



IHV N NEWS

A NEWS PUBLICATION OF THE INSTITUTE OF HUMAN VIROLOGY, NIGERIA

Emergency Food Relief Program Empowers 2,000 Households in FCT, Nassarawa

by Luret Dakum



IHV N Program Managers, Dr. Victoria Igbinomwanhia and Mrs. Laurentia Dashe presenting a food package to a caregiver at a community event in Nasarawa State

More than 2000 households have received foodstuff and capacity building on sustainable nutrition services from the Emergency Food Relief Program implemented by the Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria (IHVN).

IHV N Director, Prevention, Care and Treatment, Dr. Helen Omuh revealed this at the close-out meeting of the program in Abuja, Nigeria. She said that the program is aimed at combating food insecurity and improving nutrition among at-risk families in 17 local government areas in the Federal Capital Territory and Nasarawa State.

She added that “households were carefully selected based on vulnerability assessments designed to

address the urgent hunger crisis in vulnerable communities. The project focused on children aged 0-17 years and vulnerable caregivers, ensuring that the most food-insecure households received direct support. Throughout the initiative, 5,000 households were screened, with 2,500 of the most at-risk families selected across 12 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Nasarawa and 5 LGAs in FCT.”

Dr. Omuh further explained that “the program's impact extended beyond food distribution and incorporated community awareness campaigns, distribution of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials to promote sustainable nutrition practices and training along side food demonstration sessions with 2,500

caregivers on meal planning, dietary diversity, and nutritious food preparation for long-term benefits to their families.

IHV N Program Manager, Dr. Victoria Igbinomwanhia, emphasized the program's comprehensive approach. “Beyond providing immediate relief, we empowered caregivers with the knowledge to sustain healthy nutrition habits.

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From the Chief Executive Officer

Last year, IHVN celebrated its 20th anniversary, themed, “Consolidating 20 Years of Excellence in Public Health Implementation, Research, and Capacity Building.

Our achievements since inception in 2004 go beyond the numbers – provision of HIV testing services to more than 18 million people, life-saving antiretroviral treatment to more than 600,000 people, training of over 100,000 healthcare workers, providing tuberculosis services to more than 300,000 individuals, contributing to health systems strengthening as well as advancing world-class research that benefits Nigerians. This year, we are even more committed to providing timely and relevant services to meet Nigeria's public health needs. The activities featured in the January to March 2025 newsletter showcase this commitment across the projects we implement. Enjoy your reading!



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



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Emergency Food Relief Program Empowers 2000 Households in FCT, Nassarawa



Some food items packaged for distribution in Nasarawa state

This program was not just about food, it was about fostering resilience within these communities.”

“All food items including rice, beans, vegetables, fruits, eggs, oil, milk, and beverages were locally sourced to support the economy and maintain the highest quality for beneficiaries,” she added.

Project beneficiaries said that the project impacted the well-being of their families. Halima Saudu from Gaibu

community in Nasarawa State said, “This support has given us hope. Not only did we receive food, but we also learned how to combine these items for a balanced, healthy meal.” Another beneficiary, Stella Eden, described the impact on her children, “thanks to IHVN, my children can now be healthy and do well in school.”

The program was implemented with funding support from Gesundes Africa - Sternstunden, Germany.

IHVN is Committed to Providing Efficient Services - CEO

by Blessing Ukpabi

The Chief Executive Officer of the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) has said that the Institute is committed to providing timely and relevant services to meet Nigeria's public health needs. Dr. Dakum stated this during a retreat for the organization's Senior Management Staff and Team Leads in Lagos, Nigeria.

“This year, the beneficiaries of our services will be encountering program delivery that is highly efficient and research that is relevant to the needs of the populations that we serve.” He said that the retreat has also equipped senior staff with leadership skills for team success.

Also at the retreat, the IHVN Chief Operating Officer and Managing Director, Dr. Charles Olalekan Mensah stated that participants have reviewed the organization's performance in 2024, and identified gaps and strategies for enhanced performance in 2025. Dr. Mensah called for collaboration to ensure that no one is left behind.

