



# ECEWS RISING

JANUARY 2026 EDITION

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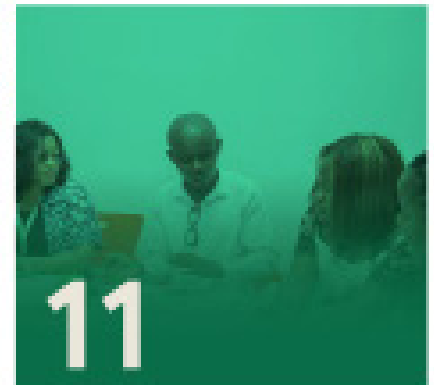
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## From the CEO's Desk

As we begin a new year, we extend our sincere appreciation to our partners, stakeholders, and communities whose trust, collaboration, and shared purpose continue to drive our work. This edition brings to light the discipline and partnerships that sustain our efforts and reaffirm a core truth across our programs: lasting health gains are achieved not only within clinical settings, but through deliberate engagement in the communities where everyday life unfolds.

Our focus story explores community-based care as a critical missing link in achieving optimal outcomes for children and adolescents living with HIV (CALHIV). In Osun State, the ECEWS-SPEED Community Case Management Program (CCMP) is redefining HIV care by extending support beyond health facilities to address the social, emotional, and economic realities that often determine treatment success. Through structured community case management, the ECEWS-SPEED Project is closing these gaps by providing tailored follow-up, psychosocial support, caregiver engagement, and linkages to essential social services.

This approach reinforces a broader lesson: health systems are strongest when they recognize the human context of care. By bringing services closer to families and empowering community structures, CCMP is improving adherence, restoring dignity, and safeguarding the future of vulnerable children and adolescents.

Progress across our other programs further reflects this commitment. We have supported on-site mentorship and capacity building for NYSC members on antiretroviral therapy services at Lutheran Hospital, Yahe, and strengthened malaria treatment services across 36 health facilities in Enugu State. Together, the work highlighted in this edition reflects the dedication of our teams, partners, and communities to building responsive systems that place people, not just programs at the center of care.

As we look ahead, your continued support through advocacy, collaboration, and shared purpose remains vital. Together, we are building healthier communities and advancing a future where every child and adolescent has the opportunity to survive, thrive, and lead well.

Many thanks to you for being part of the journey into the New Year.

*Andy Eyo*

Chief Executive Officer, ECEWS



## Taking Pediatrics HIV Care Beyond the Clinic in Osun State

success. They support school attendance, promote safe living environments, improve access to clean water, and coordinate closely with ECEWS-supported health facilities to ensure continuity of care. They also collaborate with mentor mothers to support pregnant women identified at health facilities and traditional birth attendants, helping to prevent HIV transmission to newborns.

The impact of the program is measurable. Of 3,455 children assessed HIV risk in households of people living with HIV (PLHIV), 2,789 now know their HIV status. Hospital appointment compliance has been sustained for 849 CALHIV and 1,223 HIV-positive caregivers. To support retention in care, 218 beneficiaries previously received conditional cash transfers, startup kits, and income-generating support. In addition, 3,235 households were trained on environmental sanitation, while 350 households lacking safe water received Veronica buckets and water guards to reduce disease risk.

Community-based care is increasingly recognized as the missing link in achieving optimal outcomes for children and adolescents living with HIV (CALHIV). In Osun State, the ECEWS-SPEED Community Case Management Program (CCMP) is demonstrating how extending care beyond hospital walls can address the social, emotional, and economic barriers that medication alone cannot resolve. While Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) has transformed HIV treatment, nearly 850 pediatric and adolescent patients in Osun State continue to struggle with treatment continuity due to poverty, stigma, and loss of parental support.

As certain intervention activities listed above wrapped up following the limited waiver period, a chance emerged for more Government of Nigeria (GoN) and public-private partnerships to boost community-level social security and safety net services, thereby sustaining the program's progress and providing vital support to those in need, ultimately leading to a more comprehensive and sustainable approach to addressing community challenges.

