



Nka Uforo Iban: Transforming Lives of Rural Traders Since 2015

10



- 3 A Stitch in Time:
Idiodo's Tailored Triumph
- 6 From Crisis to Hope: How ECEWS' Enhanced Expert Support
Initiative (E2SI) is helping people in remote locations triumph
- 9 ECEWS Hosts 5th CDC Nigeria Biannual Meeting:
A Focus on Simplification and Sustainability

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



Chief Executive Officer, ECEWS



A Stitch in Time

Idiodo's Tailored Triumph

Idiodo Akpoduado, a seasoned tailor from the heart of Delta State, Nigeria, once found himself entangled in the threads of adversity. Years of financial hardship had frayed the fabric of his family's life, forcing his children out of school and his business to the brink of collapse. But fate, it seemed, had a different pattern in mind.

In 2023, a lifeline appeared in the form of the SPEED project, a beacon of hope for countless Nigerians. This project, funded by PEPFAR through the United States Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (US-CDC implemented by the Excellence Community Education Welfare Scheme (ECEWS), prioritizes empowerment of the Government and community stakeholders towards reducing HIV incidence for at-risk populations. Recognizing Mr. Akpoduado's potential, the SPEED project

provided him with a much-needed boost. A fresh supply of vibrant male fabrics was delivered to his humble shop, igniting a spark of hope and determination within him. With renewed vigor, he began to meticulously craft garments, each stitching, proof of his resilience and skill.

As his reputation grew, so did his clientele. Customers from far and wide in Warri environs sought out his expertise, drawn to the quality and style of his work. His business, located at No. 105 Ovie Street in Ovwian community, became a bustling hub of activity.

The financial windfall from his thriving business allowed Mr. Akpoduado to provide for his family's needs. His children, once confined to the shadows of poverty, were enrolled back in school, their futures now bright with promise. The once-empty

dinner table is now laden with nourishing meals, a testament to the transformative power of the SPEED project.

Mr. Akpoduado's story is more than just a personal triumph; it's a testament to the power of human potential and the impact of well-intentioned programs. By empowering individuals like him, the SPEED project is not only uplifting lives but also strengthening the fabric of society.



A Taste of Success

Iwebi's Culinary Journey

Iwebi, a 49-year-old woman from Delta State, Nigeria, had been running a small culinary business to supplement her family's income. However, when her husband passed away, she faced the daunting task of becoming the sole provider for her four children. Despite her culinary skills, she struggled to expand her business to meet their growing needs. However, things began to change when she was identified by ECEWS under the US CDC-funded SPEED in Delta State.

Iwebi was enrolled by one of our Community-based organizations, the Nigerian AIDS Counselling Organization (NACO) in 2024, after careful assessment and profiling. She was then supported with a startup fund to bolster her cooking business. Armed with this financial support, Iwebi embarked on a culinary journey that would transform her life. With renewed vigour, she expanded her business offerings, providing a diverse range of delectable snacks. Her culinary creations quickly gained popularity, attracting a growing customer base. As her business flourished, her family's financial situation improved significantly. The once-strained household now enjoys a sense of security and prosperity.

To further solidify her financial future, Iwebi was provided with robust financial education and linked to a Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA). This membership has provided her with access to both savings and loan opportunities, allowing her to further invest in her business and secure her family's well-being. Iwebi's story is a testament to the power of empowerment. Through the SPEED project's targeted support, she was able to turn her culinary passion into a thriving business. Her journey showcases the transformative impact of the program on individuals and communities alike.



**IWEBI TURNED
HER CULINARY
PASSION INTO
A THRIVING
BUSINESS**



FROM CRISIS TO HOPE

How ECEWS' Enhanced Expert Support Initiative (E2SI) is helping people in remote locations triumph over adversity



The medical team attending to Joy after her resuscitation on her first day of admission



During the 2nd day review by the E2SI pediatrician expert



The facility team reviewing Joy's health on the 4th day of her admission

Joy is a bright 13-year-old girl who lives with her widowed mother and two siblings in a small household. Four years ago, she was diagnosed with HIV and was receiving treatment at Mkpato Enin Primary Health Centre, until 30th August, 2024 when her health took a turn for the worse. She was rushed to the health centre with complaints of shortness of breath, a rapid heartbeat, coughing, and fever. Realizing she was found to be in a critical condition, the health team immediately rushed her to Sacred Hospital in Ukam, where she was given oxygen and blood transfusion, after conducting some tests.

