

## 2022 Quarter 4 Newsletter

### West Africa AIDS Foundation & International Healthcare Center

2022 Quarter 4

#### Glad Star Ministry & Star Ghana Matching fund for IHCC's HM= HB



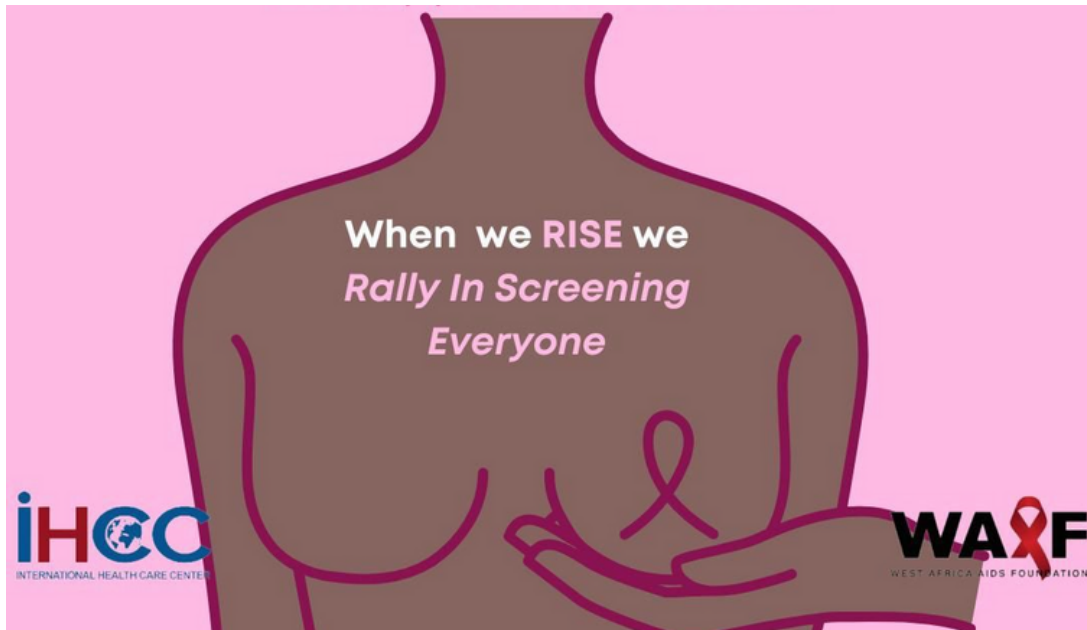
**Clients seated in the HM=HB Session**

The Healthy Mother Equals Healthy Baby (HM=HB) project has been ongoing for over a decade with support from the GladStar ministry in the USA. This program has educated and supported pregnant and lactating women living with HIV who receive care at the International Health Care Centre (IHCC). In November 2022, the STAR Ghana matching fund joined the Gladstar ministry to collaboratively fund this project. This has enabled us to increase coverage of beneficiaries.

The program includes periodic meetings where, nurses, nutritionists, psychologists and other professionals give talks to lactating mothers and pregnant women about nutritious, yet cost-effective eating habits for a healthy, yet inexpensive lifestyle. They are also taught the importance of keeping their surroundings clean to avoid environmentally borne illnesses for mother and child as well as educated on psychological topics pertaining to HIV, pregnancy and being HIV positive and pregnant. Pregnant women also enjoy the opportunity to learn from breastfeeding mothers in preparation towards safe delivery of their babies HIV free, healthy, and strong. These lessons continue all the way to the postpartum period, preparing them to provide proper care to their infants to ensure both mother and child stay healthy and strong. As part of these activities, Q and A sessions allow for participants to ask health workers questions and get answers to any concerns they might have. The beneficiaries also get the opportunity to share their ideas and problems and then deliberate on solutions to issues that are common to them.