These challenges often lead to missed appointments, poor adherence, and treatment interruptions, undermining long-term health outcomes. To address these gaps, ECEWS-SPEED implemented the Community Case Management Program, formerly the Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) model. The program shifts the centre of care from health facilities to households, ensuring that CALHIV receive holistic, family-centred support within their communities.

Despite these gains, challenges persist. Fear of stigma and difficulties around disclosure continue to limit service uptake. The suspension of critical components such as household economic strengthening and caregiver forums, without full integration into government systems, has also constrained the program's broader impact. These services were essential in building resilience, improving livelihoods, and sustaining long-term engagement in care.

At the core of the program are trained community case managers who serve as advocates, educators, and trusted allies. Through regular home visits, they monitor treatment adherence, provide psychosocial support, and educate families on HIV prevention, including prevention of mother-to-child transmission and reduction of household transmission risks. Their work is rooted in empathy, cultural sensitivity, and a deep understanding of community dynamics. Beyond health education, case managers address structural barriers that affect treatment

The strength of the CCMP lies in the relationships it builds. Community case managers are not merely service providers; they are companions in care, supporting families through some of their most vulnerable moments. Their work ensures that pediatric HIV care in Osun State is accessible, continuous, and deeply human.

Sustaining and integrating community-based approaches into national health and social systems will be essential to achieving long-term epidemic control. By investing in what works, Nigeria can ensure that every child and adolescent living with HIV can grow up healthy, supported, and hopeful because effective healing does not end at the hospital door; it begins in the community.

# ECEWS Participated in TB Champions and Ambassadors Investiture Ceremony in Lagos State

In line with strengthening community-led advocacy, ECEWS participated in the TB Champions and Ambassadors Investiture Ceremony on December 8, 2025, a landmark initiative led by the First Lady of Lagos State, Her Excellency Claudiana Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu. The event was convened to reinforce high-level advocacy and expand grassroots awareness for tuberculosis prevention, detection, and treatment across the state.

The ceremony formally commissioned female legislators, newly elected female Local Government chairpersons, and wives of Lagos State House of Assembly members as TB Champions and Ambassadors. This deliberate engagement of women leaders reflects a strategic approach to mobilizing trusted voices with strong community influence to drive health messaging, promote TB screening, and support treatment adherence at the grassroots level.

ECEWS' participation in the investiture underscores the organization's commitment to supporting government-led public health initiatives and fostering strong partnerships between implementing organizations, policymakers, and community leaders. Through collaboration and advocacy, these efforts contribute to more responsive, inclusive, and effective TB control strategies.



## ECEWS CHIS Project: Bridging Gaps in Maternal Care in Rivers State

ECEWS CHIS Project partnered with Obio Cottage Hospital, a leading maternal and child health facility in Rivers State, to mentor and build the capacity of maternity staff at the Model Primary Health Centre in Abonema. This collaboration has improved staff skills and empathy, ensuring positive experiences for women accessing antenatal and delivery services.

The scheme leverages community structures to encourage pregnant women to utilize facility services and advocates for sponsorship for those who cannot afford it, eliminating financial barriers.

Enrolled clients are encouraged to serve as ambassadors, promoting the scheme's visibility. Though implementation is recent, plans are underway to introduce surgical services, including caesarean sections, to improve maternal and fetal outcomes.

Through the CHIS project, lives are being transformed, one mother at a time.



# ECEWS and NEPWHAN Collaborate to Strengthen HIV Care Retention in Cross River State



ECEWS hosted the Cross River State Chapter of the Network of People Living with HIV and AIDS in Nigeria (NEPWHAN) during the week of January 5, 2026. The advocacy visit, led by the State Coordinator, Mrs. Cecilia Ofum, focused on strengthening collaboration to prevent treatment of interruption and sustain engagement in HIV care, particularly among recipients of care at heightened risk of disengagement.