“For public health interventions to be



IHVN Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Patrick Dakum, IHVN Board Director, Mr. Foluso Phillips, IHVN Board Vice Chairman, Sr. Steve Omojafor and IHVN Chief Operating Officer and Managing Director, Dr. Charles Olalekan Mensah, at the IHVN 2025 Performance and Strategy Review Retreat.

successful, we need collaboration amongst multiple partners with each demonstrating and honing their areas of comparative advantage. We are open to partnership and appreciate existing collaborators,” he said.

The retreat featured plenary sessions, panel discussions, leadership training, group strategy sessions, and team bonding activities.

In one of the sessions, the Vice Chairman of the IHVN Board of Directors, Sir Steve Omojafor urged the leaders to use power wisely and utilize

influence to persuade and motivate others. He said that good use of power enables leaders to build a productive workforce and utilize talents for the best solutions.

IHVN Board Director, Mr. Foluso Phillips called the Team Leads to involve staff in decision-making, uphold the dignity of team members, be fair, and create an environment where people can be their best.

The IHVN Annual 2025 Performance and Strategy Review Retreat was themed, “Enhancing Progress, Accelerating Results for Sustainability.”

IHVN Inducts Prof. Ahmed Tijjani Mora and Barr. Paul Usoro as Board Members

by Luret Dakum

To bolster its governance structure and strengthen its capacity to provide quality healthcare services, capacity building, and research in Nigeria, the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) has inducted two eminent professionals, Prof. Ahmed Tijjani Mora and Barr. Paul Usoro, SAN, as members of its Board of Directors.

At the ceremony, IHVN Board Chairman, Alhaji Dr. Umaru Muttallab expressed confidence in the capabilities of the new members to drive the organization's vision forward.

"I am very excited to admit two new members to the board and these are people that have come with vast experience, one experienced in the pharmaceutical industry and research and the other, very experienced as a Senior Advocate of Nigeria and this is going to boost the board of IHVN," he said.

He expressed confidence in the contributions of the new members in supporting the Board to be more effective, efficient, and result-oriented.

Prof. Ahmed Tijjani Mora is a distinguished pharmacist and academic with invaluable experience in the healthcare and pharmaceutical sectors. He is a former Registrar of the Pharmacists Council of Nigeria (PCN) and a Fellow of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN).



Prof. Ahmed Tijjani Mora and Barr. Paul Usoro, SAN being inducted as IHVN Board members in a ceremony at the IHVN Campus.



Chairman IHVN Board of Directors, Alhaji Dr. Umaru Muttallab addressing the newly inducted board members

"I am committed to ensuring the availability of drugs and pharmaceutical products for the treatment of tuberculosis and the maintenance of HIV care and I will encourage the management to engage with manufacturers to establish long- or short-term relationships. This approach would make these essential drugs more affordable for the organization and individuals living with HIV. Furthermore, there is no reason why this Institute cannot become a producer of pharmaceutical products itself. I am more than honored to join the board because of the caliber of people at the institute. They are individuals of great integrity, and I am genuinely happy to be part of this

team" Prof. Mora said.

In the same vein, Barrister Paul Usoro, who was also inducted said that his diverse background will support the organization's goals.

"My background is diverse. I sit on the board of a bank and have served on multiple boards, including financial institutions and telecommunications companies. I bring experience in governance, which is crucial for an organization like this. Combining this governance expertise with my core field and legal practice, I can contribute meaningfully in those areas. For instance, in the financial sector, we focus on objectives and goals to measure achievements. Similarly, I will apply this approach to support the institute's initiatives."

He added that "the institute's objectives are noble, primarily focused on helping humankind from a medical perspective. Anything that aids humanity is worth encouraging. I am privileged to join this board and contribute in whatever way I can to advance the institute's goals."

