



# Caritas Stylus

A Caritas Nigeria Newsletter



Caritas Nigeria's Senior Management Team's Courtesy Visit to IHVN

L-R: Dr. Jude Ilozumba - Program Director of Tuberculosis programs, Rev. Fr. Uchechukwu Obodoechina, PhD - Executive Secretary/CEO of Caritas Nigeria, Dr. Patrick Dakum - CEO of IHVN, Dr. John Oko - Chief of Party, and Cecilia Agrinya-Owan - Senior Advisor, Communications



Caritas Nigeria's Florence Okakwu teaching participants how to prepare soybean powder

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Inauguration of Pioneer Trainers of the Catholic Social Teaching Program

# EDITORIAL

Welcome to another exciting edition of Caritas Stylus!

June has been a significant month for Caritas Nigeria, marked by various impactful activities and initiatives. One of the highlights was the inauguration of the pioneer tutors for the Catholic Social Teaching (CST) program who were trained to equip our staff and partners with a deep understanding of social justice principles which are essential for addressing the complex challenges faced by the communities we serve. By grounding our efforts in these teachings, we ensure that our work is not only effective but also ethical and compassionate.

In line with our commitment to partnerships and collaboration, Caritas Nigeria's senior management team made a courtesy visit to the CEO of the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN). This meeting was pivotal in discussing the ongoing Global Fund-funded tuberculosis program, where IHVN is the principal recipient and Caritas Nigeria is a sub-recipient. The discussions focused on strengthening our collaboration to enhance the effectiveness of the TB program, ensuring better health outcomes for those affected by the disease. We value such partnership-strengthening opportunities because they are crucial to tackling public health challenges more comprehensively.

Our capacity-building and public health improvement activities this month have been diverse and far-reaching. We participated in the National Childhood Tuberculosis (TB) Testing Week across our TB/HIV program states of Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo, reaching over 1,000 children with tuberculosis testing services and sensitization. Our efforts in preventing the transmission of HIV from a mother to her unborn child were highlighted through Baby Shower activities, where expectant mothers received maternal health kits and comprehensive health talks. Demonstrating our commitment to ensuring improved health and social outcomes for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), In Enugu State, we conducted financial literacy training for community-based organizations and gender services focal persons supporting our OVC program in the state, thereby empowering them with the knowledge to manage resources effectively, whereas in Abia State, we convened the OVC technical steering committee meeting to address the challenges of vulnerable children.

We also carried out a Business Systems Review for the ACCESS project, focusing on optimizing our operational processes. Our Baby Shower program, through which we scale up our Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) of HIV program, saw 1,661 individuals, including children, and pregnant women with their partners, screened for HIV across our three program states. Our laboratory commodity management training in Abia, Enugu, and Imo states ensured that our laboratory scientists and technicians were well-equipped to provide comprehensive HIV care and treatment services to clients accessing care in our supported antiretroviral therapy service delivery facilities. Likewise, we trained the champions of the Operation Triple Zero program, a strategy which aims to promote treatment adherence and reduce stigma among adolescents and young people living with HIV in Imo State. The training on best agronomic practices for vulnerable women in Borno State further demonstrated our commitment to holistic community development.

Our observance of global events added a broader dimension to our work. On World Environment Day, we reaffirmed our dedication to environmental sustainability through various awareness and action-oriented activities. World Refugee Day provided an opportunity to highlight the plight of refugees and renew our commitment to supporting displaced populations. The International Day for the Protection of Children emphasized the importance of safeguarding children's rights and well-being, aligning with our ongoing efforts to support vulnerable children and their families.

We hope you find this edition both informative and instructive!

Best wishes,

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# From the Executive Secretary/CEO's Desk

It is with a heavy heart that I begin my message to you by acknowledging the loss the Caritas Nigeria family has endured. On June 1, we paid our last respects to our Data Protection Officer and a cherished member of our Senior Management Team, Cletus Aloke, Esq., fondly known as Barr. Aloke, who gained passage into immortality on April 10, 2024. We honour his memory for his commitment to our cause and the profound impact he had on our mission and community.

