

# ECEWS RISING

Monthly Newsletter

July 2024 Edition



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# From the CEO's Desk

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As we flip through the pages of another enlightening edition of our newsletter, I am filled with pride and thankfulness to observe our community's unwavering spirit in action. Each story, article, and activity highlighted on these pages exemplifies the unwavering commitment and passion that propel us ahead in our purpose.

This edition features inspiring stories of change-makers who are making a difference in the lives of many people, overcoming obstacles with fortitude, and paving the path for a brighter, more inclusive future. Their tales highlight the transforming power of compassion, collaboration, and determination.

We are also excited to share updates on our ongoing projects, upcoming events, and opportunities for you to get involved. Your

support, whether through volunteering, donations or advocacy, plays a crucial role in amplifying our impact and bringing about meaningful change.

As we navigate through these challenging times, let us remember that our strength lies in unity and solidarity. Together, we can create a world where every individual has the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their circumstances.

Thank you for being an integral part of our journey. Your unwavering support in our cause fuel our efforts and inspire us to reach greater heights.

Let's continue to stand together, uplift each other, and build a brighter future for all.



*Andy Eyo*

Chief Executive Officer, ECEWS



## ECEWS Conducts Comprehensive ART Training for Healthcare Providers in Akwa Ibom State



*Ifiok, a Quality Improvement/Assurance Advisor speaking on Quality HIV services, during the 3-day training*

ECEWS successfully conducted a comprehensive integrated Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) training program for ART Coordinators and Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV (PMTCT) focal persons in secondary health facilities across Akwa Ibom State. This initiative is part of the United States Agency International Development (USAID)-funded Accelerating Control of the HIV Epidemic in Nigeria (ECEWS ACE-5) Project in the state. The training was designed to foster the integration of HIV services into routine health services and strengthen the Government of Nigeria's (GoN) leadership of the HIV response in line with Nigeria's Alignment 2.0 strategy. The training which was held from July 15-17, 2024, covered the updated HIV treatment guidelines, promoting patient-centred care approaches, adherence strategies, Gender-Based Violence screening and first-line support, Cervical Cancer screening, Infection Prevention and Control, and a host of other areas.

## ECEWS Collaborates with Akwa Ibom State Primary HealthCare Development Agency (AKSPHCDA) to Strengthen the Capacity of Frontline Health Workers



*Cross-section of participants during the training session at PHC Uyo*

In line with the Federal Government's plan to train 120,000 frontline healthcare workers to provide integrated service delivery at the grassroots level, ECEWS supported a 10-day training program for frontline health workers in primary healthcare facilities in Akwa Ibom State from July 8-15, 2024. The training, which was organized by the Akwa Ibom State Primary Health Care Development Agency (AKSPHCDA), with funding and technical support from USAID through one of her implementing partners, was held across the different local government areas in the state. Aligned with USAID's Primary Impact Initiative, the training was designed to reposition the primary healthcare system as a first layer of care. It strengthened the skills of healthcare professionals, including nurses and community health extension workers, in delivering high-quality integrated medical services for improved health outcomes.



# ECEWS Block Grant Initiative empowers Orphaned and Vulnerable Children through Education in Delta State

Photos: Utin Archibong



Group photograph at Educational Block Grant Launch at Okpe Mixed Secondary School with Representative of Mins of Education and MWACSD. Others are the School Principal, Chief Inspector of Education for Ika South LGA, ECEWS team, RULIN CBO Staff and Students.



Beneficiaries of the Block Grant initiative



Students of Okpe Mixed Secondary School expressing their joy for this great support through cultural dance



In its mission to combat HIV/AIDS, ECEWS with support from the United States Centre for Disease Control (US CDC) through the Sustainable Program for HIV Epidemic Control and Equitable Service Delivery (SPEED) project introduced a Block Grant Initiative for orphaned and vulnerable children in Delta State. This initiative, which is implemented through Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), is focused on improving school infrastructure, fostering an environment for academic growth and creativity, and providing high-quality education, including school fee waivers for these children. As part of this initiative, 20 triple-seater desks each were provided to Umutu Mixed Secondary School in Ukwani LGA and Okpe Mixed Secondary School in Agbor in July 2024. The handover events were attended by the representatives of the Honourable Commissioners for Education and Women Affairs Community and Social Development, Dr. Mike Emeshili and Mrs. Emekpe, respectively. ECEWS remains committed to ensuring quality education for every child in its program.