The IHVN board consists of seasoned, committed professionals and leaders in health, business, research, management, finance, communications and other areas who drive the Institute's mission to ensure equitable access to quality health services through innovative and evidence-based services.

IHVN Participates in CUGH Conference 2025 *by Uzoma Nwofor*

The Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria (IHVN) joined over 2,000 scientists, students, and professionals from academia to present, learn, and tackle some of the world's most pressing health challenges at the 2025 Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH) conference which held at Atlanta Georgia.

With the theme, "Innovating and Implementing in Global Health for a Sustainable Future", the conference served as a premier platform for advancing global health collaborations, fostering interdisciplinary research, and strengthening academic partnerships. It brought together leading institutions, researchers, policymakers, and organizations dedicated to addressing global health challenges. IHVN showcased its contributions through 12 poster presentations and three oral

presentations on innovative strategies, including intensified childhood TB case finding, male-targeted outreach,



4th left IHVN Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Patrick Dakum flanked by the Institute's staff at CUGH conference 2025.

community interventions and real-time surveillance. Others include, AI-driven epidemiology, and TB contact investigation, the effects of community-based antiretroviral refill on adherence and retention, enhancing retention in care through client data re-validation and gatekeeping approach, improved viral load suppression amongst children living with HIV through targeted adherence counselling. IHVN representatives at the

conference said that it offered immense benefits for partnerships which are crucial in improving health outcomes in Nigeria and beyond. According to Assistant, Director, Health Product Management, GC7 TB & HIV Grant and N-THRIP, Mrs Chiagozie Mgbemena, the CUGH conference was "inspiring and enlightening, and a great opportunity to showcase the great work IHVN is doing on a global scale."

Project Director, USAID TB LON 3 Project at IHVN, Dr. Gbenga Daniel mentioned that 'by presenting and sharing cutting-edge best practices, IHVN has positioned itself as a valuable partner for academic institutions and research organizations seeking to address global health challenges. This conference has facilitated networking opportunities, enabling IHVN to establish connections with potential collaborators and funding agencies.'

IHVN Celebrates Employees of the Month *by Chizurum Kalu*

As part of the ongoing commitment of the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) to fostering a culture of excellence and recognizing outstanding staff performance, the Executive Management has initiated the "Employee Recognition Awards." These awards are designed to celebrate the achievements of "Employees of the Month" and "Employee of the Year."

IHVN Director of Finance and Administration, Mr. Olu Alabi, highlighted that the recognition program evaluates overall employee performance, professionalism in attire, innovation, teamwork, productivity, efficiency, leadership, interpersonal skills, punctuality, and adherence to IHVN's core values and principles. Since its inception in July 2024, the initiative has celebrated the achievements of numerous employees from various departments and regions, each of whom has demonstrated exceptional performance within their teams. The following employees have been honored for their contributions:

July 2024: Zayyan Bello, Temitope Olukomogbon, Judith Arachie, Adeyemo

Adeyemi, Chieme Ogumka, Chigozie Ezinne Nwafor, Nakom Kefas, Pantong Gershon Daskyakar, Fredrick Saiki, and Yop Tenmang.

August 2024: Samuel Adams-Dabban, Temitope Olukomogbon, Shimang Joy, Victoria Igbo Adejo, Gyang Samuel Pam, Sambo Yakubu Lodeya, Ayomide Olumefun, Omololu Ogunremi, Ibrahim Fwangmun, Frederick Saiki, Solanke Oladapo Felix, Chinye Dumebi Rosemary, Adebimpe Manuwa, Samuel Akingbesote, and Adeogun Temitope.

September 2024: Clare Ohunayo, Emmanuella Emmanuel, Oluwayemisi Asiozi, Lem Kwem Imasuen, Oluwatoyin Awoyemi, Oluwakemi Akinyede, Elizabeth Ejura Ali, Johnbull Egharevba, Abdulmojeed Akande, Muhammed Usman, Lojah Pascal Nyam, Isaac Bakzak, Sanusi Abiodun, Rayi Oluwagbemi, Ebenezer Ajayi, Anderson Ricketts, and Odola Oluwafemi.