This month, we are particularly proud to announce the inauguration of the pioneer tutors for our Catholic Social Teaching (CST) program. This initiative marks a significant milestone in our journey, reinforcing our commitment to integrating CST principles into every facet of our development and humanitarian interventions. In addition, our efforts to strengthen partnerships have been noteworthy. Our recent courtesy visit to the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) exemplifies our dedication to collaborative approaches in addressing public health challenges. This partnership is vital as we continue to enhance our tuberculosis and HIV interventions and improve health outcomes for communities in need.

Moreover, our commemoration of World Environment Day this month was particularly significant. In alignment with the Laudato Si initiatives, we have reaffirmed our commitment to environmental stewardship. Through various activities, we aim to raise awareness and take actionable steps toward environmental sustainability, underscoring the importance of caring for our common home.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement with Caritas Nigeria.

Yours in the service of Caritas,

**Rev. Fr. Uchechukwu Obodoechina, PhD**  
**Executive Secretary/CEO**



## Caritas Nigeria Amplifies Environmental Efforts with Laudato Si-Inspired Initiatives

**A**ligning with the Pope's encyclical, Laudato Si, Caritas Nigeria is intensifying its environmental initiatives to address pressing ecological concerns and ensure the safety of all living beings. Among our eco-friendly efforts are tree-planting activities and the distribution of energy-saving cookstoves to local communities.



Following the World Environment Day celebration, we recently organized a seminar on Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought Resilience. Held at the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, this seminar aimed to build on the awareness generated during the event and explore practical solutions to environmental challenges.

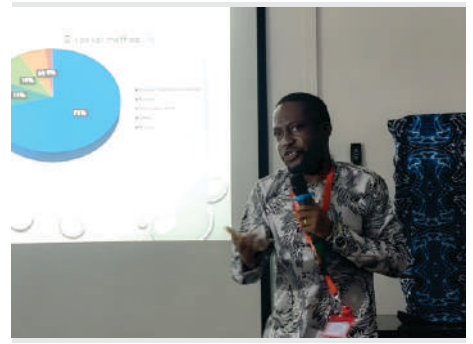
In his speech, Rev. Fr. Zacharia Samjumi, Secretary-General (SG) of the CSN, expressed his joy at seeing young students participate, emphasizing the importance of educating them about their role in preserving the planet. Representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and the Abuja Environmental Protection Board also spoke, highlighting government initiatives such as good agricultural practices, tree planting, and waste management.

Our team provided an overview of our plastic waste recycling projects, including the creation of interlock pavers from sachet water bags and plastic bottles. We also took the opportunity to educate attendees about the Times and Fortunes of Lake Chad. The session concluded with a Q&A segment, allowing participants to share ideas on effective waste management and commit to implementing their new knowledge in their communities.

The seminar was made more engaging with artistic elements; students performed a touching poetic recital on Mother Earth, and members of the Catholic Women's Organization presented a musical rendition of environmental care.



## Photo Gallery



## National Childhood Tuberculosis Testing Week in Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States

In commemoration of the National Tuberculosis Testing Week for Children, which focused on the theme “Check Am Oh!”, Caritas Nigeria, in collaboration with the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) and the Ministries of Health in Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States, conducted a National Tuberculosis Childhood Testing Week.

In Imo State, this initiative benefitted over 300 children from Comprehensive Primary School and Obosima Primary School in the Ohaji community, Egbema LGA, whereas in Ugbodogwu Primary School 1 & 2 in Enugu North LGA, over 300 schoolchildren were screened for TB and the schoolchildren were educated on TB preventive strategies such as maintaining good hygiene, ensuring proper classroom ventilation, and implementing effective infection control measures.

In Abia State, the exercise, which took place at the Lokpa Cattle Market in Lukwesi community within Umunneochi LGA, had over 400 households in attendance, with families bringing their children to benefit from free tuberculosis (TB) testing services. Likewise, In Iziogo community, Izzi LGA of Ebonyi State, our team provided TB testing services to over 200 children who presented at the venue and educated parents and other community members on the signs, symptoms, and prevention of childhood TB.