Recognizing that Joy's condition required more specialized care, the health facility engaged the Enhanced Expert Support Initiative (E2SI) for support. The E2SI is an initiative of the USAID-funded ECEWS ACE-5 project in Akwa Ibom and Cross River State that connects health experts at tertiary hospitals with healthcare providers at primary health centers to improve the clinical management of HIV and its

comorbidities. An expert pediatrician from the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital (UUTH) was called in to assess her. After a thorough evaluation, the pediatrician diagnosed her with severe anemia and bronchopneumonia, with the possibility of tuberculosis, all occurring in the background of Advanced HIV Disease (Stage 3). Further tests showed she also had malaria and a urinary tract infection. A comprehensive treatment plan was developed that included intermittent virtual check-ins on her by the paediatrician. After five days of following the prescribed treatment plan, Joy was doing very well and was discharged with oral medications.

Joy's journey from the brink of crisis to recovery is a testament to how timely and expert care, can change the fortune of those in the most vulnerable situations, giving them hope and healing. The Expert Support Initiative ensures that no child should face such challenges alone.

ECEWS Board Chair Receives Prestigious Recognition

ECEWS recently celebrated its esteemed Board Chair, Professor Enobasi Urua, who was honored with the prestigious title of Distinguished Professor of Linguistics. This recognition took place during the University of Uyo's 29th and 30th combined convocation, held on Saturday, November 8th and 9th, 2024.

The two-day event featured several key highlights, including the investiture of new Emeriti, the conferment of Distinguished Professorships, the Award of Honorary Doctorate Degrees, and the conferment of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degrees. Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Pastor Dr. Umoh Eno, was also honored during this ceremony.

The grand ceremony was presided over by Alhaji Abubakar Maje, CON, the University's Chancellor, and Professor Zubaru Tajo Abdullah, the Pro-Chancellor. The event attracted top dignitaries such as President Ahmed Bola Tinubu, represented by Professor Oluware Abraham, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt, and Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Pastor Dr. Umoh Eno, among others.



This prestigious recognition underscores Professor Urua's outstanding academic contributions and highlights ECEWS' commitment to promoting access to quality education and empowering communities. ECEWS extends its heartfelt congratulations to Professor Urua and is inspired by his remarkable achievement. Excellent Community Education

Welfare Scheme (ECEWS) proudly celebrates its esteemed Board Chair, Professor Enobasi Urua who was recently honored with the prestigious title of Distinguished Professor of Linguistics. The recognition took place during the University of Uyo's 29th and 30th combined convocation ceremony, culminating on Saturday, November 8th & 9th, 2024.

These two-day activities featured various key highlights, including the Investiture of new Emeriti, the conferment of Distinguished Professorships, awarding of Honorary Doctorate Degrees, and the conferment of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degrees, which also Pastor Dr. Umoh Eno, the Governor of Akwa Ibom State, was honored. The grand ceremony, which was presided over by Alhaji Abubakar Maje, CON, the University's Chancellor, and Professor Zubaru Tajo Abdullah, the Pro-Chancellor attracted top dignitaries such as President Ahmed Bola Tinubu, represented by Professor Oluware Abraham, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt & Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Pastor Dr. Umoh Eno amongst others.



Tackling TB & HIV Co-Infection in Osun State:

ECEWS Spearheads the TB Clinic-Laboratory Interface Continuous Quality Improvement (TB CLiCQ) Program

ECEWS, under the CDC-funded SPEED project, launched the TB CLiCQ (TB Clinic-Laboratory Interface Continuous Quality Improvement) program in three key facilities in Osun State: State Specialist Hospital Asubiaro, UniOsun Teaching Hospital, and State Specialist Hospital Ede. This was geared towards supporting the global End TB Goal by 2030 through targeted improvements in TB clinic operations and laboratory services, focusing on quality interventions that enhance patient outcomes. To ensure the program's success, ECEWS conducted an intensive 5-day training session for healthcare workers, including Clinicians, laboratory staff, Directly Observed Treatment (DoT) providers, monitoring and evaluation officers, and continuous quality improvement focal persons. The training

equipped healthcare teams with the skills and knowledge necessary to drive sustained improvements in TB care and laboratory services. With full support and a clear commitment, ECEWS continues to lead efforts in the fight against TB and HIV co-infection, building healthier futures for communities across Osun State.



