

# THE SUSTAINABLE FINANCING INITIATIVE IN NIGERIA

Funded by the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Sustainable Financing Initiative for HIV/AIDS (SFI) aims to increase sustainability of the HIV response by promoting shared financial responsibility with host country governments. Since 2014, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has implemented SFI in 16 countries and two regional programs, with a budget of nearly \$48 million.

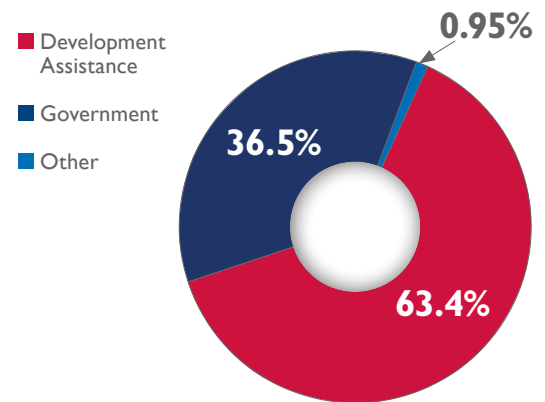
Nigeria has the second largest population of people living with HIV (PLHIV) in the world, with about 1.8 million persons affected in 2020. In 2018, the prevalence of HIV among people ages 15 to 49 was 1.3 percent. In 2020, an estimated 94,648 people were newly infected with HIV and 44,478 died from an AIDS-related illness.<sup>1</sup> The Government of Nigeria is committed to increasing domestic resources to reduce the burden of HIV/AIDS, yet gaps in human resources, overburdened healthcare facilities, and challenges in the supply chain have been obstacles to controlling the epidemic.

In collaboration with the Government of Nigeria and relevant stakeholders, between 2016 and 2020, SFI strengthened the capacity of private sector actors to provide high quality HIV healthcare services and procure essential commodities, provided technical assistance to government officials to enhance financial management, and supported the integration of HIV services into states' social health insurance schemes. These efforts represent important milestones in improving the sustainability of Nigeria's HIV response.

## AT A GLANCE

HIV/AIDS Response Funding Sources in 2017<sup>2</sup>

**Nigeria total: \$410 million**



## How SFI Contributes to a Sustainable HIV Response



SFI **expanded access** to HIV services and antiretroviral (ARV) treatment. A total of **91,239 ARV pick-up visits** at community pharmacies occurred over three years.



HIV spending increased by **\$1.7 million** in Lagos State from 2017 to 2018.



SFI strengthened the capacity of public and private sector actors to mobilize resources for a **more integrated and sustainable HIV response**.

PHOTO: ESIMAJE MICHAEL ONOSEME



HIV/AIDS Testing and counseling

## Spotlight: Making Health Care Accessible

By using community pharmacies to support the distribution of ARV treatment, SFI leveraged the capacity of the private sector to increase PLHIV access to essential medicines. As a result of this activity, 15,266 clients accessed ARVs through 320 community pharmacies in Lagos, Akwa Ibom, Cross River and Rivers States, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Both pharmacists and clients were pleased with this service, citing shorter wait times, greater discretion, and more profits for the vendors.

*Clients find the service is more convenient. "I don't have to wake up early to go and queue up before collecting my drugs," one pharmacy client said. Another client noted that the community pharmacy serves patients better. "It has more privacy," the client said. "It saves time."*

<sup>1</sup> PEPFAR (2020). Nigeria Country Operational Plan (COP) 2020. Strategic Direction Summary. March 18, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) (2020). Financing Global Health Visualization. Seattle, WA: IHME, University of Washington.

BETWEEN 2016 AND 2020, SFI FOCUSED ON IMPROVING THREE KEY AREAS IN NIGERIA: PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT, AND FINANCIAL PROTECTION. AS A RESULT OF THIS INITIATIVE, FUNDS HAVE BEEN CHANNLED TO COUNTRY-LED EFFORTS TO FURTHER MOBILIZE DOMESTIC RESOURCES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF PLHIV.