The comprehensive testing aimed to promptly identify and treat tuberculosis cases, thereby preventing the spread of the disease. Our field team encouraged high-risk groups to get tested for TB, promoting early diagnosis and treatment, and addressing the stigma associated with the disease. Efforts were also made to boost vaccine uptake in TB-prevalent areas and provide support for those affected by TB. In addition to testing, the program also focused on raising awareness about the symptoms, prevention, and treatment of tuberculosis.

The Tuberculosis Testing Week addressed immediate health concerns and fostered a greater understanding and vigilance towards tuberculosis, ultimately contributing to better health outcomes. By emphasizing early detection and treatment, Caritas Nigeria and its partners are making significant strides in the fight against tuberculosis and the commitment to improving public health, particularly in vulnerable communities.

### Photo Gallery



## Photo Gallery



## Preventing Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV through ‘Baby Shower’

Demonstrating our unwavering commitment to managing pediatric HIV by preventing mother-to-child Transmission of HIV, Caritas Nigeria’s regional offices in Abia, Enugu, and Imo States conducted Baby Shower activities organized under the Accelerated Control of HIV Epidemic and Sustainability Solutions (ACCESS) project, funded by the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

To promote maternal and child health, we provided comprehensive health services, including HIV testing and counselling, blood pressure checks, and blood sugar screening, to pregnant women across the three states. Specifically, 413 women in Abia State, 598 in Enugu State, and 384 in Imo State participated in these health initiatives. By delivering much-needed resources directly to those in need, Caritas Nigeria’s Baby Shower program is making a significant impact on maternal health.

In a related development, as part of our continuous efforts to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV under our PEPFAR-funded ACCESS Project, Caritas Nigeria conducted a Baby Shower Activity on June 26, at Holy Cross Parish, Iji-Nike, in Enugu East local government area.

The event, which took place yesterday, began with a prayer session led by the Assistant Parish Priest. Our team provided an integrated health talk to the expectant mothers and their partners, offering a comprehensive approach to pregnancy support and guidance.

We also conducted HIV screenings for 266 individuals, including children, and presented each expectant mother with a maternal health kit to ensure safe delivery and promote hygiene. The health outreach was made even more engaging with a dance competition for the women and their partners, helping to alleviate stress and make the event more enjoyable.

### Photo Gallery



## Photo Gallery



## Photo Gallery



## Caritas Nigeria Enhances Financial Literacy for Orphans and Vulnerable Children Support in Enugu State



**L**eaning on funding support from PEPFAR through the CDC, Caritas Nigeria's Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) program team in Enugu State conducted a comprehensive five-day workshop on Child-Optimized Financial Education Management. The workshop brought together representatives of Community-based Organizations and gender focal persons from the State Ministry of Gender Affairs and Social Development across Abia, Imo, and Enugu States.

Aiming to better support OVC beneficiaries through effective financial planning and management, the workshop enhanced the capacities of participants' capacity in assisting families in preparing for emergencies, planning for future business ventures, and encouraging personal savings. The training provided tools and strategies for comprehensive financial planning, addressing both immediate and long-term financial goals.

This initiative is part of our efforts to secure the economic well-being of OVC and their households by fostering greater economic stability and resilience among them. By improving the financial literacy of Community-based Organizations and Case Managers, the program seeks to empower families to make informed decisions about financial products, ultimately contributing to their long-term economic well-being. Participants left the workshop with a deeper understanding of financial planning, ready to impart this knowledge to the families they support, ensuring that OVC beneficiaries have a stable and promising future.



## Commemoration of the International Day for the Protection of Children



The International Day for the Protection of Children is observed globally on June 1, serving as a platform to promote and enhance the welfare and well-being of children. This day underscores the importance of raising public awareness about children's rights and needs, striving towards a brighter future for all.

In Ogoja, Cross River State, Caritas Nigeria, supported by the United Nations High Commissioner

for Refugees (UNHCR), organized a series of events to commemorate a significant occasion. At Government Secondary School and St. Eugene's Primary School in Ukende, Ogoja LGA, our team implementing the Protection program, conducted a lively quiz competition that enlightened the school children about their rights and protection needs.



