



ECEWS RISING

Monthly Newsletter

August 2024 Edition



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Photo credit: Sheyi Rotimi

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From the CEO's Desk



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.

With gratitude

Andy Eyo

Chief Executive Officer, ECEWS

ECEWS facilitates a Gender and Human Rights Response Committee (GHRRC) Technical Working Group (TWG) Meeting in Osun State



Photo Credit: Utin Archibong

ECEWS supported the Osun State Government to convene a meeting of its Human Rights Response Committee to address the impact of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) on survivors in the state. Led by the Osun State Agency for the Control of AIDS (OSACA) and co-chaired by the Human Rights Commission, this gathering brought together key stakeholders from the health, gender rights, and child protection sectors.

Recognizing the enduring trauma experienced by GBV survivors and the detrimental effects of this violence on communities, the meeting focused on several crucial areas. Participants shared their experiences as GBV responders and advocates of change and discussed GBV sector referral pathway services available for survivors of GBV and case follow-up strategies. The meeting also focused on developing more comprehensive support systems for survivors, improved access to justice based on a survivors-centered approach, and awareness-raising sessions/campaigns on GBV prevention, response, and its consequences to the survivors and society.

ECEWS remains committed to supporting GBV survivors and fostering a safer environment for all

ECEWS collaborates with the Akwa Ibom State Health Insurance Agency (AKSHIA) to enrol beneficiaries into the Akwa Ibom State Health Insurance Scheme (ARISE Care)



Photo Credit: Liberty Mfon

In alignment with the Akwa Ibom State government's ARISE Agenda, which focuses on sustainable development and social inclusion, the USAID-funded ECEWS ACE-5 project collaborated with the Akwa Ibom State Health Insurance Agency (AKSHIA) to conduct a pilot enrolment drive for beneficiaries into the scheme. This was preceded by a two-day training for selected staff to support the drive in the state. The pilot phase focused on the enrolment of children and other vulnerable individuals in Uyo, Oron, Ikot Ekpene, Eket, Nsit Ubium, and Essien Udim Local Government Areas.

4,905
indigent residents
enrolled

263
recipients of HIV
care successfully
enrolled

Bukola's Triumph

From Trauma to Triumph



Bukola, a 15-year-old orphan living in Osogbo, Nigeria, faced a daunting challenge. As the eldest of four orphaned siblings living with their elderly and impoverished grandparents, she bore the brunt of their emotional abuse. The constant verbal assaults and lack of support pushed Bukola to the brink, making her contemplate leaving home.

However, a ray of hope shone through when Bukola was introduced to the CDC-funded Sustainable Programs for HIV Epidemic Control and Equitable Service Delivery (SPEED) Project implemented by ECEWS. Through the project, she was enrolled in a sewing course, learning valuable skills that would empower her. ECEWS, committed to empowering the communities it serves, provided Bukola with the necessary tools and support to develop her potential.

After completing the sewing program, ECEWS provided Bukola with a sewing machine, enabling her to start her own business. Her new

found ability to generate income not only improved her relationship with her grandparents but also allowed her to support her younger siblings. She was able to contribute to household expenses and help her brother with transportation costs for his shoemaking classes.

With each successful transaction, Bukola's confidence grew. She realized that her skills and determination could lead to a brighter future. Inspired by her progress, Bukola set her sights on financial independence and began saving for her aspirations.

Through her journey, she overcame adversity, found purpose, and paved the way for a more promising future. ECEWS through the SPEED project, by providing her with the necessary support, played a crucial role in empowering Bukola and helping her achieve her goals.

Through the SPEED Project, ECEWS is committed to collaborating with its partners to elevate healthcare standards and improve public health outcomes. This is a crucial step in ensuring that everyone has access to comprehensive and effective healthcare services.

“
Bukola's story is a testament to the power of resilience, education, and empowerment.”

Like Bukola, ECEWS has provided support to 2,988 other women in similar situations in Ekiti, Delta and Osun to overcome Gender-Based Violence

Photo Credit: Sheyi Rotimi



Menstrual Hygiene Support

A household assessment identified adolescents lacking access to sanitary kits. In response, menstrual hygiene kits (made up of sanitary pad, soap and towel) were distributed.

26

Adolescents supported in Delta State, Nigeria



95

Adolescents supported

40

Adolescents supported in Osun State, Nigeria

29

Adolescents supported in Ekiti State, Nigeria

Water Treatment and Waste Management

To ensure the provision of safe drinking water



115

Men & women were sensitized on water treatment



82

Beneficiaries were supported with Water Guard



145

Beneficiaries were sensitized on proper disposal of waste in the household



Hand Washing Support

986

Caregivers were sensitized on the importance of regular handwashing

and spigot buckets were distributed to encourage the practice. This initiative has strengthened hand hygiene in the community, reducing the risk of disease transmission.





Photo Credit: Utin Archibong

Empowering a GBV Survivor

A Tale of Resilience and Recovery

Socioeconomic challenges create a breeding ground for gender-based violence, especially among vulnerable communities. In Nigeria, the recent economic hardship has pushed many families into poverty creating an atmosphere for the negative coping mechanism among members of the community and, leading to the unintended neglect of minors by struggling caregivers.