NEPWHAN commended the Cross River State leadership and ECEWS ACE 5 Project team for their sustained commitment to advancing the state's HIV response. Discussions emphasized the strategic role of community-led structures in the early identification of treatment interruption risks and in strengthening community-facility linkages to improve retention and adherence outcomes.

During the engagement, the Associate Director for Cluster Operations, Dr. Kenneth Odey, stressed the need for sharing client line lists to track and re-engage clients at risk of treatment interruption, while Pharm.

Ekpenyong emphasized linking clients to tailored Differentiated Service Delivery (DSD) models for sustained treatment access.

The collaboration with NEPWHAN was reaffirmed as a key strategy for strengthening community mobilization, advancing client-centered care, and sustaining viral suppression outcomes across Cross River State.





# The Stirring of Hope

How Godwin →  
Found His Edge



In the quiet corners of Ado-Ekiti in Ekiti State, Godwin's childhood was measured by the rhythmic stirring of a pot. He grew up watching his grandmother's hands, weathered and tireless as she prepared pap to keep them afloat. It was a humble cereal pudding that put food on their table and kept Godwin in school, but it came with a heavy, unspoken reality. Without a miracle or a marketable skill, this small stall was likely where Godwin's story would begin and end.

Godwin's life changed not by chance, but through the deliberate intervention of the ECEWS SPEED project in 2023. Godwin was identified through the project's Community Case Management (CCMP) program; this wasn't just a chance encounter; it was a systematic effort to locate and support vulnerable youth directly in their communities.

The team recognized Godwin's natural resilience and potential. He was soon selected as a Champion for the Adolescent peer group. For the first time, Godwin wasn't just a young man trying to survive; he was a leader helping his peers navigate their own health and life journeys. The stipend he earned in this role became the catalyst for his transformation. "I finally had the money to take care of my grandmother," Godwin says. "The woman who nurtured me all these years... I can finally give back to her."

With a little financial breathing room and a lot of heart, Godwin finally reached for a dream he'd held since childhood: the art of barbing. He didn't just save his earnings; he invested them back in himself, enrolling in a professional apprenticeship. This marked a profound transition in his life as he stepped away from the steam of the pap stall and into the precision of the barber's chair.

Today, Godwin's courage has paid off. He earns a steady monthly income and stands as living proof that when talent is met with the right institutional support, "making it" ceases to be a distant dream and becomes a tangible reality. Godwin's story shows us that we aren't defined by our limitations. Thanks to the watchful eye of the Community Case Management program team, he is no longer just a boy waiting for the future; he is a young man carving it out, one haircut at a time.



## ECEWS Strengthens Malaria treatment Across 36 Health Facilities in Enugu

ECEWS Impact Malaria Project conducted intensive facility monitoring and mentoring visits across 36 health facilities in four Local Government Areas of Enugu state in January 2026. The visits were aimed at addressing gaps identified during recent assessments, ensuring that every facility is equipped to provide the highest standard of care for malaria. We worked with health care workers to refine their approach and strengthen the local health system from the ground up.

The exercise was beyond simple observation, offering on-site mentoring to improve malaria case management and the use of essential treatments like Artemisinin-based Combination Therapies (ACTs) and Sulfadoxine-Pyrimethamine (SP). Our team worked alongside facility staff to sharpen documentation practices and reinforce strict waste management protocols. The visits showed collaborative effort to ensure that patient records are accurate, and that medical waste is handled safely, protecting both health workers and the wider community. This reaffirms our commitment to evidence-based health interventions and the ongoing fight against malaria in every community we serve.





## ECEWS Hosts the 2026 Q1 CDC Partners Planning Meeting

To kick off the new fiscal year, ECEWS Nigeria hosted the FY26 Q1 Implementing Partners Planning Meeting on January 14 in Abuja. Bringing together CDC funders and partners, the session focused on a clear goal: ensuring that the data driving our health programs is accurate, timely, and impactful.