The Technical officer OVC delivering an opening remark and the remarkable achievements of ECEWS SPEED OVC project across different communities and LGA' s in Delta State in collaboration with Community Based Organisations



The representative of the Honourable Commissioner Ministry of Education Dr Mike Emeshili giving an opening remark during the Educational Block grant launch at Okpe Mixed Secondary where he appreciated the Management of ECEWS for supporting development of the Education Sector in Delta State and also asked for more support.



20 three seater desk launched at Okpe Mixed Secondary School at Abavo Community



15 three seater desk launched at Umutu Mixed Secondary School



## Delta State Health Workers Trained on DHIS-2 for Improved Data Management and HIV Response

The US-CDC-funded ECEWS SPEED Project recently facilitated a 3-day training on District Health Information Software 2 (DHIS-2) for healthcare workers in Delta State. The training aimed to strengthen the Health Information System towards sustainability and state-led HIV response. Participants drawn from the State Ministry of Health and its agencies, including health facilities, were trained on DHIS-2 for data entry, retrieval, and facility-level reporting. Through this initiative, the ECEWS-CDC SPEED Project is supporting health program success and HIV response sustainability in the state.



ECEWS State Program Manager, Henry Udenenwu, making a remark during the training



Representative of the Chief Records Officer, HMB, Ben Achusin (Mrs)



A cross-section of participants



Dr Christian Tetsola, Director of Public Health, giving a remark and extracting a commitment from the M&E Officers to translate the knowledge and skills from the training into their work at the facilities

## Nigeria Medical Association, Akwa Ibom State Honors ECEWS CEO With A Humanitarian Award

Photo: Kise Terver



Dr. Chukwemeka Okolo receiving an award on behalf of Dr. Andy Eyo, the CEO of ECEWS

The Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) of Akwa Ibom State honoured the ECEWS CEO, Dr. Andy Eyo with a Humanitarian Service Award at their 2024 Annual General Meeting and Book Launch. NMA Chairman, Prof. Emem Abraham praised the CEO for his significant contributions to public health, gender-based violence (GBV), and HIV initiatives in Akwa Ibom State. Accepting the award on behalf of the CEO, Dr. Chukwemeka Okolo, ECEWS Deputy Director, expressed gratitude and noted that ECEWS is the second-largest employer of medical doctors in the state, pledging continued support for ongoing health initiatives in the state.





## ECEWS presents 10 scientific abstracts at the International AIDS Conference in Germany



Associate Director – Prevention, Care & Treatment, Dr. Onwah during a presentation at the IAS Conference

ECEWS presented 10 scientific abstracts at the 25th International AIDS Conference in Germany, AIDS2024, which was held from July, 22-26th 2024, highlighting our significant work in HIV epidemic control in Nigeria. The abstracts drew the interest of a wide range of attendees at the conference, notably, the Honorable Minister of State for Health, Dr. Tunji Alausa, the Director General of the National Agency for the Control of AIDS, Dr Temitope Ilori, and the PEPFAR Chair Dr. Shabeen Ally. The Associate Director for HIV Prevention, Care and Treatment on the ECEWS ACE-5 Project, Dr. Oghenezuazo Onwah made an oral presentation showing how the use of a urine-based test improved uptake of tuberculosis testing among children with advanced HIV disease in Southern Nigeria. Similarly, Pharm Sherrif Arthur, a Pharmacy Specialist with the project, also discussed Enhanced HIV Treatment Continuity via Community Pharmacy in Southern Nigeria at a PEPFAR session during the conference.



Honourable Minister of State for Health, Dr. Tunji Alausa visits the ECEWS exhibition booth



Dr. Andy Eyo sharing knowledge with participants at the ECEWS exhibition booth



ECEWS and other participants at the IAS Conference



The ECEWS team in a group photograph



## ECEWS Trains Delta State Officials on Finance and Grant Management for HIV Response and Signs MOU with Delta State Ministry of Health (DELSACA)



Delta SAPC, Dr Linda Peter-Enyi (seated right) signing on behalf of the Delta State Government, Dr Chioma Helga Law-Maduka (seated left) signing on behalf of ECEWS