Three-year-old Justina (real name withheld) was a victim of this situation. While her mother was out working to provide for their

family, Justina was sexually assaulted by a stranger.

Justina's mum had stepped out for a few minutes to purchase supplies for the household when she returned to find her child missing. Panic-stricken, she began searching for her daughter with her heart pounding in her chest.

“I knew something was wrong as soon as I entered the house,”

Justina's mum recalled.

“My child is always happy to welcome me. But there was only silence.”

Her search led her to the compound's public toilet, where she witnessed a horrifying scene. A stranger was emerging from the toilet, zipping up his trousers, carrying her three-year-old daughter, Justina. The child was visibly distressed, and Justina's mum could see blood on her clothes.

“I couldn't believe my eyes,” Justina's mum said. “It felt like a dream.”

Without hesitation, Justina's mum confronted the stranger and demanded that he return her daughter. The man fled, leaving Justina in her arms. She rushed the child to the hospital, one of the facilities supported by the CDC-funded Sustainable Programs for HIV Epidemic Control and Equitable Service Delivery (SPEED) Project implemented by ECEWS.

...Justina's mum has been able to improve her family's financial status. The grinding machine has enabled her to provide services



At the hospital, Justina was examined and found to have suffered a traumatic assault. She received immediate medical attention and was provided with essential psychosocial therapy to help her healing process from the ordeal. The ECEWS SPEED project also provided Justina's mum with economic empowerment when she was enrolled in life-skilled building activities at the safe space, she went through coaching sessions and learned how to operate a grinding machine, after graduating from the program, she was empowered with the grinding machine as part of ECEWS family support system intervention. This economic empowerment has provided the family with an income-generating opportunity for the improved well-being of the entire family. Her unwavering determination together with the support she received, helped Justina heal and rebuild her life.

"I am incredibly grateful for the help that ECEWS has given us," Justina's mum said.



The grinding machine has allowed me to save more money through VSLA, ensuring Justina's well-being and providing for our family.

Over the past year since the incident, Justina's mum has been able to improve her family's financial status. The grinding machine has enabled her to provide services to the neighborhood, leading to increased income.

With Justina's mum's new found financial stability and with the aim of reintegrating Justina back into the society to help her healing process, she has been able to enroll Justina in a nearby school. This has allowed Justina to interact with other children and develop essential social skills as a positive coping mechanism and improved self-esteem, she has become more confident and outgoing, and her trauma-related symptoms have significantly improved.

This story shows how societal support can improve the resilience of survivors of gender-based violence. Justina's mum has been able to overcome adversity, provide a safe and nurturing environment for her children, and build a brighter future for her family, with support from the CDC-funded ECEWS SPEED Project,

ECEWS Supports 5-Day Free Medical Outreach Organized by Hon. Moses Essien, Ibiono Ibom Constituency

The ECEWS ACE-5 Project partnered with Hon. (Comrade) Moses Essien, a member of the Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly, to provide free medical outreach services for people in Ibiono Ibom LGA. The outreach, which was held at the Health Center in Ikot Uba, Ibiono Ibom LGA between August 5th to August 9th, 2024, saw over 700 persons receiving care, including surgeries, blood pressure checks and treatment, blood sugar

checks and treatment, deworming of children, malaria rapid diagnostic testing and treatment, HIV testing and counselling, eye examinations with the provision of eyeglasses, and general medical consultations.

This collaboration is a further demonstration of the ECEWS ACE-5 Project's commitment to improving community health and strengthening the health system in Akwa Ibom State.



Photo Credit: Kise Terver



ECEWS trains peer educators to improve peer-based service delivery for adolescents in Osun State

ECEWS conducted a six-day training for peer educators in Osogbo and Ile-Ife LGAs, aimed at activating eight additional peer-based service delivery centers and piloting community initiatives to improve peer-based services in Osun State. The training included participants from the state government and health facilities. The training improved the abilities of the peer educators to offer psychosocial support to their peers, complete the peer health education curriculum for adolescents and young people living with HIV, and strengthen caregivers' capacity to provide treatment and psychosocial support to their wards. The training included pre and post-tests, discussions, Q&A sessions, brainstorming, group work, and recitations.



Photo Credit: Sheyi Rotimi



ECEWS collaborates with Cross River State Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs & Poverty Alleviation to mark the 2024 World Humanitarian Day

ECEWS ACE-5 team in Cross River State partnered with the Cross River Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation to commemorate World Humanitarian Day 2024, under the theme "Act Now," on August 19, 2024. This global campaign aims to unite the humanitarian community in demonstrating a commitment to serving communities in need, regardless of location or circumstance.

The event highlighted the state's dedication to delivering humanitarian aid in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The celebration involved collaboration with key actors, including line ministries, agency heads, and various implementing partners. Notable attendees included the Honourable Commissioner of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, the Commissioner for Women Affairs, the Commissioner for Sports, and representatives from Humanity Without Borders, an initiative led by the First Lady, Her Excellency Rev. Mrs. Eyoanwan Otu. Other participants included UN agencies, WHO, CUSO, CBOs, CSOs, and other stakeholders in the humanitarian and development sector. The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs reaffirmed its commitment to partnering with these stakeholders to deliver essential aid with professionalism and dedication.



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