The Healthy Mother equals Healthy baby monthly meetings are considered a form of support group opportunity since all the beneficiaries are persons living with HIV. Importantly, this meeting together provides a safe space where stigma of any kind is not tolerated. Each time beneficiaries meet, they are sent home with nutritious food items put together by a nutritionist and which consists of items like eggs, rice, oil, milo, milk, fruits and vegetables. These food items not only assist the direct beneficiaries but goes a long way to support their other household members including children which helps reduce economic burdens almost all of them face.

## PINK OCTOBER Awareness at IHCC



October is globally recognized as breast cancer awareness month and this year, WAAF's clinic, the International Health Care Centre (IHCC) celebrated the occasion with awareness creation activities. This included sensitizing and educating men and especially women about breast cancer and the need for regular breasts examinations. The IHCC was festively decorated in pink balloons and banners to drive attention to the facility and the available free breast screening examinations. During the month of October 2022, IHCC screened 26 clients for breast abnormalities and 6 clients were referred for further diagnostic testing and treatment. A major drawback to testing was the shyness of visitors to have the screenings conducted even though the facility offered a very private setting for the activity. In solidarity, all staff, interns and volunteers wore pink ribbons on their chests to denote the occasion. The pretty ribbons were also available for all visitors to the facility.

## CHAG CSS CLM Data Review Meeting

Based on WAAF's impressive work on a recent Community Led Monitoring (CLM) pilot project within a team made up of NAP+ Ghana, UNAIDS Ghana and the NACP Ghana, the Christian Health Association of Ghana (CHAG), invited WAAF to jointly review data tools in preparation for the next phase of CLM on the Global Fund Community System Strengthening (CSS) project. This component of the project seeks to empower the target population of the CSS project to monitor project implementation by collecting data from PLHIV and TB Clients, key target beneficiaries of the project, as well as care givers who provide care to persons living with HIV and TB clients in project implementation sites in Ghana. The workshop covered monitoring data collection tools (interview guides) for this project. The subject matter of the tools covers quality, availability and access to HIV and TB care and treatment services. It is WAAF's hope that with such validated tools by various experts, complete cycles of Community Led Monitoring activities can be done for enhanced quality of care for persons living with HIV, TB and both.





## EpiC Refresher Training



**WAAF EpiC Team and volunteers seated in the training**

Between the 21st – 25th of November 2022, the WAAF EpiC team together with the FHI 360 EpiC Ghana team conducted two refresher trainings for EpiC project staff. One was a 3- day training for Peer Educators and mobilisers and another, a 2-day training for PrEP champions and Lay Counsellors. These activities were necessitated as a requirement for implementation of the just begun EpiC phase III. These training courses were to refresh the knowledge of key players in the implementation process and update them on the goals of the project and their specific roles and strategies to successfully complete the EpiC project. The training also addressed the bottlenecks encountered in the previous years of implementation in Phase I and II. The activities also presented a great opportunity to share updates on recent changes made to the HIVST and PrEP implementation guidelines. This was a brilliant opportunity to prepare the team as they started to work on the project.

## In-house Staff training on Improving Service delivery to Vulnerable groups

In October 2022, WAAF's Programs Manager GF NFM III project Coordinator and Gender focal person; Phinehas Kissiedu Ayeh took the HQ staff through an inhouse training on Providing KP Competent HIV Services to Key & Vulnerable Populations. This training was to make our team KP competent for them to appreciate the needs of vulnerable groups to provide tailored services for improved health outcomes. At the end of the training, participants demonstrated an understanding of vulnerable issues and the use of the right/ appropriate language in the issues and provision of services to key and vulnerable populations.



