

ANNUAL REPORT

2018



WHO WE ARE

Youth Initiative for Drug Research, Information, Support and Education (YouthRISE Nigeria), is an advocacy and service based non-profit organisation, committed to promoting human rights, access to quality health and socio-economic justice, as efforts in reducing drug related harms, especially among young persons. The operations of the organisation spurs from the need to provide evidence-based response to the growing drug challenge, and HIV infection, especially among young persons. In the last five years, the organisation has been resilient in highlighting the need for a policy reform that provides a human rights and health based response to the drug challenges, in Nigeria.

OUR VISION

YouthRISE Nigeria envisions a society where the rights and health of young persons in Nigeria is protected and promoted.

OUR MISSION

YouthRISE Nigeria as an initiative, is birthed from the need to promote evidence based drug policy and interventions, with the meaningful inclusion of young persons, and most affected communities.

ACRONYMS

- **ART** - Anti-retroviral Treatment
- **IEC materials** - Information, Education and Communication materials
- **HCT** - HIV Counselling and Test
- **NDLEA** - National Drug Law Enforcement Agency
- **NACA** - National Agency for the Control of AIDS
- **PWUDS** - Persons Who Use Drugs
- **PWIDS** - Persons Who Inject Drugs
- **PLHIV** - Persons Living With HIV
- **SACA** - State Agencies for the Control of AIDS
- **SRHR** - Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights
- **STI** - Sexually Transmitted Infection

OVERVIEW OF 2018

Building on the innumerable successes recorded by Youth Initiative for Drug Research Information Support and Education in Nigeria (YouthRISE Nigeria), in 2018, the organisation focused on enhancing its activities and efforts to leading drug policy reform advocacy in Nigeria and the West African sub-region. YouthRISE Nigeria continues to thrive through the various projects and activities it undertakes in addressing issues central to; drug policy, human rights and public health in Nigeria, particularly among vulnerable population. The organisation seeks to influence the focus of drug control in Nigeria to human rights and health of persons who use drugs and members of their communities.

Building and strengthening existing relationships with key stakeholders, especially; the government, relevant ministries, departments and agencies, law enforcement agencies, Civil Society Organisations and the media is always a landmark for YouthRISE Nigeria to advocate and influence policies relating to vulnerable population within the society, who have overtime

been affected by outcomes of the drug policy in Nigeria.

Also, YouthRISE Nigeria interfacing with PWUDS and PLHIV, especially at the community level informed most research focus, and recommendations communicated with stakeholders and the general public during; conferences, meetings and forums. It is remarkable that the achievements of the organisation press on 3 focal points- **advocacy**, **research** and **service delivery**, which served as tools for the implementation of all project activities.

Thematic Preoccupations of YouthRISE Nigeria's Activities



YouthRISE Nigeria is given to engaging with state and non-state actors notably policy makers, Law Enforcement Agencies, CSOs and other stakeholders through its continuous advocacy for

drug policies and practices that reduce drug related harm in the society. In 2018, YouthRISE Nigeria further intensified her voice in promoting evidence-based drug policy. From participating in national and international meetings and conferences, YouthRISE Nigeria made effort to bring to the fore, the health and human rights lapses in addressing the prevalent use of drugs in Nigeria and the West African sub- region predominantly populated by youths, and also giving relevant recommendations for a youth-centered drug policy and interventions.

Research

In policy advocacy and programming, YouthRISE Nigeria engages in-depth quantitative and qualitative study in areas relating to evidence-based policy to better understand drug trends especially among young persons, characteristics of key populations at risks, risky behaviours associated with drug use and drug harms to the community. It is noteworthy, that the research scope extends to Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), especially for females who use

drugs. Consequently, it is upon the basis of these researches that YouthRISE Nigeria maps out; interventions, engagements and recommendations in line with the organization's goals. With continuous research, YouthRISE Nigeria has been resourceful in developing articles, research papers and policy briefs on issues relating to; drug use, HIV/Hepatitis Treatment, drug policy.