During the meeting, leadership from CDC Nigeria emphasized that high-quality monitoring and evaluation are the lifeblood of program success. Dr. Stephen Balogun and Dr. Ayodele Fagbemi from CDC Nigeria shared a strategic roadmap for the quarter, highlighting the importance of the updated MER framework and the need for rigorous client verification. By addressing common hurdles, such as staff capacity and documentation gaps, through intensive training and stronger accountability, we are ensuring that our monitoring systems remain robust and reliable.

The sessions also focused on operational readiness, particularly the optimization of National Data Repository (NDR) uploads and adherence to reporting deadlines. Partners provided practical strategies for pre-submission checks and line-list reviews to maintain the high standards achieved in the previous year. These joint efforts in our collective coordination will ultimately lead to more transparent health systems and better results for the communities we serve.

## ECEWS Conducts On-Site Mentorship and Capacity Building of NYSC Members

In a bid to enhance service delivery, ECEWS recently facilitated an on-site mentorship and capacity building session for NYSC members deployed to Lutheran Hospital, Yahe. The session equipped corps members with the knowledge and practical skills required to effectively support recipients of care across multiple service delivery points within the facility.

The session was led by the ART Team, under the coordination of the ART Coordinator, Mrs. Ajegi Josephine, with technical support from the Clinical Services Specialist (CSS). In her opening remarks, Mrs. Ajegi emphasized the strategic role of corps members as Government of Nigeria focal persons, highlighting their responsibility in promoting integrated service delivery for all clients, irrespective of HIV status.

Participants received an overview of the ECEWS ACE-5 Project in Cross River State and the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets. The session covered key areas of HIV programming, including testing, treatment, and viral load suppression, as well as clinical services, lab services, and Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT).

This initiative reflects ECEWS's continued commitment to strengthening human resource capacity and reinforcing integrated, high-quality ART service delivery at the facility level.



# APYIN Osun State Charts New Path for HIV Advocacy with ECEWS Support

The newly elected APYIN Osun state chapter executives paid an advocacy visit to ECEWS State Program Manager, Mrs. Seunfunmi Adefiranye, in January 2026, discussing challenges and plans to support the community. They highlighted the need for systems that enable young people to thrive and offer peer support, focusing on impactful initiatives for the new year.

APYIN highlighted stigma and discrimination as major barriers to HIV care and social inclusion, especially in higher institutions. To address this, propose to intensify targeted information and health education to promote acceptance.

During the visit, SPM Dr. Adefiranye congratulated the new excos and emphasized the need for a clear roadmap

documentation, domestic resource mobilization, and strategic partnerships for APYIN in driving sustainable impact.

She reaffirmed ECEWS's support and commitment to walk this journey with APYIN, providing detailed technical support and facilitating the engagement of key stakeholders. The Osun State Agency for the Control of AIDS (O'SACA) was reechoed as a critical partner in leveraging available resources to support youth-focused HIV interventions across the state.

A certificate of recognition was presented to ECEWS SPM Adefiranye in appreciation of hands-on technical support, and to ECEWS for outstanding work and continued support in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Osun State.



# Strengthening NGO Resilience and Sustainable Health Financing in Cross River State



In December 2025, ECEWS participated in a high-level stakeholders' meeting convened by the Cross River State Ministry of International Donor Coordination (MIDC). The meeting focused on developing a framework to strengthen the resilience, relevance, and sustainability of NGOs operating within the state. Discussions centered on the urgent need to expand domestic funding sources and increase State Government ownership of programmatic gains achieved through NGO and implementing partner interventions. The session was formally opened by the Honourable Commissioner, Elder Dr. Lukpata, who emphasized the importance of government-led sustainability efforts before proceeding to a scheduled engagement with the State Governor.

