



Q1 2026 NEWSLETTER

Saving Lives, Shaping Systems, Strengthening Africa

Our impact across the health and social sectors
- January to March 2026

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Executive Summary

The quarter at a glance

WELCOME TO OUR Q1 2026 NEWSLETTER.

This quarter has been one of significant milestones, from achieving a 55% reduction in facility-based maternal deaths through Project Aisha in Lagos, to positioning Kaduna State for data-driven Primary Health Care (PHC) financing under the Gates Foundation-supported execution grant.

Across six active projects, our teams are working at the intersection of evidence, delivery, and institutional strengthening to strengthen health systems across Africa.

Here's a look at what we've been doing and why it matters.



HEADLINE IMPACT

310K+

Women reached with quality
maternal care services

55%

Maternal death reduction across 43
health facilities in Lagos and
Kaduna states

112

Health facilities tracked
across Lagos and Kaduna
States



KEY OUTCOMES ACROSS PROJECTS ...

PROJECT AISHA

- 85% improvement in ANC quality
- 31% increase in 4+ ANC visits
- 88% of deliveries monitored correctly
- 67% reduction in PEE/PPH/OL deaths

KADUNA KSSDP

- Expenditure tracking completed for 23 PHCs
- Identified partner coalition established
- Execution grant operationalized

GLOBAL FUND

Impact evaluation completed. Key activities included:

- **Field Visits:** We conducted site visits to 39 facilities across five intervention states (Anambra, Ebonyi, Gombe, Kwara, and Lagos) and five control states (Adamawa, Enugu, Imo, Kogi, and Oyo) to establish formal evaluation protocols.
- **Stakeholder Interviews:** We interviewed 114 participants at both the national and state levels. This group included representatives from SHIA, SASCP, and SACA, as well as facility-level stakeholders and beneficiaries.

PEE Preeclampsia & Eclampsia
 PPH Postpartum Haemorrhage
 OL Obstetric Labour

PHCs Primary Health Care
 ANC Antenatal Care
 SACA State Agency for the Control of AIDS

SHIA State Health Insurance Agency
 SASCP State AIDS and STIs Control Program

PROJECT AISHA: QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IS SAVING MOTHERS' LIVES ●●

In Lagos and Kaduna States, Project Aisha's Quality Improvement (QI) collaboratives across 69 PHCs are delivering results that redefine what's possible in Nigeria's primary healthcare system.

The model is built on a cascaded approach to capacity building. To date, 79 State QI Trainers have trained 158 frontline health workers, who are now implementing four distinct QI projects across the maternal continuum of care. Peer-to-peer learning across facilities is accelerating the spread of best practices, while real-time patient feedback loops ensure that women's voices actively shape the quality of care they receive.

The results are striking. Facility-based maternal deaths have declined by 55%, while the quality of antenatal care has improved by 85%. The proportion of pregnant women returning for four or more visits has increased by 31%, and correct monitoring of spontaneous vaginal deliveries has improved by 88%.

At the core of this model is a deliberate integration of women's voices. Health facilities now capture real-time patient feedback, incorporate these insights into QI processes, and strengthen upward reporting through performance dashboards.

Beyond implementation, the project is also contributing to thought leadership across Africa. Two research abstracts have been submitted to the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua) and the Health Systems Research conference, with peer-reviewed manuscripts and learning briefs currently in development

TESTIMONIAL

"We are not just tracking data; maternal indicators have shown us the real impact of our work, improved our documentation, strengthened peer supervision, and guided care to enhance maternal and neonatal health."

- Nurse, Longe Medical, Lagos, Nigeria



Dr. Ramat Odesesan, DMS District II, addressing participants at Project Aisha's Cluster Meeting.

KADUNA STATE SERVICE DELIVERY PROJECT (KSSDP): INSTITUTIONALIZING EXPENDITURE TRACKING ACROSS 23 LGAS ●●●

The Kaduna State Service Delivery Project (KSSDP) is advancing efforts to institutionalize expenditure tracking across all 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs). Under the Gates Foundation-supported PHC Execution Grant, HSDF has introduced Primary Healthcare Expenditure Tracking across 23 PHC Centres of Excellence bringing, for the first time, clear visibility to revenue and expenditure patterns across the state.



The Hon. Commissioner of Planning and Budget Commission delivering the closing remarks on behalf of Kaduna State leadership after the Orientation alongside the Hon. Commissioner of Health.

During this quarter, the team conducted an in-depth analysis of the 2026 Kaduna State approved budget to identify financing gaps in primary healthcare. This was complemented by a review of Annual Operational Plan (AOP) funding across six Gates-supported programme areas. The execution grant has also been actively operationalized through sustained engagement with state leadership and the Gates Foundation.

In parallel, HSDF is strengthening coordination across the ecosystem by leading two key platforms: the Gates Foundation Partners Performance Management Coalition and the newly established Kaduna Public Financial Management (PFM) Partners Coalition. These mechanisms are aligning partners (including BudGIT, SCIDaR, EngenderHealth, CHAI, and others) around shared priorities for improving primary healthcare delivery.



HSDF's Hussena Hassan, Dr. Shamang (Gates Foundation), Dr. Sunday (DHPRS, SMOH), and Dr. Dutse (SPHCB) reviewing the agenda at the PHC Execution Grant Orientation Alignment Meeting

FROM ENSURING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO COMMODITIES TO CHRONIC DISEASE MANAGEMENT: TWO CRITICAL FRONTIERS

PPH Project - Drug Revolving Funds in Niger & Kano States

HSDF's work is expanding across two critical frontiers-ensuring reliable access to essential maternal health commodities and advancing the management of chronic diseases.

