



# 5 YEARS OF REWRITING SHE STORIES:

A WOMEN'S VOICE AND LEADERSHIP  
NIGERIA PROJECT REPORT

2019 - 2024



# AUGUST 2024

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# Acronyms

1. AAN	ActionAid Nigeria
2. AMAC	Abuja Municipal Area Council
3. CARD	Community Advocate for Rural Development
4. CCAPI	Child Care and Adult Protection Initiative
5. CBO	Community Based Organization's
6. CGE	Center for Gender Economics Initiative
7. CRIRS	Cross River Internal Revenue Service
8. CSO	Civil Society Organization's
9. CSCWEE	Civil Society Coalition on Women Economic Empowerment
10. CWEENES	Christian Women for Excellence and Empowerment in Nigeria
11. FCT	Federal Capital Territory
12. FGC/M	Female Genital Cut/Mutilation
13. FIDA	International Federation of Women Lawyers
14. GBV	Gender Base Violence
15. GLOHWOC	Global Hope for Women and Children Foundation
16. GAC	Global Affairs Canada
17. IDRC	International Development Research Center
18. IFA	Ikpri Ikang Farmers
19. KTMDI	Kungiyar Tallafin Mata Development Initiative
20. LASTMA	Lagos State Transport Management Agency
21. LWRO'S	Local Women's Right Organization's
22. NAWOJ	Nigeria Association of Women Journalists
23. NANA	Nana Girls and Women Empowerment Initiative
24. NCF	Neighborhood Care-Well Foundation
25. NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
26. NELMCO	Nigeria Electricity Liability Management Company
27. NIUF	Nka Iban Uko Foundation
28. NWA	Njikoka Women Association
29. OCDI	Olive Community Development Initiative
30. PSC	Program Steering Committee
31. RAHAMA	Rahama Women Development
32. SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
33. SIF	Strategic Innovative Fund
34. SOF	Strategic Opportunity Fund
35. SWOFON	Small-Scale Women Farmers Organization in Nigeria
36. SWIT	Society of Women in Taxation
37. SSG	Security to the state Government
37. TAs	Technical Support
38. TOR	Terms of Reference
39. UN	United Nations
40. UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
41. UNFPA	United Nation Population Fund
42. UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
43. VAPP	Violence Against Person Prohibition Act
44. VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association
45. WACOL	Women Aid Collective
46. WD2023	Women Deliver 2023 Conference
47. WINET	Women Information Network
48. WRO	Women's Rights Organisations
49. WVl	Women's Voice and Leadership
50. WVl-N	Women Voice and Leadership- Nigeria Project
51. WEPBI	Women Empowerment and Peace Building Initiative
52. WHO	World Health Organization

# Foreword

## Celebrating Achievements and Inspiring Change

It is with immense pride and a deep sense of accomplishment that I present the end-of-project report for the Women's Voice and Leadership (WVL) Nigeria initiative, implemented by ActionAid Nigeria from 2019 to 2024. This report not only marks the culmination of years of dedication and hard work but also reflects our unwavering commitment to advancing the rights of women and girls across Nigeria.

At ActionAid Nigeria, we stand resolute in our pursuit of gender equality and the empowerment of women. We believe in the transformative power of collective action and the potential of individuals to drive lasting change. The WVL Nigeria project has been an extraordinary journey, characterized by challenges, triumphs, and countless moments of learning and impact that have touched the lives of many.

This initiative aimed to empower women and girls by advancing their rights and supporting women-led organizations, networks, and movements. Through capacity-building, resource allocation, and mentorship, the WVL Nigeria project enhanced the financial, technical, and organizational capacities of these organizations, enabling them to address the barriers more effectively to gender equality.

Additionally, the project strengthened feminist platforms at both the state and federal levels, fostering greater collaboration and cohesiveness in the fight for women's and girls' rights. By addressing critical issues within our target communities, we have empowered women and girls to claim their voices, take control of their rights and build a brighter future. This project's success is reflected in the milestones achieved and in the profound transformations witnessed among those we served.

Throughout this journey, our focus has been on building the capacity of women-led organizations, networks, and movements to address gender equality, while also ensuring their growth and sustainability for continued impact. By leveraging our collective knowledge, expertise, and resources, we have made a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals and society.

This report chronicles the stories, insights, and accomplishments that have shaped the course of our project. While this report marks the conclusion of a significant chapter, it also serves as a catalyst for ongoing efforts. We believe that achieving gender equality and eradicating poverty is possible through strong collaborations and the dedication of both state and non-state actors across sectors. As you explore the outcomes and stories within this report, we invite you to draw inspiration from the journey we have undertaken. Let these achievements remind us that, despite the challenges we face, positive change is within our grasp.

As we conclude this project, our commitment to building a better world remains unwavering. The lessons we have learned, the impact we have created, and the relationships we have nurtured will continue to guide our future endeavors. Together, we will build on these accomplishments and forge a brighter future for all.