ECEWS's role in supporting the State Agency for the Control of AIDS (SACA) in developing a domestic funding framework for HIV/AIDS programs and advancing locally driven financing models that ensure continuity of essential health services was highlighted.

In his closing remarks, the Permanent Secretary of MIDC commended stakeholders for their collaborative engagement and reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to advancing the NGO resilience agenda in Cross River State. This engagement reflects ECEWS' ongoing leadership in advocating sustainable health financing and sustainable institutional resilience, responsive, and sustainable beyond donor support.



# ECEWS Strengthens ART Service Quality and Data Integrity in Lagos and Cross River States

To sustain progress and ensure accountability, ECEWS Lagos State hosted a Joint Supervisory Support Visit (JSSV) in collaboration with the National AIDS and STI Control Program (NASCP), the State AIDS and STI Control Program (SASCP), and the Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (NEPWHAN) in December 2025. The multi-agency visits assessed Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) service quality, documentation practices, and adherence to national implementation standards across 12 ECEWS-supported health facilities. The assessment identified several strengths, including the availability and use of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), efficient clinic flow management that reduced client waiting times, and strong service integration linking HIV care with tuberculosis screening, maternal health services, and other essential clinical interventions.

Complementing these quality improvement efforts, ECEWS Cross River State conducted a Joint Data Quality Assessment (DQA) in January 2026 across all project clusters to strengthen the accuracy, completeness, and reliability of program data used for planning and performance monitoring.

The DQA brought together key Government of Nigeria stakeholders, including the State Agency for the Control of AIDS (SACA), the Department of Planning, Research, and Statistics/State Bureau of Statistics (DPRS/SBS), and the State AIDS and STI Control Program (SASCP), working closely with the ECEWS ACE 5 Cross River State Strategic Information team.

This collaborative, government-led approach strengthened state ownership of monitoring processes, ensured alignment with national data standards, and enhanced capacity for continuous quality improvement. Findings from the DQA are being applied to refine reporting systems, guide targeted mentorship, and sustain high-quality data that donors and stakeholders can rely on for strategic decision-making.



# Revolutionizing TB Case Finding Among PLHIV in Ekiti State Through CAD-Enabled Portable Digital X-Ray Technology

## Introduction

The US-CDC-funded SPEED Project has recorded a breakthrough in Tuberculosis (TB) case finding among People Living with HIV (PLHIV) in Ekiti State. By integrating Computer-Aided Detection (CAD)-enabled portable digital X-ray technology into routine, facility-based TB screening, the project significantly improved the efficiency, sensitivity, and reach of TB detection marking a major advancement in integrated HIV/TB service delivery in Ekiti State.

## The Challenge

Tuberculosis remains the leading cause of death among PLHIV in Nigeria. Conventional TB screening approaches, which rely largely on symptom-based assessment, often fail to detect subclinical or paucibacillary TB particularly among PLHIV who may present minimal or no symptoms. This diagnostic gap delays treatment initiation and fuels ongoing transmission. There was therefore an urgent need for a rapid, sensitive, and easily deployable screening tool capable of identifying TB earlier and more accurately in this high-risk population.

## The Innovative Solution

In response to this challenge, the Ekiti State SPEED Project deployed a state-of-the-art CAD-enabled portable digital X-ray machine for TB screening among PLHIV. This innovation offered two key advantages:

**Portability:** The device enables on-site TB screening at ART clinics, support group meetings, and Operation Triple Zero (OTZ) sessions, bringing essential diagnostic services closer to clients.