## Public Financial Management

To enhance the Government of Nigeria's ownership of the HIV response, SFI provided technical assistance to help develop the HIV Domestic Resource Mobilization Strategy, which calls for greatly increasing federal funding to states for HIV programs. SFI also worked with government officials in Kano and Lagos states to improve their budget planning, which resulted in a **\$1.7 million increase in spending in Lagos from 2016 to 2018, and \$1.0 million in Kano and \$1.7 million in Lagos allocated for the HIV response from 2019 to 2020.**

## Private Sector Engagement

Prior to SFI's work, Nigeria's private sector delivered over half of non-HIV health services, but played a minor role in HIV service provision. **SFI conducted market analyses and strengthened the capacity of the private sector to expand service delivery** to help PLHIV get the health care they need. SFI's support for private clinics and hospitals increased HIV testing and treatment at 117 facilities. Five new fast track clinics, or private wings of public hospitals, that provide premium care to clients who can afford to pay, provided care and treatment for 1,485 PLHIV.

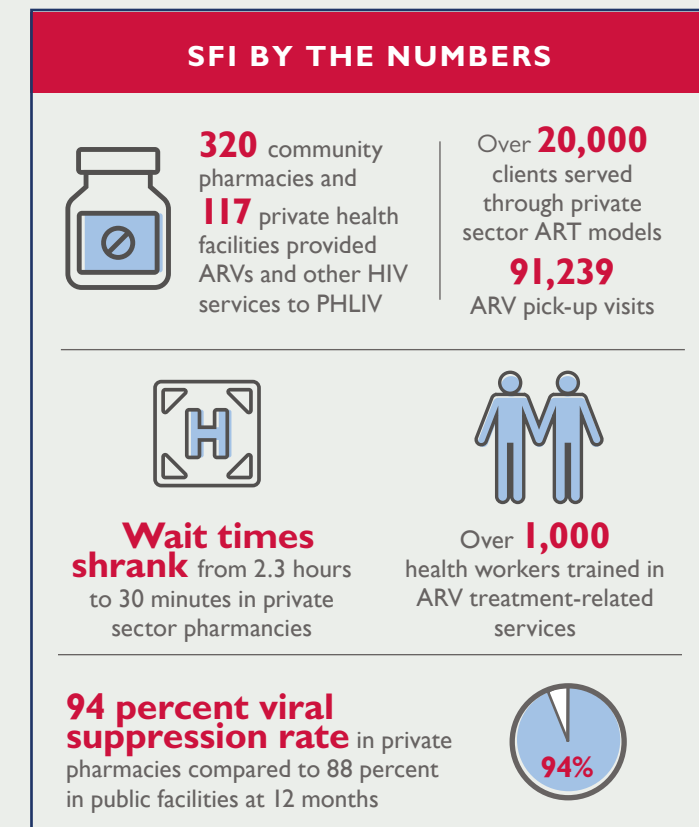
**SFI fostered innovative partnerships with private sector laboratories and lab equipment manufacturers** to improve the procurement and distribution of viral load testing for PLHIV in Lagos and Rivers States.

**Engagements with private pharmacists and clinics expanded access to care in the private sector.** SFI built the capacity of 624 healthcare workers and 471 community pharmacists for delivering ARV treatment and ARV refill services, and negotiated with HIV self-test kit distributors to facilitate private pharmacies' access to kits at reduced prices. These pharmacies reported high client satisfaction and superior clinical outcomes for HIV treatment. Clients experienced shorter waiting times (30 minutes, compared to 2.3 hours in public facilities) and **private sector pharmacies retained 97 percent of clients at 12 months, compared to 74 percent retention in the public facilities.** After being piloted in four states, the model is being scaled up to other USAID states and replicated in other countries throughout the continent.

## Financial Protection

SFI supported analysis, advocacy, and engagement with authorities in Lagos and Kano states to help develop a roadmap for integrating HIV services into the state's social health insurance scheme. Lagos' target would cover 50 percent of the population by 2025. As of September 2020, SFI's support helped enroll 200,000 persons and contract 40 HIV facilities in Lagos.

The success of SFI's work in pilot states has attracted much interest. **SFI's work at the national level created a roadmap**



**that was endorsed by the national health insurance scheme and which other states can follow to integrate HIV into their insurance schemes.**

SFI supported advocacy and evidence generation aimed at the sustained elimination of formal and informal user fees. An SFI-supported survey found that one-quarter of PLHIV were charged fees for HIV services in the public sector in 2019. This finding sets a baseline that will be used to monitor user fee elimination moving forward.

## SUMMARY

SFI's activities in Nigeria demonstrate how targeted engagement with the private sector, evidence-based planning and decision-making, and access to social health insurance contribute to a more sustainable and client-centered HIV response. These successful programs implemented in a few states can be scaled nationwide for wider impact.