ECEWS, through the CDC-funded SPEED Project, conducted a 3-day training on Finance and Grant Management for staff from the Delta State Ministry of Health between July 25-29, 2024. The training aimed at enhancing financial management, transparency, accountability, and compliance with regulatory requirements, involved participants from the Directorate of Public Health, the State AIDS and STI Control Program (SASCP), the State Agency for the Control of AIDS (SACA), etc. The training led to the review and execution of a memorandum of understanding between ECEWS and the Delta State Government for the implementation of HIV epidemic control activities in the state, with the state government in the

driving seat. Key stakeholders present at the event include the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, Dr. Philomena Okeowo; Director of Public Health, Dr. Christian Tetsola; State AIDS and STI Program Coordinator (SAPC), Dr. Linda Peter-Enyi; Finance Officer, Ministry of Health; Director of Budget Planning; Chief Medical Director, Hospitals Management Board, Dr. Afinotan; NEPWHAN State Coordinator, Mr. Christopher Ogberetitor; Representative of the Acting Executive Secretary of DELSACA; National Clinical Mentor for Delta State, Prof. Augustine Omoigberale; and other notable officials.

## ECEWS raises the bar on laboratory diagnostic efficiency in Nigeria

ECEWS has advanced laboratory diagnostic services for key groups, particularly children, by partnering with CEPHEID to launch a cutting-edge 16-module GeneXpert machine at FMC Asaba, marking the first installation of its kind in Delta State. This initiative was implemented through the US-CDC-funded SPEED project implemented by ECEWS in the state. This follows from ECEWS' launching of three state-of-the-art molecular laboratory diagnostic machines (Alinity machines) received under USAID's support in Akwa Ibom State. The 16-module GeneXpert machine installed at Asaba is able to improve the turnaround time for diagnosis of Tuberculosis and can improve

early diagnosis of HIV in newborn children in the state. As part of the equipment installation process and user training, ECEWS organized a comprehensive 2-day training at the Molecular Laboratory in FMC Asaba on July 11th and 12th, 2024.

Thirty-two (32) participants, including 13 staff from supported facilities, HMB, Delta State Ministry of Health, and ECEWS project staff had their capacity built on the use and maintenance of the 16-module GeneXpert machine. ECEWS remains committed to the improvement of healthcare delivery in the communities that we serve.



Cartridge preparation in the biosafety cabinet during GeneXpert training and site activation @the Molecular lab FMC Asaba



The cutting of ribbon by Dr Omoh Ekene CMAC FMC Asaba during the installation of 16 Module GeneXpert machine



# ECEWS Conducts Free Hydrocele Surgeries to Combat Neglected Tropical Diseases in Cross River State

Photos: Valentine Ogunaka



Tape cutting by Rep of HE to flag off the Free Surgical Mission



Cross section of participant poses with H.E Representative after the opening ceremony/flag off of the free surgical mission



ECEWS NTDs Project Lead presenting ECEWS Souvenir to HE Rev Mrs Eyoanwan Otu

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) are a diverse group of medical conditions that affect people living in impoverished communities.

Prioritising these communities, ECEWS in collaboration with the Cross River State Ministry of Health, conducted a pilot program to provide free hydrocele surgeries for 10 indigent individuals out of 64 identified cases across four LGAs in the state. This initiative aimed to strengthen the health system by offering necessary surgical interventions for those with hydrocele in vulnerable communities, building the capacity of surgeons in

the state, and enhancing the state's healthcare capabilities for integrated disease management. The intervention took place from July 16th to July 20th, 2024, at the General Hospital in Calabar, with support from various stakeholders and partners. This collaboration is an outcome of the mentorship ECEWS has been receiving from Hellen Keller International in managing NTDs in Nigeria.

Present at the opening ceremony to mark the commencement of the surgery was the wife of the Executive Governor of the State, Rev Mrs Eyoanwan Bassey Otu,

ably represented by her Senior Special Adviser on Programs (Dr Mrs Queen Eton Essien), the Director of Public Health (Dr Jonah Offor); the Director of Medical Services (Dr Stephen Agbor), the National Coordinator for NTDs at the Federal Ministry of Health (Dr Fatai Oyediran), Cross River State NTDs Coordinator (Mrs Veronica Mark), the Medical Superintendent of General Hospital Calabar (Dr Kenneth Takim), a representative from Research Triangle Institute (Mr Chukwuma Okonkwo), and a representative of Hellen Keller International (Ms Unyime), among a host of others.