Service Delivery

YouthRISE Nigeria adopts a community-based approach in service delivery. That is, meeting these clients where they are, and leading them through counselling, treatment and quality assessment to enable them live healthy lives. YouthRISE Nigeria overtime, developed a client-centred treatment model, which it uses in interfacing with; persons who use drugs, persons living with HIV, females who experience gender based violence among others. Also, through established partnerships with other civil society and health care facilities, YouthRISE Nigeria ensures that it delivers satisfactory healthcare service to clients and community members.

Key Stakeholders engaged in 2018

- National Human Rights Commission
- Policy Makers
- Community Leaders
- NDLEA
- Nigeria Police Force
- Media
- NACA
- Federal Ministry of Health and other relevant government agencies
- Civil Society Organisations
- Student group/ youth-led organization

Target Population for 2018 Project Year

- Adolescent girls and women
- Youths
- PWUDs
- PLHIV



PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED IN 2018.

- **Partnership to Inspire Transform and Change the HIV Response (PITCH).**

Scope: Promotion of Human Rights, Access to HIV and Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights for key population.

- **Strengthening Youth CSOs' Response to Drug Policy Reform in Nigeria.**

Scope: Capacity Building, Policy Advocacy and stakeholder's engagement.

- **Increasing Access to HCT Uptake Among People Who Use Drugs.**

Scope: Providing access to HIV Counselling, Testing (HTC), treatment and support for PWUDs.

- **Integrated Most at Risk Populations HIV Prevention Program (IMHiPP).**

Scope: Reducing drug related harms and HIV

Impact among PWIDS.

- **Provision of Community based drug treatment service in the FCT (YouthRISE Nigeria Drop-In-Centre).**

Scope: Treatment and Support Services for females who use drugs, Behavioural Maintenance Intervention, Advocacy.

Partnership to Inspire Transform and Change the HIV Response (PITCH).

Sponsor: Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The PITCH Project clearly highlights the vulnerabilities of People Who Use Drugs, policies and perceptions that undermine their human rights and their access to appropriate treatment and health especially for HIV and Sexual Reproductive Health.

The project concerns itself, with strategic engagements with relevant partners, to derive policies that ensure humane and health approach to drug use. These partners include; Policy makers, Federal Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women and Social Development, NACA, SACA, FCT Primary Health Care Providers.

This project made efforts in engaging quantitative and qualitative research on **Police Knowledge/Attitude Practices towards HIV/AIDS Prevention among People Who Use Drugs**. As the title implies, this survey was conducted to inquire into the knowledge capacity and perception, of

the officers of the Nigerian police force, and how it informs their approach to PWUDs.

Furthermore, a novelty match between the police officers and vulnerable persons disposed to the use of drugs was played. This was in commemoration of the International Human Rights Day, with the Nigerian Police Force showing their readiness to promote and protect the rights of vulnerable youths in the society.

Regarding the role of media in building perception on social issues within the society the organisation enhanced its active engagement with media practitioners. This engagement took a form of a media roundtable involving relevant stakeholders. The discourse of this meeting was central to the; discrimination and stigmatisation of vulnerable population, especially PWUDs. Also considering the stakes challenging the human rights of these vulnerable persons, which has affected their access to treatment for substance use and other health matters.

To further intensify advocacy efforts, the PITCH project engaged the use of 'photo voice', which

involves working with community members to document their experiences and challenges using photos. YouthRISE Nigeria used this tool as an opportunity to explore and underscore topical issues as; discrimination and stigmatisation of PWUDs, arbitrary arrests and policy brutality among PWUDs, treatment access for drug use, sexual reproductive health for females who use drugs, gender based violence among others.

Strengthening Youth CSOs Response to Drug Policy Reform in Nigeria.

Sponsor: Open Society Foundation

Using the tool of advocacy, qualitative research, and stakeholder's engagement, this project's focus was on congregating a critical mass of advocates towards advocating for drug policy reform in Nigeria. This project targeted; CSOs, student leaders, policy makers, the media and the community members. The project concerned itself with capacity building, engagements with stakeholders and the public with the aim to influence perception on drug use and drive towards drug policy reform.

One of the deliverables of this project was the training of 25 young civil society actors who were selected from across the country, through a competitive application process. These participants experienced cutting edge capacity building experience in drug policy, particularly to understand drug dependence prevention; treatment and care. These trainees have gone ahead to amplify efforts geared toward drug

policy reform advocacy in the country.