ECEWS Strengthens Leaders' Capacity with Leadership Training from Lagos Business School

ECEWS recently invested in its leadership team by sending senior managers to a rigorous Leadership Enhancement training program at the prestigious Lagos Business School, Pan-Atlantic University. This investment underscores our commitment to fostering a culture of excellence and innovation. By equipping our leaders with advanced skills and knowledge, we aim to drive sustainable growth and achieve our organizational goals. The intensive training program covered a wide range of topics, including strategic leadership, effective decision-making, innovative thinking, emotional intelligence, and change management. We believe that by empowering our leaders, we empower our entire organization to achieve new heights.





ECEWS Hosts 5th CDC Nigeria Biannual Meeting:

A Focus on Simplification and Sustainability

The recent 5th CDC Nigeria Biannual Meeting, hosted by the Excellence Community Education Welfare Scheme (ECEWS), marked a significant milestone in Nigeria's public health landscape. Themed "Strategic pivoting towards program simplification and sustainable public health intervention," the two-day event brought together diverse stakeholders to address critical health challenges and chart a path towards a healthier Nigeria.

Key discussions centered on simplifying healthcare programs, reducing maternal and infant mortality, addressing rising healthcare burdens, and preparing for new health threats. Community engagement, data-driven decision-making, and innovative approaches were emphasized.

Acting Country Director of CDC Nigeria, Suzanne Theroux, called for a coordinated HIV response. U.S. Ambassador Richard Mills

Jr. stressed the importance of simplifying health programs for sustainability and state ownership. NACA Director General Dr. Temitope Ilori shared the government's plan to integrate HIV response into national structures.

The event also focused on state-led HIV workplan implementation, the role of state health ministries in outbreak responses and data management, and the potential of health insurance and program simplification for sustainability.

This biannual meeting, hosted by ECEWS, serves as a crucial platform to drive progress, foster innovation, and ensure a healthier future for Nigerians. By fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing, the 5th Biannual Meeting aimed to strengthen Nigeria's public health system and improve the lives of millions.





Nka Uforo Iban: Transforming Lives of Rural Traders Since 2015

Since its launch in 2015, Nka Uforo Iban has significantly empowered rural traders in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Founded by Akwa Ibom women in Maryland, USA, this association provides vital support to less privileged and physically challenged traders through training and startup grants. Beginning in Uyo Local Government Area at Akpan Andem market, Nka Uforo Iban has expanded to nine LGAs and nine markets, impacting 180

women and their communities. Participants receive training in record keeping, product diversification, packaging, and marketing techniques, equipping them with essential skills to run successful businesses. The results have been transformative. Women who once struggled financially are now thriving entrepreneurs, supporting their families and contributing to local economies. This empowerment not only enhances individual livelihoods

but also fosters community growth and cohesion. Nka Uforo Iban's ongoing commitment to expanding its reach promises to touch even more lives in the years to come. As a model of hope and resilience, the association exemplifies how targeted support can create lasting change in rural communities, demonstrating the power of education and empowerment in transforming lives.



ECEWS Participation in the 12th National Colloquium on Mental Health and Development



ECEWS actively participated in the 12th National Colloquium on Mental Health and Development, organized by the Mobile Manna Foundation to commemorate World Mental Health Day 2024 in Akwa Ibom State.

Chaired by Mkpisong (Obong) Ide Owodiong-Idemeko, Chairman of the Akwa Ibom Investment Corporation, the event brought together mental health professionals, government officials, and other key stakeholders to discuss pressing mental health issues, including insecurity, depression, and trauma.