October 2024: Temitayo Raimi, Clare Ohunayo, Sunday Ekere, Lem Kwem Imasuen, Ayomide Olumefun, Elizabeth Ejura Ali, Charles Imogie, Abubakar Iliyasu Bichi, Pascal Lojah Nyam, Adekunle Adebisi Deborah, Ifeanyi-Ukeagbu Ify Genevieve, Adebimpe

Manuwa, Idowu Owoeye, and Samuel Akingbesote.

November 2024: Emilia Chiori Uche, Saheedat Ibrahim, Sunday Agwu Ekere, Atinuke Omananyi, Adeyinka Owoade, Olabode Abidemi Adesanya, Vera Iliya Musa, Kolawole Adesoji, Isaac Bajeh, Paschal Lojah Nyam, Sanusi Ibrahim Abiodun, Babajide Kadri, Adebimpe Manuwa, Temitope Adeogun, and Samuel Akingbesote.

December 2024: Chidinma Ibe, Ahuche Doreen, Helen Oluwatoyin Ademola, Adeyinka Owoade, Oyediran Oludare, Dungji Gogwim Simon, Zachariah Bako, Oyeleye Samuel Olukunjo, Chinye Dumebi Rosemary, Adebimpe Manuwa, and Ogunduboye Adebayo.

January 2025: Adebola Raji, Victoria Etuk, Teclair Ngo-Ndomb, Collins-Kalu Derby, Bang Logams, Adeyinka Modupe Owoade, Olufemi Ogundiran, Shiedu Abdulrahman, Ismail Ahmed Tijjani, and Tuamsen Shindes.

This initiative not only rewards outstanding individual achievements but also promotes a sustained environment of excellence at IHVN.

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Photo Gallery



During a road walk organized by the Network for Oncology Research in Africa (NORA), IHVN staff engaged with Piwoyi community members to raise awareness about cancer prevention, early detection, and treatment, emphasizing the importance of proactive health measures.



A cross section of participants at the National Condom Summit in Abuja, marking International Condom Day. The summit was done in partnership with NACA and held at the IHVN Campus.



The Global Fund GC7 N-THRIP project engaged Regional PCT focal persons and Lab counterparts in a strategic training session aimed at enhancing technical expertise, leadership, and collaboration with HQ to improve the Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission PMTCT outcomes – Participants at the training.



The Minister of State for Health and Social Welfare, Dr. Iziaq Adekunle Salako visiting the IHVN booth at the first National Summit and Diagnostics held in Abuja.



IHVN staff across departments participate in commemorating International Women's Day 2025 themed, "Accelerate Action."



6th left: IHVN Project Director of The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Grant Cycle-7 TB & HIV Grant, Dr. Olayemi Olupitan participating in a pre-World Tuberculosis Day press conference in Abuja

EQUAL Researchers Call for better working Conditions for Midwives *by Blessing Ukpabi and Luret Dakum*

EQUAL Researchers at the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) have called on the government and policymakers to improve the working conditions of midwives in conflict-affected areas to address poor maternal and newborn health outcomes in the country.

This call was made during a stakeholder meeting to disseminate research findings from Ensuring Quality Access and Learning for Mothers and their Newborns in Conflict Affected Context (EQUAL) Consortium research focused on midwifery participation, retention, and resilience in Yobe State.

The Principal Investigator of EQUAL at IHVN, Prof. Emilia Iwu stated that Nigeria has only six midwives per 10,000 people with the deficit worse in the North-East which has been affected by Boko Haram Insurgency. Prof. Iwu who was represented at the dissemination event by EQUAL Project Co-Investigator, Dr. Charity Maina said that “conflict has caused widespread economic hardship, food insecurity, displacement of residents and health workers, and severe disruption of healthcare delivery, including the destruction and closure of some health centers.