To further shape the narrative on drug use in Nigeria, YouthRISE Nigeria organised an intensive training for media practitioners from across the country. This was to ensure an increase in the number of reality-based well-informed media publications on drug use in the country. The training involved exposition on drug use challenges, and the need for an approach rooted in human rights and public health. Following this, one of the participants was supported to investigate the human rights implication of the Nigeria drug law. This led to a report [Inside Nigeria's](#)

[Brutal Narco Wars.htm](#) which brings to light series of human rights abuses perpetrated in the course of drug control in Nigeria. This report was published in one of the renowned newspapers in Nigeria, Daily Trust newspaper.

A major component of this project was the launching of the 'We Are People' advocacy campaign to further enunciate the necessity of addressing drug use challenge as; a public health and human rights agenda that bothers on social development. This campaign is part of the organization's efforts to shape public perception on drug use, and people who use drugs. Furthermore, the campaign is a reminder that the operational drug policies have overtime become ineffective in tackling the present drug use challenges in our society, therefore calling for reformed drug policy that applies an evidence-based approach to the growing drug use challenge amongst youths.

Increasing HTC Uptake Among Persons Who Use Drugs

Sponsor: UNAIDS

The main objective of this project was to provide access to HIV counselling and testing for people who use drugs in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT, Abuja, Nigeria and ensure linkages to other HIV treatment, care and support; and to build the organization capacity of YouthRISE Nigeria.

A 5-day internal capacity training, was organised on; proposal writing and HIV programming among key population. This training was to further enhance the ability of YouthRISE staff and outreach workers in the art of commuting strategic concept notes and proposals on matters relating to HIV programming, and HCT. This was also an avenue for the organisation to revise the steps and measure through its activities, in achieving the project's objectives.

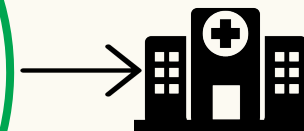
HCT was an integral aspect of the project's activity. Given the stereotype and stigma challenges associated with accessing HIV

treatment at health centres/facilities, particularly among PWUDs, mobile HCT was introduced. This involved; mobile counselling and testing outreaches in locations mapped out and designated hotspots, as was suitable for clients to access these services.



For tracking and updates of client's treatment, the organisation conducted HIV Support group sessions for clients enrolled into the HCT & ART services. These sessions were specifically for PWUDs, as they were given opportunity to relate their concerns on drug use and HIV. An outstanding feature of these sessions was nutritional support provided to beneficiaries.

clients who test positive to HIV during these outreaches, were immediately referred & enrolled into care and treatment at the YouthRISE Nigeria Treatment Centre.



At the end of the project timeline a total of 526 drug users in the FCT were reached with HIV testing services and 100% of those who tested positive were enrolled into ART. These were achieved by using the tools and forms designed by the national HIV/AIDS program.

Regarding the capacity building training, a pre and post-test was administered to the participants and at the end of the training there was 70% increase in knowledge gained among participants.

Integrating Most at Risk Populations HIV Prevention Program (IMHiPP).

**Sponsor by: USAID, Through Heartland
Alliance, Nigeria.**

The age group captured within the activities of this project was between 15-49 years, based on the report by UNAIDS Data 2018 of, Nigeria has a teeming population of youths living with HIV. This project engaged outreach staffs including; HCT refresher training for counsellor testers, and minimum prevention package of intervention for outreach coordinators.

It is important to point out that this project sought to provide HTS/STI testing to a total of 3200 persons. Remarkably, YouthRISE Nigeria realised a total of 3600 persons, provided with HIV/STI prevention and treatment services. This status also covers for Anti-retroviral treatment provided to 150 PWIDs-PLHIVs enrolled within the organisation's directory. Furthermore, STI Syndromic Management being included in this project was to provide STI treatment for community members and referral to the YouthRISE Nigeria one-stop-shop.

Furthermore, counsellor testers carried out weekly HIV testing and outreach programs for community members. This was done through mobile enrolment, home based care, mobile refill and viral load testing. Other activities included; prevention messages, condom programming, peer-peer training, HIV education, carried out through interaction and IEC materials.