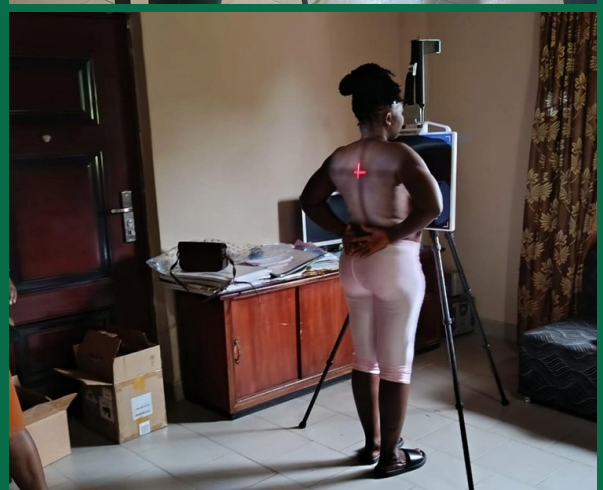
**Artificial Intelligence (AI):** The integrated CAD software functions as a "second reader," automatically analyzing chest X-ray images in real time and flagging abnormalities suggestive of TB with high sensitivity enhancing detection beyond what visual review alone might achieve.

## Implementation

Trained Clinical Service Unit teams conducted TB screening across multiple ART sites. The screening process was streamlined and client-friendly, involving a brief clinical assessment and symptom screening followed by a chest X-ray using the portable device. The CAD software generated immediate preliminary results, enabling prompt identification and prioritization of clients with abnormal findings for confirmatory testing using GeneXpert MTB.

## Outcomes and Impact

A total of 651 PLHIV was successfully screened for TB using the CAD-enabled portable digital X-ray system. 34 individuals (5.2%) were identified as TB presumptive based on a combination of clinical assessment and AI-assisted chest X-ray findings of the presumptive cases, 6 clients were confirmed with TB and promptly initiated treatment, representing 17.6% diagnostic yield among presumptive cases, and 0.92% TB case detection rate among all individuals screened. This yield is particularly significant given that many PLHIV screened were asymptomatic or minimally symptomatic groups often missed through routine passive case-finding approaches. Beyond improved detection, the intervention: Enabled earlier identification of TB, often at less infectious stages, improving patient outcomes and reducing community transmission. Strengthened TB/HIV service integration, delivering a seamless "one-stop" care experience that enhances client satisfaction and retention in care. Optimized the use of confirmatory diagnostic



resources by efficiently triggering only high-risk clients for GeneXpert testing.

## Conclusion

The strategic deployment of CAD-enabled portable digital X-ray technology under the Ekiti State SPEED Project has demonstrated a scalable, high-impact approach to TB screening among PLHIV. The intervention significantly improved screening sensitivity, optimized diagnostic workflows, and contributed directly to life-saving early TB treatment initiation.



## ECEWS Strengthens PMTCT Services to Improve Maternal and Child Health in Cross River State

In the first quarter of FY26, ECEWS Cross River State team intensified targeted interventions to optimize PMTCT services across the state. The approach focused on enhancing service delivery through strengthened coordination between antenatal care (ANC) clinics and HIV treatment units, scaling up community sensitization, promoting early HIV testing, and ensuring prompt linkage to care for identified clients.

Healthcare workers received continuous mentorship and supportive supervision to improve adherence monitoring, client follow-up, and data quality. Interventions also emphasized male partner involvement and stigma reduction through community dialogues and engagement with traditional and community leaders, fostering an enabling environment for sustained PMTCT uptake.

In the Central Cluster, maternal ART initiation rates increased, early infant diagnosis (EID) coverage expanded, and facility-level data completeness and reporting timeliness improved, enabling more accurate program monitoring and evidence-based decision-making. During the reporting period, 514 newly enrolled pregnant women were tested for HIV, identifying four new positive cases, while three women already aware of their HIV-positive status were promptly linked to care.

ECEWS Ikom and Yakurr implementation teams remain committed to sustaining these gains through ongoing capacity building, routine supportive supervision, and strengthened community engagement.