## ECEWS Supports Launch of 'Baby Shower Toolkit' to Address Mother-to-Child HIV Transmission



Baby shower toolkit launch at Lagos State



In partnership with Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Health, CDC Nigeria launched the 'Baby Shower Toolkit' to assist implementers with the necessary information, methods, and tools for holding Baby Showers within Nigerian faith-based communities. This approach effectively engages women and families by combining celebration and health screenings, such as HIV tests for expectant mothers and their partners. The toolkit, which shows a positive impact through evidence, also includes six tools to facilitate data collection and is adaptable for use in other settings. ECEWS was represented by a team led by our Head of Clinicals, Dr. Okezie Onyedinachi. Dr. Favour Chima, our Senior Technical Advisor for PMTCT/Pediatrics & Adolescents, presented ECEWS's contributions to improving maternal and child health outcomes at the meeting, highlighting ECEWS' efforts at increasing HIV testing coverage for pregnant & breastfeeding women, prompt linkage of women diagnosed with HIV to treatment, and birth testing for HIV-exposed infants. These efforts demonstrate ECEWS's commitment to providing comprehensive care for mothers and children.

## ECEWS-CDC SPEED Project Drives Progress at the Delta State HIV Programme Retreat

The SPEED project, in collaboration with the Delta State Ministry of Health, organised a 4-day HIV Programme Retreat from July 16-19, 2024. The retreat focused on discussing the sustainability of Delta State's HIV program, assessing strengths, best practices, and areas for improvement, and evaluating the impact of the clinical mentorship program on enhancing sustainability. Progress on health financing and enrolment of people living with HIV into the state health insurance scheme was also reviewed. The event featured presentations, discussions, feedback sessions, team bonding activities, and the evaluation of the National Harmonized Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool Plus (NHOCAT+) assessment outcomes, leading to the development of a performance improvement plan. A communiqué was issued at the end of the retreat.

Photos: Utin Archibong



Group photograph of participants at the HIV Programme Retreat



ECEWS Delta State Program Manager, Henry Udenewu addressing participants at the training



Opening Remark by the Permanent Secretary State Ministry of Health, Dr. Philomena Okeowo



Goodwill message by the NCM Delta State Prof. Augustine





USAID team holding the brief at the ECEWS HQ office (Photo: Liberty Mfon)

## ECEWS receives a USAID Nigeria team on a five-day visit to Akwa Ibom State

ECEWS led other USAID implementing partners in Akwa Ibom State to receive a USAID team led by Dr. Ezekiel James, a Development Assistance Specialist and Deputy Director, who was on a supportive mentorship visit to the State. The team which was received at the ECEWS Headquarters on Nwaniba Road by the ECEWS CEO, Dr Andy Eyo, visited eight primary health centres in Afaha Offiong, Ikot Abasi, Ikot Ebok, Ikot Ekpene, Nsit Atai, Oron, Uyo, and West Itam to assess the implementation of USAID's Primary Impact initiative and guide her partners on how to better support integrated service

delivery at the primary healthcare level in the state. At each facility, the team reviewed the service flow and the other activities at the different units and service delivery points and made recommendations on how to close identified gaps in systems integration and overall service delivery.

## ECEWS Launches Innovative Approach to Improving Male Uptake of HIV Services in Ebonyi State

In response to the low uptake of HIV Testing Services (HTS) among men, particularly in underserved and hard-to-reach areas, ECEWS launched a new initiative at 20 sites in Ebonyi State, focused on offering HIV Self Test (HIVST) Kits to partners of pregnant women. The HIVST kits allow a person to test for HIV by themselves and see their results. ECEWS collaborated with key stakeholders to pool resources and expertise, conducted advocacy visits to the Officers in Charge (OIC) at the selected Primary Health Center (PHC), generated demand for these kits through awareness campaigns on social media, clinics and door-to-door



A capacity-building session for OICs and CHEWS during activation of HIVST program intervention in Akpamachi in Abakaliki, and Ojigwe PHCs respectively in Ohaozara LGA, Ebonyi State.



sensitisation, and provided support for retrieving HIVST results through text messages, phone calls, and other communication channels. Healthcare workers were trained on streamlined distribution methods to reach a target audience and proper documentation on the relevant tools.