Dr. Bala Gana, representing ECEWS, delivered a thought-provoking keynote address on "Mental Health in the Workplace for Those Serving Vulnerable Populations." The address emphasized the critical need to support caregivers' mental well-being to ensure they can continue to provide quality care to those in need. Through interactive discussions and practical sessions, participants gained valuable insights and strategies to improve mental well-being. The colloquium underscored the importance of mental health in promoting individual and community well-being, highlighting the need for expanded mental health initiatives.

Enhancing Healthcare Sustainability through Solar Power Interventions in Cross River State

In line with the ECEWS ACE-5 Project sustainability plans, the project has initiated several solar power interventions to improve healthcare facilities across the supported project states. This includes the deployment of 10KVA inverters with Lithium-ion batteries at four key locations: Calabar General Hospital, Ugep General Hospital, Dr. Lawrence Henshaw Memorial Hospital, and Ekpo Abasi Primary Health Centre. Six solar freezers have also been installed at these facilities to support eco-friendly practices and enable efficient remote sample logging.



Another significant aspect of this initiative involved the installation of a solar inverter at the University of Calabar Teaching Hospital (UCTH) to provide a reliable power supply for the Serology Lab, thereby improving the efficiency and reliability of critical laboratory operations. The ECEWS ACE-5 team in Cross River also repaired and returned a malfunctioning inverter to Dr. Lawrence Henshaw Memorial Hospital, further strengthening laboratory infrastructure and service delivery. These efforts reflect the project's commitment to promoting sustainable energy solutions and ensuring uninterrupted laboratory operations, ultimately contributing to improved healthcare outcomes in the region.

Commemoration of Global Handwashing Day

On October 15, 2024, Excellence Community Education Welfare Scheme (ECEWS) celebrated Global Handwashing Day with activities at two health facilities in Ado-Ekiti, including the One-Stop-Shop (OSS) and Community Health Centre (CHC) Okesha. This year's observance focused on promoting hand hygiene and enhancing WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) services, especially for vulnerable populations. To mark the day, ECEWS facilitated the installation of Veronica buckets in each facility, creating accessible handwashing stations for clients and staff.

This intervention aims to reinforce daily handwashing habits, improving hygiene practices among facility users and aligning with WASH

standards. At Community Health Centre Okesha, the celebration coincided with an antenatal care (ANC) clinic session, providing a unique opportunity to engage pregnant and breastfeeding mothers on hand hygiene.

During the health talk, the ECEWS team integrated messages about the critical role of handwashing in preventing infections, safeguarding maternal and child health, and reducing the spread of disease. Attendees were encouraged to make handwashing a regular part of their routines, particularly before meals and after visiting healthcare facilities.



ECEWS Inaugurates Infection Prevention and Control Committee at General Hospital Obubra, Cross River State

In its ongoing commitment to reducing and eliminating infections in healthcare settings, the ECEWS ACE-5 team in Cross River State has facilitated the establishment of an Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Committee at General Hospital Obubra. This committee plays a critical role in managing infections and enhancing the quality of healthcare delivery within the hospital. Its primary objectives are to assign dedicated

personnel for infection control, prevent the spread of infections, and promote effective waste management practices. Chaired by the hospital's medical superintendent, with the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Champion serving as secretary, the IPC team has already begun implementing infection control measures within the hospital and its surrounding environment. Early outcomes of this initiative include the formal inauguration of the IPC committee, strengthened collaboration among stakeholders, and a more robust framework for secondary-level healthcare service delivery contributing significantly to public health initiatives across the state.

The management of General Hospital Obubra, Cross River state expressed deep appreciation for ECEWS ACE-5's pivotal support in elevating infection control standards and improving overall healthcare quality at the facility.



New Initiative Targets Malaria in Enugu

The signing of a contract agreement between Excellence Community Education Welfare Scheme (ECEWS) and the National Malaria Elimination Programme (NMEP) on November 11, 2024, marked a significant milestone in the ongoing efforts to combat malaria in Enugu State, Nigeria. The project, titled "Support to Malaria Elimination," is a two-year initiative funded by the Islamic Development Bank through the NMEP, Lives and Livelihood Funds. The primary objective is to reduce the malaria burden to pre-elimination levels and ultimately bring malaria-related mortality to zero.