Thank you for joining us on this remarkable journey.

**Andrew Mamedu**

Country Director

ActionAid Nigeria

## Acknowledgement

The implementation of the Women's Voice and Leadership Nigeria project and its accompanying achievements would not have been possible without the financial support of Global Affairs Canada (GAC). The remarkable efforts and contributions of Olivia Trans, a former WVL Nigeria Team Lead with GAC, Josephine Obinyan who initiated this engagement, working tirelessly with ActionAid Nigeria Team- Ene Obi, ActionAid Nigeria Previous Country Directors, Andrew Mamedu who was the Former Director of Resource Mobilization and Diversification, Now the Country Director, Nkechi Ilochi-Kanny, ActionAid Nigeria's (AAN) current Director of Resource Mobilization and Innovation Unit who at that time doubled as the Manager of the Women's Rights Unit and WVL Project Manager, Suwaiba Muhammad Dankabo Former Head/ Director of Programmes now Deputy Country Director, and Tassallah Chibok Former Director of Programmes who are highly appreciated. Without them this project would never have come to life and made the impact it has on Nigerian Women, girls and their communities.

The supervisory technical guidance and continuous support provided by the GAC team Djifa Ahado the Former Head of Development Corporation, Jade Delima-Roussel, Development Officer and Current WVL Nigeria Team Lead, Josephine Obinyan International Assistance, Mirwaise Sadaat, Project form WVL Nigeria Programme Officer and Idoteyin Offong Feminist Consultant, a team of skilled experienced and very supportive who have led the work and on the WVL-Nigeria Project. Their hard work, commitment and expertise have been invaluable to the project implementation and achievements of the Project.

Without the professional and passionate commitment of the 100 organizations comprising of 10 Women's Rights national network networks, 18 State Level Women Led organizations and 72 Community Based Organizations who implemented diverse and tailored interventions over the period of 5 years across targeted communities in the 6 project States (Bauchi, Kebbi, Kwara, Enugu, Cross River, Lagos) and National ) the outstanding benefits of the project's outcomes being enjoyed by women and girls in these communities may not have been experienced. We also want to appreciate the contributions and efforts of 82 women's rights networks and movements who carried out interventions from the strategic opportunity, innovation and Covid top up funds. These efforts also contributed greatly to the success of the project.

We take this opportunity to appreciate the leadership of the programme directorate, and all women's rights unit staff with either direct or indirect links to the project whose commitment and tireless efforts from inception, have contributed immensely towards the recorded accomplishments being celebrated:

Celestine Odoh Head of Programmes, Niri Goyit (Manager, Women's Rights Unit/ WVL Project Manager), Vivian Efem-Bassey (Manager, Projects & Lagos Field Office) who also doubles as the WVL Project Coordinator South), Noro Bature Project Coordinator North, Amina Aliyu Adamu Former MEL Advisor and Current (Manager IASL, AAN), Paul Samuel Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Advisor, Prince Egba Programme officer and Maria Effiwatt Programme Consultant Onyekachukwu Ugwu former Programmes Officer for their technical, programmatic, grants processing and administrative support provided to partners.

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ensuring proper documentation of all project work for dissemination and learning purposes are acknowledged. Monday Ekpa Logistics Officer, for dedication and commitment in providing Logistics support for the project team and partners. your efforts dedications and contributions towards ensuring proper documentation of all project work for dissemination and learning purposes are acknowledged.

The Invaluable support of the Project's Governance; The Project Steering Committee Members, Grant Selection Committee Members, ActionAid Senior Management Team and other AAN unit staff. Immense gratitude to our amiable Country Director - Andrew Mamedu (Country Director) whose visionary leadership and support from the project design to its implementation and completion has been remarkable.

To all relevant stakeholders: Local, State and National level Ministries, Department & Agencies, Local Government level Departments & Units, Civil Society Organizations, the Media, Traditional Leaders Councils, the various community constituents particular women leaders and women groups, members of community level committees, community members, amongst others who created an enabling environment for the successful implementation of this project, that provided the needed political will, guidance and support and participated actively in project activities, your efforts are appreciated.

Thank you all!

**Niri Goyit**

Manager, Women's Rights Unit, AAN

## Executive Summary

It's been five years of inspiring change as the Women's Voice and Leadership-Nigeria (WVL) Project, a flagship initiative funded by Global Affairs Canada and implemented by ActionAid, has significantly transformed the funding landscape for women empowerment and advancing gender equality in Nigeria. Implemented from 2019 to 2024, the project empowered local women's rights organizations, networks, and movements with resources to carry out diverse, context-specific interventions that enhance the lives of women and girls. The various funding streams—including multi-year grants, the Strategic Opportunity Fund, the Strategic Innovation Fund, and the COVID-19 Top-Up Fund—along with a flexible and participatory approach, enabled 182 organizations to directly impact the lives of 4,082,535 individuals and indirectly reach over 3,067,618 people. The WVL Project marked a departure from traditional funding models, which are often prescriptive and rigid in focus and fund usage. By breaking down silos within the gender and women's rights sector, the project increased the capacity of women-led networks and movements to influence policies. Additionally, it provided opportunities for these organizations to strengthen their internal systems, structures, programming capabilities, and outreach, ultimately bolstering their sustainability and ability to drive long-term change.