## ECEWS Leads Integrated Joint Monitoring & Supervisory Visit in Osun State

ECEWS led a joint monitoring and supervisory visit in Osun State in January 2026, bringing together key stakeholders to assess 17 Anti-retroviral Therapy (ART) supported facilities and 37 health facilities. Using an online Kobo Collect tool, the team collected real-time data, ensuring accuracy and efficiency. Service integration assessments were conducted at select Primary Health Centers (PHC), Olode, PHC Osu, and MDG Wakajaye using the CDC checklist.

This visit marked a significant milestone as the first successful integrated joint monitoring effort, showcasing collaboration among stakeholders. ECEWS team played a vital role, with active participation from Mr. George Odotuga (Technical Advisor, Strategic Information), Mr. Ogli Abuh (Senior Technical Officer, Strategic Information), and Dr. Michael Aworeni (Technical Officer, Health System Strengthening & Continuous Quality Improvement). The exercise aimed at strengthening program implementation and improving service delivery. Preliminary findings highlighted areas of strength and opportunities for growth, informing future programming.

The success of this visit demonstrates the power of collaboration and sets the stage for future integrated efforts. We look forward to leveraging insights gained to enhance service delivery across supported facilities.



# Ebonyi State Expands PMTCT Coverage with Global Fund–Supported Onboarding of DUFUTH and NOFI

Ebonyi State has expanded its Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV (PMTCT) services with the onboarding of the David Umahi Federal University Teaching Hospital (DUFUTH) and the National Obstetric Fistula Centre, Abakaliki (NOFI), with support from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS.

The development is aimed at strengthening access to HIV prevention, testing, and treatment services for pregnant and breastfeeding women in high-volume and specialized maternal health facilities, in line with Nigeria's goal of eliminating mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

DUFUTH and NOFI are tertiary and specialized referral centres providing care for women with complex obstetric and

reproductive health needs within Ebonyi State and beyond. Their inclusion in the PMTCT network is expected to increase early HIV testing among pregnant women, ensure timely initiation of antiretroviral therapy, and improve follow-up for HIV-exposed infants.

As part of the onboarding process, healthcare workers in both facilities received orientation on national PMTCT guidelines, HIV testing services, data management, referral systems, and quality assurance procedures. The facilities were also integrated into the state and national HIV monitoring and reporting platforms to support standardized data capture and performance

tracking.

Stakeholders say the expansion will improve PMTCT service coverage, strengthen linkages between maternal health and HIV services, and contribute to a reduction in new pediatric HIV infections in the state.

The onboarding reflects collaboration between the Ebonyi State Ministry of Health, implementing partners, and the Global Fund, with continued supportive supervision and mentorship planned to ensure sustainability of PMTCT services beyond the current grant cycle.



# Why Empowered Caregivers are the True Lifeline for Children Living with HIV

Effective pediatric HIV programming extends beyond clinical protocols; it is sustained by the strength, knowledge, and resilience of caregivers. Within the ECEWS SPEED Project funded by PEPFAR in Osun State, caregiver empowerment has emerged as a critical driver of long-term treatment adherence, child well-being, and sustainable health outcomes.

Prior to the intervention, many caregivers of children living with HIV faced overlapping challenges of economic hardship, social stigma, and the emotional burden of managing complex treatment regimens. These pressures are often translated into missed clinic appointments, treatment interruptions, and inconsistent nutritional care, particularly during periods of social or economic stress.

To address these gaps, the SPEED Project established structured monthly caregiver forums designed to strengthen both clinical understanding and psychosocial resilience. These forums were intentionally created as safe, supportive spaces where caregivers could access clinical literacy, practical training on Antiretroviral Therapy (ART), and peer-led emotional support. By transforming caregiving from an isolated responsibility into a shared experience, the project reduced stigma and reinforced collective problem-solving.

The intervention recognized that caregiver stability is foundational to child health. Through facilitated discussions and training, caregivers gained the confidence and skills required to navigate treatment schedules, manage side effects, and prioritize consistent care despite competing life pressures. The

forums also fostered a sense of belonging and emotional security, strengthening caregivers' capacity to sustain long-term engagement in care.