Under the PPH Project in Niger and Kano States, the organization is strengthening state capacity to operationalize Drug Revolving Funds (DRFs), with a focus on ensuring uninterrupted access to postpartum haemorrhage commodities at health facilities. Newly deployed State Technical Assistants are supporting implementation on the ground, while a policy brief published in March 2026 outlines a pathway for sustainable access to heat-stable carbetocin (HSC) as a key intervention for reducing maternal mortality in Nigeria.



Group photo from DRF/financial mgt workshop in Niger state showing DRF committee members from the SMOH, State PHC Devpt Agency, Drug mgt Agency and State Health Insurance Agency (NiCare).



Workshop session during the DRF/financial mgt workshop for DRF committee members in Niger state.



Discussions at the PEN-PLUS operational plan presentation.



HSDF's Priye and Kimberly listening in as the PEN-PLUS operational plan is being presented.

NCDI Phase 3 - Nigeria's PEN-PLUS Pilot

Through the Non-Communicable Diseases and Injuries (NCDI) Phase 3 project, we are supporting Nigeria's PEN-PLUS pilot-an important step toward expanding care for advanced non-communicable diseases. The organization recently convened a strategic alignment meeting with the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (NCD Division) and WHO Nigeria to define the pilot's support package. As the technical coordination anchor, HSDF is aligning partners, minimizing duplication of efforts, and developing an initial monitoring and evaluation framework designed for scale across broader NCD programming.

GLOBAL FUND NHI EXPANSION & NATIONAL NUTRITION STRATEGY



HSDF Paul & Emeka with Enumerator During Data Collection at Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH)



Global Fund Supported NHI Expansion

We are also partnering with Global Fund Facility (GFF) to conduct process and impact evaluations of the national health insurance expansion for People Living with HIV and TB patients across five Nigerian states: Anambra, Ebonyi, Gombe, Kwara, and Lagos.

Working across multiple national agencies including NTBLCP, NHIA, NASCP, NACA, and several state-level agencies, this evaluation demonstrates HSDF capacity as a trusted leader in evaluation design and methodology across the continent.



Enumerator Training in Anambra State

FCDP — Shaping Nigeria’s Nutrition Plan for 2026–2030

Concurrently, through the Finance Capacity Development Platform (FCDP), HSDF is supporting the Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning to inform Nigeria’s next National Nutrition Plan (2026–2030). Drawing on lessons from the recently concluded National Multisectoral Plan for Food and Nutrition (2021–2025), the team is helping translate evidence into strategy. With the potential to reach an estimated 3.5 million malnourished children across Nigeria and Somalia, this work reinforces HSDF’s role as a key thought partner in shaping national nutrition policy across Africa.



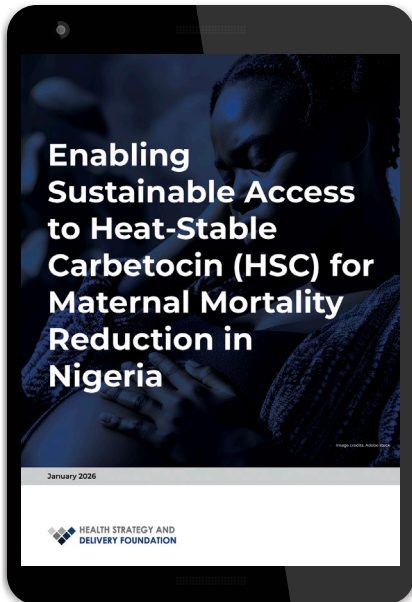
Cross section of stakeholders at the 1st Quarter National Nutrition Technical Working Group (NNTWG) Meeting



Opening remark by the Head of Nutrition Department at the 1st Quarter National Nutrition Technical Working Group (NNTWG) Meeting



WHAT WE PUBLISHED THIS QUARTER



Policy Brief: Enabling Sustainable Access to Heat-stable Carbetocin (HSC) for Maternal Mortality Reduction in Nigeria

[Click to read more](#)



Quality of maternal care and mental health findings from Project Aisha's QI collaborative

[Click to read more](#)

WHAT'S COMING IN Q2 2026

Q1

Q3

As we move into Q2, we are deepening our work across all six active projects while preparing to expand into new territories including our growing presence in other African countries and continued engagements with the Global Fund.

Key priorities for the next quarter include:

1

Scaling Project
Aisha's QI model to
additional facilities
across Lagos State.

2

Delivering interim
evaluation findings
from the Global Fund
NHI expansion study.

3

Strengthening our
thought leadership
pipeline with new data
insights, and knowledge
products across sector

We remain committed to our mission of saving lives and livelihoods by transforming the health and social sector landscape in Africa using better evidence for decision-making, accountability, and action.

PHOTO GALLERY



Kaduna State execution grant orientation meeting with State leadership and funders (Gates Foundation)



Stakeholder Engagement with Permanent Secretary, Lagos Health district VI



Private facility cluster meeting



Cross section of stakeholders at the 1st Quarter National Nutrition Technical Working Group (NNTWG) Meeting



Kaduna State execution grant orientation meeting with State leadership and funders (Gates Foundation)