# West Africa AIDS Foundation & International Health Care Center

WAD 2022

## Community ARV Refill DSD Project



As part of the roll out of innovative differentiated service delivery where clients remain at the center, WAAF's onsite clinic; the International Health Care Centre in Haatso, was approached by CHAG to join the facilities piloting the community refill project. Under this project, clients who are living with HIV and are stable and virally suppressed on treatment have the opportunity to get ARV refills at community level within selected pharmacies. The project started with the selection of pharmacies which was followed by a week's training on ARVs, stigma and discrimination, confidentiality, and proper documentation when it comes to records keeping in HIV treatment. So far IHCC works with 2 pharmacies and have successfully referred 35 well established clients to the pharmacies who have successfully picked their medications (ARVs). Picking up ARV refill at community level allows for clients to not necessarily come to the health facility / clinic for a period of at least 3 months if there is absolutely no need for that. In the event, there is a need for facility level visit, the clinic where they are registered is always available to them. Clients, however, remain on scheduled facility level visit appointments for other services such as routine laboratory tests and periodic doctor-check-in appointments. WAAF / IHCC are already thinking of supporting the country to move to the next level where through Telehealth clients will be able to see their doctors when and where they need care.



The team at the West Africa AIDS Foundation and its onsite clinic; the International Health Care Centre have for many years, joined other organizations in HIV to commemorate the World AIDS Day Celebration. The celebration presents the unique opportunity for public and private partners to spread awareness about the status of the HIV pandemic and encourage more progress in HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care around the world. On December 1, 2022, WAAF and IHCC head office staff joined the Ghana AIDS Commission and other partners at a National Durbar to celebrate World AIDS Day 2022. This took place at the Forecourt of the state house in Accra, Ghana. The WAAF IHCC team carried out HIV testing and counseling, blood pressure screening, condom, and lubricant distribution as well as the exhibition of our work over the years spanning of photos, and videos to keep all persons present engaged when they walk by our stand. WAAF's branch offices in the Central region, Western region and Northern region were not left out as they also carried out similar activities in solidarity towards WAD celebrations on the regional level by partnering with the various District Health Directorates and the GAC technical support units (TSU) of the various regions in Ghana where our offices and projects are being implemented. These presented the opportunity for people to know their HIV status by testing and for people to access condoms, lubricants, IEC materials including demonstrations of the right way to wear a condom.



## West Africa AIDS Foundation & International Health Care Center

### Annual Time with Accra North Circuit Methodist Women Fellowship



The Accra North Circuit Methodist women fellowship have for several years conducted an annual visit to spend time with, pray for and make donations to clients of WAAF's clinic, the International Health Care Centre (IHCC) in Accra Haatso. During these visits, they listen to the experiences of people living with HIV and how they cope with the condition amidst the many challenges. This interaction continues to give them insights into areas they can better support clients during subsequent visits. These donations have continuously helped in improving the nutritional needs of our clients. The year 2022 was no exception as the fellowship showed up in their numbers colorfully to make merry with our clients followed by a generous donation. They also thanked the staff of the International Health Care Centre for their continuous and consistent support in improving the lives of both PLHIV and non-PLHIV.



### Effective PrEP Education



Akua Otiwaa Bediako (not real name) is a WAAF case manager in the Nzema East Municipality where the West Africa AIDS Foundation (WAAF) implements the USAID Strengthening the Care Continuum Project.

Akonu, a community within the municipality has a site of Female Sex Worker (FSW) peers who do not believe in orthodox health care delivery (mainstream hospitals and clinics for diagnosis and treatment). Instead, the system of choice is the traditional health care delivery system, comprising herbal medicines and spiritual divinations popularly known as Nakaba. The general mindset of this population is that every sickness is spiritual and is not best addressed by orthodox health care. One day, Otiwaa reached out to this community to offer education and testing for HIV. Unfortunately, the peers were reluctant to accept these services because of their mindset about orthodox methods of diagnosis and treatment. However, with persistent HIV education and counselling, Otiwaa managed to pique their interest. Being high-risk population, she highlighted the benefits of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to the community. The benefits of PrEP appeared to be favorable to the peers, leading to their interest in testing and subsequent enrollment. Thankfully, the entire site tested non-reactive and a 100% enrollment on PrEP was achieved. Thanks to effective education on testing and PrEP, this KP community who initially clung to their beliefs against orthodox healthcare delivery were successfully tested for HIV and enrolled on PrEP, a life-saving change in mindset and behavior.