Participants received awards while school heads expressed their gratitude to Caritas Nigeria for orchestrating a successful celebration. The event shed light on critical issues such as child labour, abuse, and the lack of access to education and healthcare, emphasizing the community's collective effort to promote the welfare and well-being of its children.



## Enhancing Healthcare Services in Lejja Community

Our Executive Secretary/CEO, Rev. Fr. Uchechukwu Obodoechina, PhD, supported by our staff in Enugu State, conducted a significant health outreach at St. Raphael's Catholic Church in Lejja, Nsukka LGA from May 31 to June 1, 2024. The exercise aimed to provide essential clinical services to the Lejja community, focusing on comprehensive health screenings.

Accordingly, our medical team conducted HIV and TB screenings using GeneXpert technology, blood sugar tests, malaria diagnostic tests, and weight measurements. Alongside these services, the pharmacy staff offered drug counselling, dispensed necessary medications to clients with prescriptions, and led integrated health talks addressing men, women, and children in the community.

In total, 455 individuals received critical health services from the exercise. Notably, our team swiftly managed an emergency case involving an elderly patient with acute urinary retention, performing catheterization on-site and referring the patient to one of Caritas Nigeria's service delivery facilities in the state for further treatment.

This initiative underscores our commitment to improving healthcare access and outcomes in underserved communities. By offering a wide range of medical services and education, Caritas Nigeria not only addresses immediate health needs but also empowers communities with the knowledge to maintain and improve their health in the long term.



## Business Systems Review of Caritas Nigeria's ACCESS Project



In a proactive move towards enhancing operational efficiency and transparency within our ACCESS Project, our team from our headquarters conducted a comprehensive Business Systems Review (BSR) in our Enugu field office. Spanning from May 21 to June 7, 2024, this rigorous assessment aimed to optimize systems and processes critical to the project's success. The BSR encompassed a thorough review of various operational facets, including asset registers, inventory lists, financial reports, procurement records, and funds advance schedules.

Led by Caritas Nigeria's expert team from the country office, the assessment was instrumental in identifying bottlenecks, pinpointing improvement areas, and reinforcing accountability across all levels of project management, thereby streamlining operations and ensuring adherence to best practices. The exercise fostered greater transparency and efficiency so that we are better equipped to deliver impactful outcomes under the ACCESS Project.



## Advancing Laboratory Services through Improved Healthcare Commodities Management

In a concerted effort to bolster healthcare delivery under the ACCESS Project, Caritas Nigeria conducted a specialized training program for a total of 53 laboratory technicians and scientists working in our HIV service delivery facilities in Enugu and Imo States. From June 3 to 7, 2024, 24 participants in Imo State and 29 in Enugu State underwent intensive capacity-building sessions aimed at optimizing laboratory management practices.

The training curriculum focused on equipping participants with essential skills in healthcare commodities management to ensure the seamless operation of laboratory services. Practical sessions provided hands-on experience in calculating stock levels and managing inventory to mitigate stockouts effectively. This initiative aimed to enhance the availability and accessibility of medical equipment, improve the quality of diagnostic testing, and streamline the tracking and management of commodities within healthcare facilities.

The workshop also centred on ingraining the principles of the ‘six rights’ of logistics management: ensuring the right product, in the right quantity, in optimal condition, delivered to the correct place, at the appropriate time, and to the intended recipient. These principles are foundational in maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of health supply chains, particularly critical in the context of managing HIV test kits and other essential commodities.

By sharpening their expertise in maintaining accurate inventory records, tracking transfers, and adhering to storage protocols, participants were empowered to uphold the highest standards of laboratory operations. They were immersed in practical exercises and theoretical modules that focused on monitoring HIV test kit consumption patterns, implementing robust tracking mechanisms, and strategizing for the uninterrupted supply of essential health commodities. The sessions made them better equipped to navigate the complexities of inventory management, anticipate supply needs, and ensure timely and reliable delivery of critical health supplies to the communities they serve.