The scope of the project encompasses several critical components, including the procurement and distribution of Insecticide Treated Nets (ITNs), management of complicated and severe malaria cases, and implementation of prevention interventions at health facilities. The National Malaria Elimination Programme (NMEP), under the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, will provide technical support, mobilize resources, and monitor progress throughout the project.

The signing ceremony was attended by officials from the NMEP, state government officials, and representatives of implementing NGOs, including Dr. Otiji Ifeoma, Programme Manager of the Enugu State Malaria Elimination Programme.

ECEWS Celebrates International Day of the Girl Child and Adolescent Health Week 2024

ECEWS joined the global community in commemorating the International Day of the Girl Child and International Adolescent Health Week 2024. These annual observances aim to unite girls and adolescents worldwide, promoting empowerment, education, and health. This year's International Day of the Girl Child theme, "Girls' Vision for the Future," inspired girls to share their aspirations and engage in conversations, debates, and recreational activities. ECEWS organized a sensitization campaign across ECEWS implementing states, reaching over 1000 adolescent girls in primary and secondary schools such as KO-VAC Group of School Ado Ekiti, Comprehensive High School Ise-Ekiti, Comprehensive Secondary School in Ikot Ekpene L.G.A, Future Leaders School in Ibiono-Ibom L.G.A, God's Opinion High School in Itu L.G.A, Pacesetters Academy in Eastern Obolo L.G.A, Hope Academy in Mkpato Enin L.G.A, Living Impact Academy in Urue-Offong Oruko L.G.A, and Wells International School in Nsit Ubium L.G.A.

Also, in Akwa Ibom State, ECEWS collaborated with GIFA (Golden Initiative for All), welcoming Mrs. Helen Eno-Obareki, the just appointed Coordinator, Office of Her Excellency, the First Lady of Akwa Ibom State, who inspired and encouraged the students to write their vision, make it plain and then work towards achieving their dreams. ECEWS team distributed sanitary pads to female students, held health education sessions, conducted gender sensitisation, and led placard advocacy activities to raise awareness on the rights of the girl child.

Similarly, in marking the International Adolescent Health Week 2024 in Osun state, ECEWS partnered with Adolescents and Young People in Nigeria (APYIN) to organize activities for about 250 adolescents' girls and young people. The theme, "Thriving, Not Just Surviving," featured talk shows, essay contests, games, and assessments. Participants shared their impactful stories, receiving prizes and creating a memorable experience. ECEWS-Ekiti state also hosted an Adolescent Club meeting at Moferere Community, providing adolescent girls with essential WASH and menstrual hygiene education. Girls gained confidence, asked questions, and better understood personal care, crucial to their physical and emotional well-being.

These events demonstrate ECEWS's dedication to empowering girls and adolescents, promoting education, health, and well-being while remaining committed to creating supportive environments for young people to thrive.





Enhancing Healthcare Service Delivery with Solar Power Solutions:

Inverter and DC Freezer Installations for Sustainable Operations

Between September 17th and 28th, 2024, the ECEWS SPEED project brought changes to healthcare facilities across Delta, Osun, and Ekiti States in Nigeria. By installing 22 solar-powered DC freezers in 12 critical sites, the project has revolutionized the way these facilities store vital HIV treatment and viral load (VL) samples.

Prior to these installations, power outages were a constant threat, jeopardizing the integrity of sensitive medical samples. Now, with reliable solar energy, these facilities can maintain a consistent cold chain, ensuring the accuracy of test results and the effectiveness of treatment.

The solar-powered systems also provide uninterrupted power for electronic medical record (EMR) systems, streamlining patient care and enhancing data management. This means healthcare providers can access patient information instantly, make informed decisions, and improve overall efficiency.

By investing in sustainable energy solutions, the ECEWS SPEED project is not only addressing immediate challenges but also building a foundation for a more resilient healthcare system. As these facilities continue to thrive, the positive impact will ripple through communities, empowering healthcare workers and ultimately saving lives.