## Rotary International District 9142 Honors Dr. Andy Eyo's Exceptional Service & Proposes a Strategic Partnership with ECEWS

Rotary International District 9142 recently honoured Dr. Andy Eyo, CEO of ECEWS, for his outstanding contributions to community service. District Governor Akan Emah and his team, presented Dr. Eyo with the Rotary Brand Champion accolade, recognizing his dedication to the principles of "Service Above Self" and his profound impact on healthcare, education, and economic strengthening. During the visit to the ECEWS headquarters, the Rotary team expressed gratitude for the humanitarian services offered by the ECEWS and discussed potential collaboration on the Rotary Health Communities Challenge to combat Cholera and Malaria in Southeast, Akwa Ibom, and Cross River states. ECEWS looks forward to continuing this partnership to enhance community service and development.



Photos: Utibe Archibong

Rotarian Emah decorating Dr. Andy Eyo with the badge of the Rotary Brand Champion



ECEWS CEO Dr. Andy Eyo inspecting the solar system at the PCR Lab in UUTH

## ECEWS Board of Directors Conducts 1-Day Field Visit to ECEWS Supported Health Facilities in Akwa Ibom State

On Friday, July 2, 2024, the ECEWS Board of Directors led by the Chairman, Professor Enoabasi Urua, conducted a one-day field visit to assess ECEWS activities under the USAID-funded ACE 5 project in Akwa Ibom State. The team was received in the state by the State Director, Dr. Bala Gana, who presented ECEWS activities in the state, including the provision of equipment to health facilities, such as solar systems, centrifuges, solar freezers, desktop computers, printers, antenatal clinic equipment, and training of primary and secondary health workers, amongst others. The ECEWS Board then proceeded to visit the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital where they met with the Chief Medical Director, Prof Emem Bassey and toured the ART clinic and molecular laboratory where they interacted with healthcare workers. The discussions focused on improving the working environment in the clinic, digitalizing the health records, setting up an adolescent hub, and integrating services to enhance patient care. The team also visited Ikot Ekpene General Hospital. The visit offered valuable insights into the progress of the ACE 5 project, reinforcing ECEWS's commitment to improving healthcare delivery in Akwa Ibom State.



## Andy Eyo Inspires Young Leaders at Ibom Led Entrepreneur Accelerator

On July 16, 2024, the CEO of ECEWS, visited the Ibom-led Entrepreneur Accelerator Program as a Guest, to inspire leadership and drive economic strengthening among the young leaders. Addressing the participants, Dr. Eyo emphasized the importance of prioritizing service and committing to building quality. He stated, "To build brand value, you have to believe in what you have." The CEO also engaged with the 10 ECEWS-sponsored trainees, urging them to seize this opportunity to enhance their entrepreneurial skills and contribute to economic growth.

Photos: Kise Terver



Dr Andy Eyo inspiring participants at the Ibom Led initiative



ECEWS CEO, Dr. Eyo with ECEWS-sponsored participants



Director General of Ibom LED, Mrs. Ekaette Umo with ECEWS CEO, Dr. Andy Eyo

## USAID Gender & Sexual Diversity Team Visits Cross River State



USAID Gender team with Implementing Partners in a meeting with the Honorable Commissioner on Health, Dr. Henry Ayuk



A group photograph of the USAID Gender team with Implementing Partners

ECEWS received the USAID Gender & Sexual Diversity Team who were in Cross River State between July 8-12, 2024 to provide technical assistance and support on the implementation and integration of gender and gender-based violence activities and services within PEPFAR programming. The team which was led by Emily Reitenauer, the Senior Gender Advisor for USAID Washington also had Allison Schmale (USAID Washington), Angela Agweye (USAID Nigeria), Betty Pius (USAID Nigeria), and Chidiebele Udefuna (USAID Nigeria). The team visited and held discussions with the Commissioner for Women Affairs, the Commissioner for Health and other government officials. They also visited four health facilities (General Hospital Calabar, Ekpo Abasi Primary Health Center, Dr. Lawrence Henshaw Memorial Specialist Hospital, and University of Calabar Teaching Hospital), one secondary school (Government Girls Secondary School Big Qua Town), and Ikot Ansa Community during their stay. The visiting team commended the strong relationship that existed between USAID partners and the State Government officials and provided feedback on how gender and gender-based violence activities in the state can be improved.





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