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### SHELTER HOME PROJECT with CHAG



There is some literature that back that especially HIV positive women have experienced some level of violence by either a partner or someone important / close to them and even that many of such ones perceive that violence is the direct cause of their HIV serostatus. There is also evidence that supports the increase of gender and intimate partner violence during the COVID19 era when lockdowns, economic hardships and extreme fear were at their peak. These and more led to the need for shelter homes that provide support to victims of Gender based and Intimate partner violence, to be better equipped in especially the COVID19/post COVID19 era. The initiative is led by the Christian Health Association of Ghana (CHAG) with financial support from the Global Fund. Under this project, CHAG contracted WAAF to procure logistics for and provide other supports to 4 shelter homes namely, Ark Foundation, Pearl Safe Haven, Gynsung and Domestic Violence Shelter. 10 regional Legal Aid commission offices in Ghana were also provided with logistics. The project started with the procurement of logistics to enable the smooth running of the shelters and to equip the Legal Aid Commission to better support the survivors in pleading their cases in court. It is to also make survivors comfortable during their time in the shelter home. Items like mattresses, refrigerators, television sets, desktop computers, laptops, printers, etc, have since been delivered to all but one of the shelter homes and those for the Legal Aid Offices have all also been delivered to the Head office in Accra to be dispatched to the various regional offices. In addition to logistical support to the shelters, the project also provides support for transportation refund and communication for volunteers who support in caring for survivors of the shelter homes. Sanitary and stationary support as well as case management support is also given to cater for the health, legal and feeding of survivors of the shelters. So far, the three shelter homes have admitted a total of 40 survivors of Gender Based Violence and Intimate Partner violence including children and teenagers. WAAF will continue to provide support to the shelter homes through the CHAG implemented GF NFM III project under the COVID-19 response mechanism.

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## West Africa AIDS Foundation & International Health Care Center

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### Photo Gallery





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## Photo Gallery





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# GET INTOUCH WITH WAAF & IHCC

WAAF and IHCC enjoy servicing the people of Ghana; we continue to ensure our services are available to all and that absolutely no one is left behind. We also enjoy sharing our experiences as we continue our journey in the areas of health in Ghana focusing on HIV and TB. You can reach us and keep in touch with us via any of the under-listed contact details. We look forward to an exciting year in 2021 and you can follow our work on these same platforms.

## **PHYSICAL OFFICE ADDRESSES**

### **WAAF Headquarters, Greater**

Accra Address: Plot 650 Ecomog Road, Haatso, Greater Accra.  
Opposite Benab Oil filling station. The closest station is Haatso Station.  
Contact Numbers: +233 302 545 054 | +233 243 362 447  
Please direct general inquiries to: [info@waafweb.org](mailto:info@waafweb.org)

### **WAAF Western Regional Office**

WAAF Takoradi Office GI18,  
Adjoa Gharthey Street Near Mexico Hotel  
GPS Address: WS-201-7442  
Contact number: 0249354576/ 0245021821/ 0243362447  
Email: [info@waafweb.org](mailto:info@waafweb.org)

### **WAAF Essiama Office**

Essiama on top of the Ecobank Building opposite Dukes filling Station  
GPS Address: WE-0206-7313  
Contact number: 0553964934/ 0249354576/ 0243362447  
Email: [info@waafweb.org](mailto:info@waafweb.org)

### **WAAF, Northern Regional Office**

Address: Savelugu Municipal Health Assembly  
Contact Number: 0243675303/ 0243362447  
Email: [info@waafweb.org](mailto:info@waafweb.org)

### **WAAF Central Regional Offices**

- Kasoa Nyanyayo Road near Teacher's quarters
- Winneba – Apam Road Opp. Dukes Filling Station
- Cape Coast – Akyeano Near Cherubim and Searphim School
- Assin Fosu Town Around Melcom
- Dunkwa Field Office, Dunkwa Atechem Boass road

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