These factors have complicated efforts to recruit and retain midwives. Initial study findings from our qualitative study underscore the need for targeted

support and intervention to improve midwifery retention and support in rural and hard-to-reach communities,” she said.

The researchers highlighted the need for government and policymakers to strengthen midwifery education, improve working conditions through incentives, develop management guidelines, address misconceptions, and enhance safety training. “The country needs to prioritize increased salaries, hazard allowances, secure transportation, and housing, and establish mentorship programs to continually support midwives in high-risk areas,” Dr. Maina stressed.

The researchers further noted the need for a clear career progression pathway for midwives and an extension of hospital postings with hands-on practice for thorough training to increase the confidence of midwives.

On security training, the researchers recommended training midwives on personal security, emergency protocols, psychological support, mental health check-ups, and peer support groups. At the meeting, IHVN Chief Operating Officer and Managing Director, Dr. Charles Olalekan Mensah, gave the opening remarks. He



Stakeholders participate in group discussions on project findings and strategies to improve maternal, neonatal, and child health in conflict-affected contexts.

welcomed participants and emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts in strengthening MNCH services. The dissemination event brought together representatives from international partners, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the Federal Ministry of Health, the National Primary Health Care Development Agency, the Yobe State Ministry of Health, amongst others to discuss research findings and share insights on the recommendations.

EQUAL is a multi-country research consortium generating evidence on effective approaches to deliver life-saving maternal and newborn health care in countries affected by conflict. IHVN is participating in this research funded by UK Department for International Development (DFID) and led by the International Rescue Committee-IRC.

Lassa Fever: IHVN Strengthens Ondo State's Outbreak Response Capacity *by Luret Dakum*

To enhance the capacity of Ondo State to respond to lassa fever outbreaks, the International Research Center of Excellence (IRCE) at the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) has collaborated with Nigerian Center for Disease Control (NCDC) and the Ondo State Ministry of Health to strengthen the capacity of the Infectious Disease Hospital (IDH) at Akure for Lassa fever diagnosis and

management.

At the launch of the optimised laboratory in Ondo State, IHVN Epidemiology & Surveillance Manager for the SECURE-Nigeria Project, Mr. Saiki Adinoyi Musa explained that Ondo State has been a hotspot for Lassa fever outbreaks, contributing 32% of Nigeria's confirmed cases in 2023. Akure South Local Government Area recorded the highest number of cases,

underscoring the urgency of improved diagnostic and response measures.

“Previously, patient samples from IDH Akure had to be transported to the Federal Medical Centre (FMC) Owo, creating logistical challenges, delays in test results, and prolonged turnaround times that negatively impacted patient management. Recognizing these issues, the Ondo State Ministry of

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More than 380 Health Workers Train on Malaria

by Blessing Ukpabi

The Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) has built the capacity of more than 380 healthcare workers in 18 Local Government Areas (LGA) in Ondo State on the diagnosis and treatment of malaria.

The two-day training sessions, which held concurrently at the Local Government Areas, equipped participants with skills to identify malaria symptoms, use diagnostic tools effectively for treatment of malaria, and properly document malaria cases within the Health Management Information System.

IHVN Ondo State Manager Dr Samuel Akingbesote explained that the training was part of the activities of the World Bank-funded Immunization and Malaria Progress by Accelerating Coverage and Transforming Services (IMPACT) project, which IHVN has been engaged to implement by the Ondo State Ministry of Health.

"Regular training of frontline healthcare workers ensures they remain updated on best practices, guidelines, and innovative approaches to delivering high-quality healthcare

services. This training will bridge gaps in knowledge and practice observed during baseline facility assessment in the state. It also aligns with the goals of the IMPACT Ondo Project by fostering the delivery of comprehensive, patient-centered care and achieving



A cross section of health care workers participating in the malaria case management training in Ondo State.

measurable improvements in health outcomes. With the conclusion of healthcare workers training, all is set for the provision of qualitative malaria care backed up with effective data management and efficient logistics system in the state," he said.