The results of this approach are evident. Among 200 caregivers participating in the Osun State forums, 98 percent maintained consistent ART clinic attendance for their wards. The project also recorded a reduction in treatment interruptions during school holidays and notable improvements in nutritional care practices. These outcomes reflect empowered caregivers who transitioned from passive recipients of information to active advocates for their children's health.

Recent fluctuations in project timelines have underscored a critical lesson: social support mechanisms are not supplementary services, but essential components of effective HIV care. The health outcomes of children living with HIV are directly linked to the mental, emotional, and economic stability of their caregivers. Disruptions to these support systems risk reversing hard-won gains in adherence and retention.

Sustaining caregiver-focused interventions is therefore vital to achieving durable epidemic control. By embedding social support structures into HIV care models, ECEWS and its partners are reinforcing the human foundation of the health system. Investing in caregivers is an investment in the future of children living with HIV, ensuring not only survival, but stability, dignity, and the opportunity to thrive.



# ECEWS & Enugu State Ministry of Health Conduct Data Verification Exercise



Reliable data is central to effective health programming, guiding decision-making, strengthening accountability, and ensuring that interventions respond to real needs on the ground. Recognizing this, ECEWS, in collaboration with the Enugu State Ministry of Health Project Implementation Unit (PIU), conducted a comprehensive data validation exercise across all 17 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Enugu State on January 15 and 16, 2026.



Prior to the exercise, inconsistencies between facility registers and Monthly Summary Forms (MSF) posed challenges to accurate reporting and program assessment. These gaps limited the ability to fully track progress, allocate resources efficiently, and design targeted interventions.

The data validation exercise brought together LGA teams, data managers, and key project stakeholders to systematically verify reported data against primary source documents. Registers and MSFs were reviewed line by line to assess accuracy, completeness, and consistency. Where discrepancies were identified, corrections were made immediately, and clear guidance was provided to prevent recurrence.



Beyond verification, the exercise served as a hands-on capacity-building opportunity. LGA teams received practical support on best practices in data management, reinforcing the importance of accurate documentation as a tool for transparency, performance monitoring, and improved service delivery.

This collaborative effort reaffirms ECEWS' commitment to data integrity and accountability. By strengthening the reliability of project data, the teams are better positioned to assess outcomes, identify gaps, and implement evidence-based interventions that maximize impact.





## ECEWS, CCCRN, and GoN Empower Adolescents Through Refill Club Care in Yakurr LGA

In a concerted effort to strengthen adolescent HIV care and support services, ECEWS Cross River State (CRS) team, in collaboration with the CCCRN and the Government of Nigeria (GoN), organized an Adolescent Refill Club meeting in Yakurr Local Government Area (LGA) on 16 December 2025. The activity aimed to educate adolescents on HIV prevention, treatment adherence, and positive living, while providing a safe supportive peer environment for young people living with HIV. A total of 27 adolescents actively participated in the session, which served as both a peer support forum and a platform for delivering essential HIV services.

During the meeting, five adolescents received antiretroviral therapy (ART) refills, ensuring uninterrupted access to treatment and reducing the risk of treatment interruption. In addition, one eligible client had a viral load sample collected to assess treatment effectiveness and monitor progress

toward viral suppression, underscoring the program's emphasis on quality care and outcome tracking.

This initiative strengthens the local health system's response to HIV and reaffirms a collective commitment to empowering adolescents in Yakurr LGA to remain healthy, adherent to treatment, and confident in managing their health.

The collaboration between ECEWS, CCCRN, and GoN stakeholders highlights the importance of integrated and multi-sectoral partnerships in improving adolescent health outcomes. By leveraging shared resources and expertise, the partners delivered youth-friendly, comprehensive, and holistic services tailored to the unique needs of adolescents living with HIV.