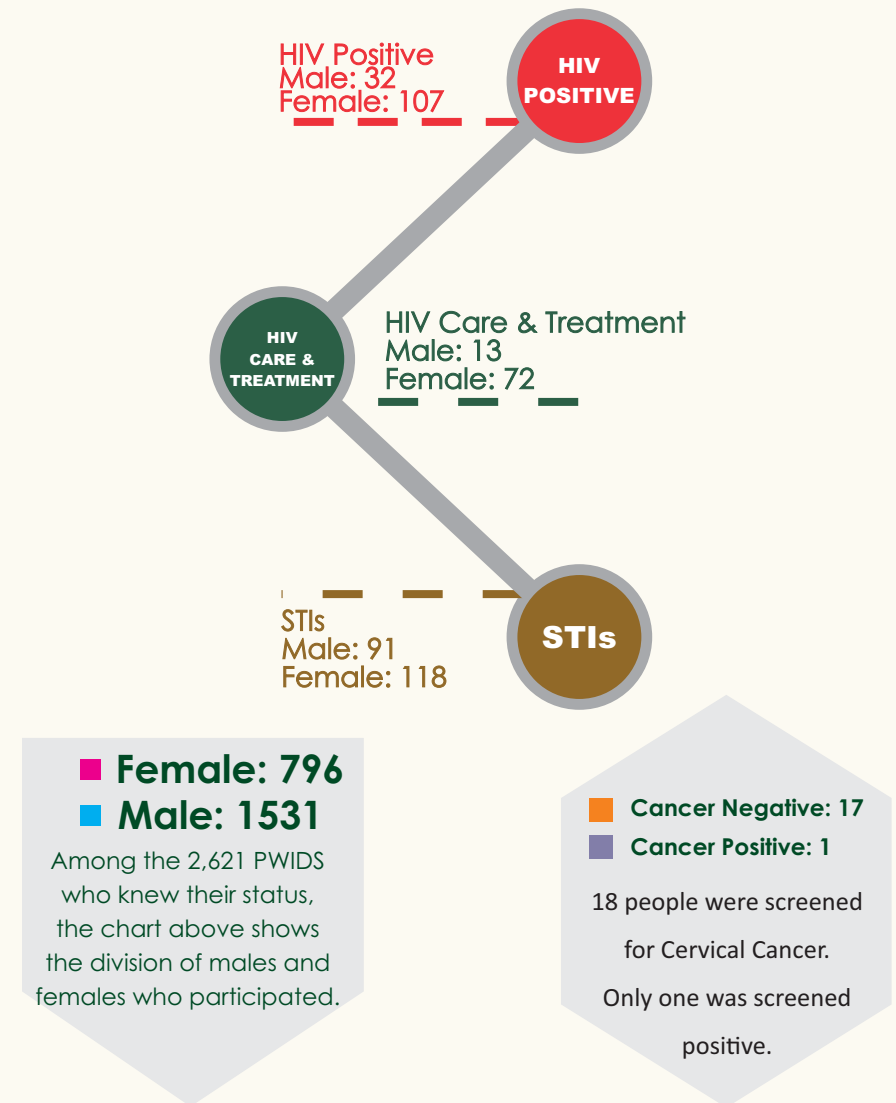
Given that most persons who use drugs, especially females are prone to gender based violence by intimate partners, the project provided access to counselling and treatment for young females. The services included; case identification and reporting, provision of pre-exposure prophylaxis, counselling, and legal aid. Victims were also required to have weekly counselling sessions, or sometimes referred to public health care services affiliated with the project.

In order to keep track on client's responsiveness to treatment as well as overall well-being, YouthRISE Nigeria organised weekly-monthly sessions and behavioural maintenance. The biomedical services included; collection of viral sample for viral-load testing, commodity and information

reinforcement, mobile refill. Behavioural maintenance included, support group sessions on healthy practices, psychological support, home-based care, treatment prescription adherence.

The IMHiPP Project utilised YouthRISE Nigeria's three building blocks; advocacy, research, service delivery to implement its activities. The project was also community-based, focusing on reducing harm related risks for PWUDs through treatments, counselling and support services.