## Photo Gallery



## Strengthening Community Support and Partnerships for HIV Care



To fortify the capacity of community-based organizations to support people living with HIV (PLHIV) within their communities, on 6 June, Caritas Nigeria convened a one-day workshop that brought together key stakeholders, including Youwin Health and Rights Initiative, Initiative for Young Women's Health and Development (IWAD), and Hero's Health Community Support Initiative, partnering with us to implement the PEPFAR-funded ACCESS Project in Enugu State.

The workshop focused on equipping CBOs with strategic insights and resources for effective HIV care delivery. Participants engaged deeply in discussions and practical sessions aimed at addressing pertinent challenges such as HIV treatment interruptions, enhancing case-finding strategies, and ensuring sustained retention in HIV care. A significant outcome of the workshop was the development of personalized action plans tailored to the unique needs of each community served by the CBOs.

The workshop not only strengthened partnerships but also underscored the critical role of community engagement in advancing sustainable health outcomes. Moving forward, these empowered CBOs are poised to increasingly drive positive change and enhance the quality of life for individuals living with HIV in Enugu State and beyond.



## OVC Technical Steering Committee Meeting in Abia State

On 19 June, our team in Abia State held the Orphans and Vulnerable Children's (OVC) Technical Steering Committee meeting, bringing together diverse stakeholders committed to the welfare of children within the HIV and OVC sphere. The meeting was a testament to our tireless efforts to improve the lives of children in the state.

The gathering saw goodwill messages from various stakeholders who lauded our dedication to promoting children's welfare. A significant highlight of the meeting was a technical brainstorming session, aimed at identifying existing gaps within the OVC program and addressing the challenges faced by orphans and vulnerable children.

Among the notable attendees were the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Ogechi Oguama, and representatives from the State Agency for the Control of AIDS (SACA), the Association of OVC NGOs in Nigeria, the Child Protection Network, International Federation of Female Lawyers, NAPTIP Nigeria and Behind Bar Initiative (BBI).

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment from all parties to continue working together, leveraging their collective expertise to create a safer and more supportive environment for children in Abia State. This collaborative effort underscores the importance of united action in addressing the needs of orphans and vulnerable children, ensuring they receive the care and protection they deserve.

### Photo Gallery



## Photo Gallery



## Empowering Women through Agronomic Practices for Sustainable Growth

In a dedicated effort to bolster agricultural productivity and sustainability, Caritas Nigeria trained 500 vulnerable women on Best Agronomic Practices (BAP) through the Emergency Food Assistance and Protection Project. Supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs through Caritas Norway, this initiative aims to improve farming techniques, enhance nutritional status, and increase household incomes for participants.

The training sessions, held from June 10 – 13, 2024, took place in the communities of Wuran and Tshuyam Zimta in Biu Local Government Area (LGA), and Bila and Gusi in Kwaya Kusar LGA, Borno State. The program focused on equipping the women with vital knowledge and skills in the production of organic fertilizers, bio-pesticides, and herbicides, enabling them to improve their agricultural yields and contribute to their communities' food security. To further support the beneficiaries, our team provided them with essential farm inputs such as vegetable seedlings, maize, rice, groundnut, and organic insecticide powder, thereby promoting economic stability and self-reliance.

### Photo Gallery



## Commemoration of the World Refugee Day in Mubi Adamawa State



On June 20, our team in Mubi, Adamawa State under the UNHCR-funded Refugee Response/General Protection Project, commemorated World Refugee Day with the theme: “For a World Where Refugees are Welcome”. This event celebrated the resilience and courage of refugees and honoured their invaluable contributions to our communities.

The head of the UNHCR Nigeria Yola sub-office, Soulaïman Hajjaj, joined in the festivities, participating in a dance celebration that set the tone for a day filled with various activities. These included a road walk accompanied by refugees and the boy’s brigade band, a tree planting exercise, a craft and entrepreneurship showcase of life skills acquired by the refugees, a novelty football match, and vibrant dance and drama performances.