The Malaria Focal Person from Owo Local Government Area, Ms. Adejimi Omolade, said that the training provided updates on malaria case management. "We learned that in the first trimester, Artemisinin-based Combination Therapy (ACT) is safe for

malaria in pregnancy. We also learned about proper use of the rapid diagnostic kit. Mrs. Omolade added that the sessions also guided grievance redress, which will build a good relationship between health care workers and patients. Another participant, a nurse from Ondo West Local Government Area, Ms. Ajayi Tolulope, said that the sessions were a time for learning and relearning malaria case management in children.

"I learned that a minimum dose of Sulphadoxine Pyrimethamine should be given to a pregnant woman as Intermittent Preventive Therapy in pregnancy. This should start between 13 to 16 weeks of gestation as Directly Observed Therapy," she said.

Healthcare workers including doctors, nurses, community health extension workers and laboratory scientists from the state's 203 Basic Health Care Fund facilities participated in the malaria case management training. IMPACT project is targeted at promoting the uptake of malaria prevention and treatment services among women and children under five years in Ondo State.

Lassa Fever: IHVN Strengthens Ondo State's Outbreak Response Capacity

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Health (SMoH) advocated for the optimization of the existing molecular laboratory at IDH."

Mr. Saiki added that with support from IHVN implemented Strengthening Global Health Security Agenda in Nigeria (SECURE-Nigeria), the laboratory was optimized to conduct Lassa fever diagnostics, supportive tests, and enhance outbreak response mechanisms with funding from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention -Division for Global Health Protection (US-CDC

DGHP),

The facility received state-of-the-art equipment, including A BIOBASE Class III Biosafety Cabinet (Glove Box) and Hematology and Chemistry Auto Analyzers for supportive investigation. IHVN provided quality laboratory equipment commodities, alongside quality management training for laboratory scientists for accuracy and reliability in Lassa fever testing. We appreciate the government for providing an enabling environment for partners to collaborate with us."

At the event, The Permanent Secretary at one Ondo State Ministry of Health, Dr Adeniran Ikuomola said that the new laboratory and equipment would enable the state to detect cases of Lassa fever on time and in turn reduce the rate of fatality.

At the occasion, NCDC Director General Dr Jide Idris, who was represented by National Incident Manager for Lassa Fever Emergency Operation Center Dr Yetunde Abioye at the event, said more effort will be made to ensure the laboratory's continuous functionality.

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IHVN Begins Construction of State-of-the-Art Learning and Development Center *by Tong'ret Lot*

In furtherance of its mission to enhance capacity building, research, and public health excellence, the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) has begun the construction of a five-story Learning and Development Center at its campus in Abuja.

The facility will contain cutting-edge amenities, including a 1,000-seat multipurpose hall, advanced training and meeting rooms, a modern library, and an e-learning center. It will also serve as a central hub for advanced training programs, promoting knowledge exchange and professional development for healthcare professionals both within Nigeria and internationally. IHVN Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Patrick Dakum noted that the center will be equipped to host both short-term and long-term training programs in collaboration with international institutions such as the University of Maryland and Rutgers University.

"We already have a number of institutions that are doing courses like Diploma and Masters in Public Health. We are now going to be looking at how we can also hone that in into a diploma, degree and post graduate degrees in implementation science," he said.

IHVN Chief Operating Officer and Managing Director, Dr. Charles Olalekan



Mensah, said the Center is part of IHVN's long-term commitment to addressing knowledge gaps, mitigating brain drain, and strengthening Nigeria's public health workforce.

"This facility will play a pivotal role in training the next generation of healthcare professionals and researchers, ensuring that Nigeria continues to lead in public health interventions."

During the first technical meeting for the project, IHVN Director of Finance and Administration, Mr. Olu Alabi, urged Lubell Nigeria Ltd to adhere to project timelines and leverage lessons learned from construction of the IHVN seven-storey twin towers which they built. The Learning and Development Center is scheduled to be operational within 24 months, with full completion anticipated within 36 months.

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