IMHiPP's Efforts Towards Reducing Health Related Risks in PWIDS and the General Population.



Provision of Community based Drug Treatment Service in the FCT (YouthRISE Nigeria Drop-In-Centre)

Sponsored by: European Union & United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Through this project, YouthRISE Nigeria established a Drop-In-Centre in Nyanya, Abuja. This was in response to high prevalence of drug use among young and adolescent girls in the area and their limited access to appropriate treatment services.

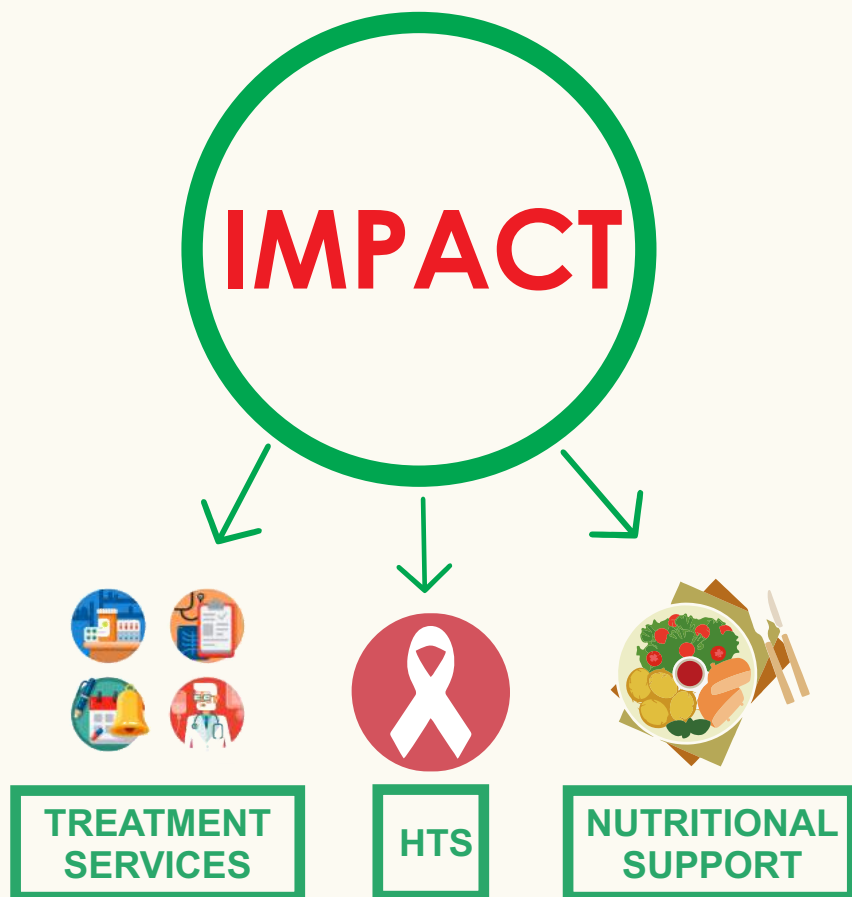
It kicked off with a community event held at the community palace, in Nyanya-Karu town of Nassarawa State. This community event was in light of the International Human Rights Day, 2018 and a medium of bringing awareness to the community, on matters relating to; use of drugs amongst young persons and sexual reproductive health. The event themed '**Getting High On Good Health**' had 200 community members in attendance and provided a platform to enlighten members of the community especially females, on the services provided at the YouthRISE Nigeria Drop-In-Centre. In addition to this, we carried out

HIV testing and enrolment into the treatment.

Impact of YouthRISE Nigeria

YouthRISE Nigeria strengthened its programming for young people who use drugs, in addition to its advocacy for a youth-centered drug policy that is anchored on human rights, public health. In the last one year we have built institutional, individual and community capacity that is reflective of our mission to serve vulnerable and marginalised communities.

By adopting a community-based approach, YouthRISE Nigeria has been able to reinstate healthy living for targeted population. With continuous support services rendered, including nutritional support, most clients have gradually progressed in their health and behavioural maintenance. Another prong of our testing program was the creation of a support group for PWUDs living with HIV. This has seen us link them to health care services that they need and also provide them with psycho social support.



