are not allowed to collect money from any person for screening or treatment of tuberculosis. We enroll them if they are positive, they receive their medications here monthly for six months and do subsequent tests till the outcome is negative for tuberculosis," she said.

It was at this private health center that Augustine, Yerima and Precious received treatment for tuberculosis.

"The staff here attend to me like a very important person. I have not paid for any treatment or for any test or for issuance of card. I want to thank the people who have used their resources to pay for the treatment that I have benefitted from," Augustine said.

"The easier access to free tuberculosis services in our communities through private sector collaboration means that no one needs to rely on self-medication. "There is free screening and treatment in public hospitals through the efforts of the National Tuberculosis and Leprosy Control Programme (NTBLCP) and now in the private sector in 21 states in the country through the support of The Global Fund," Dr Ali said.



TB Survivor, Haruna Yerima, being attended to by a health care provider in a private health facility, Alheri Ifeoluwa Medical Center in Masaka, Nasarawa State.



TB Survivor, Mr Augustine Ogar.

Private Sector Collaboration Takes TB Services to Communities

By Blessing Ukpabi and Tong'et Lot

When Augustine Ogar, a construction worker, started losing weight, coughing and feeling constantly weak, neighbors and friends advised him to take some drugs. He walked into a pharmacy to buy antibiotics and started taking them.

However, these symptoms which started in April 2020, did not improve till October of the same year. By then, he had been moved from physical construction tasks to only operating equipment because of how easily tired he was. Finally, he lost his job. It was at this point that he went to the hospital for tests that confirmed that he had tuberculosis.

"The signs were showing; I was losing a lot of weight and strength. Everybody knew that I was sick. I couldn't even go to the hospital myself. My nephew had to take me there," he said.

Stories of self-help instead of seeking healthcare early in the hospital are not unique to Augustine. Precious Muiyiwa, a hair dresser, assumed that the night sweats, cough and loss of weight she experienced were due to ulcer.

"I used to go to the chemist to buy ulcer medications because my chest and ribs were painning me. At that time, I could not



A Patent Medicine Vendor, Mr Peter Audu, interacting with customers in his store in Nasarawa State.

even go to my shop because I was weak. I had to hire someone else to attend to my customers. When it was too bad, I came to this private hospital for test. The result showed that it was tuberculosis," Precious said.

Haruna Yerima, a farmer, laments that he spent about N80, 000.00 in buying medicines from patent medicine stores. "I took the drugs but did not feel better till I went to the hospital, did a free test for tuberculosis. When the test showed that I have tuberculosis, I got free medications to treat it for six months."

Though screening and treatment for tuberculosis is free, Nigeria ranks 6th out of the 30 high burden countries for

tuberculosis worldwide. WHO reports that in 2020, 86% of new TB cases occurred in these high TB burden countries worldwide. It is estimated that there were about 452,000 tuberculosis cases in Nigeria in 2020 but out of this number, only about 138,000 people were notified. This number increased to about 207,000 cases notified in 2021 but more people living with tuberculosis in the community need to be identified and treated.

Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) Program

Manager for Tuberculosis, Dr Taofeek Ali, states that it is to identify more people with tuberculosis in the community who might delay health-seeking till it is critical, that the Institute is collaborating with the private sector to screen for tuberculosis.

"We are working with patent medicine vendors, community pharmacists, traditional birth attendants, private hospitals and private laboratories. This is with the recognition that over 60% of Nigerians access health services in the private health sector, the majority of which do not provide TB services. IHVN was engaged by the Global Fund to expand TB services in the private sector in 2019. Since then, IHVN has trained over 3,000 private

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