A poignant moment of silence was observed to honour asylum seekers who lost their lives during their journeys to safety. The positive energy and enthusiasm of the day were truly inspiring, with refugees expressing profound appreciation for the solidarity and humanitarian services provided by UNHCR and Caritas Nigeria since their arrival in Nigeria.

The celebration was a powerful reminder of the importance of welcoming refugees and supporting them as they rebuild their lives. It highlighted the collective effort to create a more inclusive and compassionate world, where refugees are not just seen as survivors but as integral members of our communities contributing to their strength and diversity.

# Inauguration of Pioneer Trainers of the Catholic Social Teaching Program



a crucial framework for service and societal contribution.

At the reception, which began with opening remarks by the CSN Secretary General, Rev. Fr. Zacharia Samjumi, the Vice Chancellor of Veritas University Abuja, Rev. Fr. Prof. Hyacinth Ichoku, highlighted the significance of CST in promoting ethical leadership and responsible citizenship. The Country Representative of CRS, represented by CRS' Capacity Building and Partnership Coordinator, Anselm Nwoke, noted the need for continuous collaboration to ensure the sustainability and impact of CST initiatives.

In a significant event that underscored the importance of moral guidance in societal development, Caritas Nigeria, in collaboration with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Veritas University Abuja, held an inauguration ceremony for the pioneer trainers of the Catholic Social Teaching (CST) program on June 21, 2024. This initiative, designed by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), aims to promote the dignity of the human person and foster social justice and peace.

The graduands were presented with certificates and charged with propagating the principles of CST by disseminating knowledge to other staff of the CBCN agencies. Afterwards, the event concluded with closing remarks by our Executive Secretary/CEO, Rev. Fr. Uchechukwu Obodoechina, PhD, marking a successful milestone in promoting CST's principles across Nigeria

The event commenced with a Holy Mass celebrated by His Eminence, John Cardinal Olorunfemi Onaiyekan, at the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria. In his homily, His Eminence emphasized the central role of Catholic Social Teaching in evangelization, describing it as a moral compass that guides individuals on how to live, function, and thrive in society. He encouraged the graduands to view CST as

The CST program highlights the collaborative efforts of Caritas Nigeria, CRS, and Veritas University in fostering a deeper understanding, implementation, and mainstreaming of Catholic Social Teaching in workplaces, schools, and Churches. This initiative is a testament to our commitment to ethical leadership and social justice, aiming to create a society rooted in the dignity of every human person and dedicated to peace and justice.

## Photo Gallery



## Enhancing Tuberculosis Interventions in Nigeria: Caritas Nigeria Pays a Courtesy Visit to the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN)



underscored the importance of collaborative efforts in tackling tuberculosis and each organisation's pivotal role in the program's success.

The CEO of IHVN expressed appreciation for Caritas Nigeria's dedication and contributions to the program. He acknowledged the impact of the partnership in improving tuberculosis detection, treatment, and prevention. Both parties reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining a robust partnership, focusing on enhancing program outcomes through continuous collaboration, resource sharing, and leveraging each organization's strengths.

Accompanying Rev. Fr. Obodoechina were key members of the Caritas Nigeria team: Dr. John Oko, Chief of Party for the ACCESS Project, Dr. Jude A. Ilozumba, Director of Tuberculosis Programs, and Cecilia Inyagbe Agrinya, Senior Advisor of Communications. Their presence highlighted the multidisciplinary approach Caritas Nigeria is taking to address TB, emphasizing the integration of project management, program direction, and strategic communication in their efforts. The meeting concluded on a positive note, with both organizations reaffirming their commitment to the shared goal of eradicating TB in Nigeria.

On 24 June, our Senior Management Team, led by our Executive Secretary/CEO, Rev. Fr. Uchechukwu Obodoechina, PhD, conducted a courtesy visit to the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN). The primary objective of this visit was to discuss and strengthen the ongoing partnership between both organizations concerning the Global Fund-funded tuberculosis program, where IHVN serves as the principal recipient and Caritas Nigeria operates as a sub-recipient.