Through constant engagement with relevant stakeholders like the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), the Nigerian Parliament, Media, Civil Society organization, YouthRISE Nigeria has been able to launch its flagship campaign, '**We Are People**'. Having a

wide reach, and also becoming an advocacy tool by stakeholders, and the public at large. This is one major tool that has further enlightened and influenced the perception of the society on the use of drugs, discrimination and stigmatisation of persons who use drugs, and the human rights of persons who use drugs being violated. This campaign has gained tremendous support locally and internationally.

YouthRISE Nigeria's Drop-In-Centre, exclusively for females who use drugs, especially within Abuja, Nigeria. Operating the Drop-In-Centre, it puts YouthRISE Nigeria at the fore in treatment and rehabilitation services and supports for females who use drugs, enjoining issues relating to ; gender base violence amongst female drug users, in addition to providing them with safe space to have their health and mental well-being tended to.

Success Stories

- YouthRISE Nigeria facilitated the reunion of over a hundred female drug users with their families and communities.
- Nutritional Support was provided for hundred beneficiaries through the IMHiPP Project.
- Two of the organisation's outreach officers were awarded by Heartland Alliance International for their outstanding performance. These awards were based on their capacity building, behavioural change. It is worthy of note that these awardees were dependent drug users, who came in as volunteers and through series of trainings and capacity building, they have grown to be better.
- YouthRISE Nigeria had three abstracts submitted at the International Aids Conference in Amsterdam, Netherlands, of which they were accepted for

presentation at the conference.

- The YouthRISE Nigeria Drug Policy Academy, helped build the capacity of young advocates on drug policy in Nigeria.

Engagement and Conferences

- YouthRISE Nigeria organized a panellist discussion, on '*Young People's Recommendations for a Youth Centred Drug Policy*' at the 3rd Biennial National Symposium on Drugs and Drug Policy in Nigeria.
- YouthRISE Nigeria participated in the public hearing, organised by the Joint Senate Committee on Drugs and Narcotics. Being a part of this meeting, YouthRISE Nigeria through the panellist session gave key recommendations relating to drug use among young people in Nigeria.

- YouthRISE Nigeria participated in the 2nd International Workshop, on HIV Adolescence Challenges and Solution organized by Virology Education Capetown, South Africa. At this workshop, YouthRISE Nigeria's Client-Centred Treatment Model was presented.
- YouthRISE Nigeria participated in the 'SA Drug Policy Week', where the Executive Director, made a presentation on the 'West African Commission's Model Drug Law'. This was also an avenue for the organisation to interact and share ideas with other actors and experts in the drug policy and development space.
- YouthRISE Nigeria organized public screening of the documentary- *"We Are People: Promoting the Right and Dignity of People Who Use Drugs in Closed Settings"* in 4 states (Lagos, Kano, Abuja and Enugu). This program engaged government agencies, law enforcement agencies, CSOs and other stakeholders on human rights based response to drug use.
- In collaboration with the Global Commission on Drug Policy, CRISA and West African Commission on Drugs, YouthRISE Nigeria, organised a public lecture on "The World Drug Perception Problem", delivered by HE. Ruth Dreifuss, former president of Switzerland and Chair of the Global Commission on Drug. This lecture centred on the perception problem faced by persons who use drugs, and the mechanisms for countering prejudices about people who use drugs.
- YouthRISE was in attendance of the 8th International symposium on drug policy organised by the Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library Centre for Human Security & Dialogue, in partnership with Global Commission on Drug Policy. The programme was themed- "Drug Policies in Africa: What Works".
- YouthRISE Nigeria attended the 13th Biennial CRISA Conference on "Drugs, Alcohol, and Society in Africa", themed 'Substance Use and Sustainable

Development in Africa: Strengthening the Evidence Base For Policy and Action'.

- A courtesy visit by YouthRISE Nigeria at the invitation of His Excellency, Eric Mayoraz, the Switzerland Ambassador to Nigeria, Chad, Niger and ECOWAS gave the organisation the opportunity, to further discuss Nigeria's drug policy and activities of YouthRISE Nigeria.





DONORS AND PARTNERS



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