In a meeting with the CEO of IHVN, Dr. Patrick Dakum, Caritas Nigeria's delegation highlighted their achievements and challenges in implementing the tuberculosis program. They emphasised their commitment to the project and shared insights on their approach to effectively manage resources, engage communities, and ensure that the program reaches its intended beneficiaries. The discussions

The meeting concluded with a mutual agreement to hold regular review sessions to monitor progress, address challenges promptly, and strategize on innovative approaches to achieve the program's goals. The courtesy visit reinforced the shared mission of IHVN and Caritas Nigeria to combat tuberculosis and improve public health outcomes in Nigeria through sustained partnership and collective action.



## Photo Gallery



## Strengthening the Operation Triple Zero Program in Imo State



To promote adherence to HIV treatment and achieve viral suppression among adolescents living with HIV, our team from the regional offices in Abia, Abuja, Imo, and Enugu recently trained participants of the Operation Triple Zero (OTZ) initiative in Imo State. OTZ is a support group that encourages adolescents and young people living with HIV (AYPLHIV) to commit to three critical goals: zero missed appointments, zero missed doses of medication and zero viral load.

Throughout the four-day training which spanned from 19 through 22 June, the Caritas Nigeria team provided counsel to AYPLHIV on overcoming stigma and discrimination, emphasizing the importance of reporting any such instances to their caregivers or counsellors. The participants acquired essential life skills, including etiquette, effective peer communication, critical thinking, and healthy living. Additionally, they learned about soybean production, highlighting its nutritional and economic benefits.

The training sessions included reviews of the OTZ group's appointment tracking documentation, success story reporting, monthly club meeting records, and various fun fair activities. This comprehensive capacity-building effort significantly boosted the confidence of the young participants, reinforcing their belief in their unlimited potential and aspirations. The training culminated in a joyous cultural dance, through which the participants expressed their gratitude and



## Fortifying HIV Interventions in Imo State Ahead of Program Transition to the Government

On June 26, Caritas Nigeria participated in a one-day health sector review meeting convened by the Imo State Ministry of Health. The primary goal of this meeting was to facilitate the seamless transition of the ongoing HIV prevention, treatment, and care program to the Imo State government by 2026.

During the meeting, the Imo State Ministry of Health presented its performance updates, highlighting key achievements, existing gaps, and strategies to improve health outcomes in the region. One significant treatment barrier reported was poor adherence to medications, largely due to the stigma and discrimination faced by people living with HIV (PLHIV). Thereafter, Caritas Nigeria's team provided an overview of our extensive efforts in improving access to HIV treatment, reducing stigma,



and supporting PLHIV.

Notable stakeholders at the gathering included the Imo State Commissioner for Health, Dr Success Prosper Ohayagha, as well as representatives from WHO Nigeria, the Imo State Health Insurance Agency, the State Primary Health Care Development Agency, and the State Agency for the Control of AIDS.

### Photo Gallery





## Mourning the Demise of a Valued Team Member



On April 10, 2024, Caritas Nigeria was profoundly shaken by the tragic news of the passing of one of our dedicated staff members, Cletus Alope, Esq. Until his demise, Barr. Alope was a member of our Senior Management Team (SMT) and a pillar of strength and wisdom as the organization's Legal Adviser and Data Protection Officer. His deep expertise in legal matters and unwavering commitment to data protection were vital in navigating the organization through countless challenges and ensuring compliance with stringent regulatory standards.

On June 1, some SMT members joined Barr. Alope's family to pay their final respects to a man whose dedication and integrity left an indelible mark on all who knew him. As they stood together, the memories of his meticulous nature and his unyielding attention to detail flooded their minds. His approach to every responsibility was marked by a rare combination of thoroughness and ethical rigour, qualities that endeared him to his colleagues and made his contributions invaluable.

In the moment of grief, the Caritas Nigeria family grappled with the void left by Barr. Alope's departure. Yet, amid the sorrow, there was a deep sense of gratitude for having had the privilege to work alongside such an exceptional individual. His legacy, defined by his relentless pursuit of excellence and his commitment to the mission of Caritas Nigeria, will continue to inspire those who remain.



# Laudato si'



*Plant a Tree Today...  
Save Our Earth!*