The project through its partners influence 47 gender related laws, policies strategies and frameworks at the national, state, institutional and community levels with Violences Against Persons Prohibition Law passed 6 states with contributions from the WVL project, domestication of the united nations security council resolution 1325 and development of Kwara state action plan, Gender strategy developed for some political parties and 5 Universities, GBV prevention and response strategy developed for schools, agricultural gender policy, 35% affirmative action amongst others. In terms of addressing GBV project partners in the project states of Bauchi, Cross River, Enugu, Lagos, Kwara, Kebbi, and the FCT, over 4,781 people directly benefited from GBV/VAWG services, including legal, medical, psychosocial support, and empowerment activities for survivors. Indirectly, over 4 million individuals were reached through media campaigns, awareness sessions, and community dialogues. A total of 4,683 GBV cases were managed, GBV multi-stakeholders committee was established and functional in Bauchi, FCT, and Kwara which contributed to increased response and justice for GBV survivors with 178 court judgements secured and 114 successful judgments. Economic empowerment was provided to 335 survivors, and 5 GB shelters were supported. School-related GBV sensitization impacted 68,492 students, 2,715 teachers, and staff across 26 schools in Kebbi. State-level initiatives included the formation of a WVL-CBO Coalition Against GBV, 44 paralegal structures, and 3 youth advocate groups. Additionally, safe spaces, 37 GBV awareness clubs, 16 SRGBV school response committees, and 16 guidance and counseling units were established. Sensitization efforts reached 472 traditional and religious leaders and 306,230 women and girls, with 95 women joining peer education groups and 118 vulnerable women receiving economic support during the COVID-19 lockdown. Capacity of police Divisional Officer and Divisional crime officer were strengthened on case management in Kwara, Enugu, Bauchi and Cross River states.

In terms of economic empowerment, the project directly empowered 22,455 women and girls across project states were directly impacted by economic justice and empowerment initiatives, leading to 6,500 rural women establishing or owning businesses through interventions such as VSLA schemes and start-up grants or equipment. The total monies raised for VSLA The scheme was adopted and implemented by 39 partners in five states and the FCT, with 532 groups involving 13,911 women. The initiative has successfully reached a broad base of beneficiaries. A total of 233 communities across 69 Local Government Areas (LGAs) have been covered, indicating widespread engagement and community-level influence. Financially, the women involved have collectively saved an

impressive ₦408.8 million, reflecting their commitment to financial security and growth. The cash share-out amounts to ₦417.5 million, indicating that the savings are not only substantial but also being effectively distributed, likely enhancing the financial stability and economic empowerment of the women involved.

Regarding women's participation in leadership across Bauchi, Cross River, Enugu, Kebbi, and Kwara States. This marks the first time in many of these communities that women have been included in such influential roles. Additionally, 40 women, with verifiable support from the project, successfully vied for and won political elective positions at both state and national levels, demonstrating the project's significant impact on women's political participation.

The project also played a crucial role in advancing gender equality in higher education by supporting the development of Gender Policies in five Nigerian universities. Furthermore, 67 young female students ascended to the presidency of their respective Student Union Governments across various tertiary institutions, including Enugu, Cross River, and Kebbi State College of Education, Technical, Peace Land College Enugu, and the University of Calabar. This achievement is directly attributed to the leadership mentorship programs spearheaded by WEPBI (Women Empowerment and Peace Building Initiative) and GADA-CETDA, Kungiyar Talafin Mata, and the Women in Politics Forum, which provided critical guidance and support to these emerging leaders.

The project was also deliberate in applying an intersectional lens and inclusive approach in ensuring that special programmes were designed and directed to empower women with disability, women living with HIV and Aids, re-integration of ex-female inmates back into society and productive activities, empowerment of widows, and teenage mothers return to school. Overall, the project reached 7, 150,153 persons of which majority constitute women and girls.

Despite these achievements the project was not rid of challenges, ranging from insecurity that led to change of some project locations to safer places, change of a few project partners, inflation of processes of goods and services which impacted project budgets, partners and beneficiaries, entrenched patriarchal norms and practices which can be attributed to negative cultural and religious norms and practices. The lessons learnt from the WVL-Nigeria Project demonstrated that a flexible, inclusive, and non-prescriptive approach is key to advancing women's rights effectively. By collaborating with diverse Local Women's Rights Organizations (LWROs), tailoring interventions to specific needs, and fostering a participatory grant-making process, the project empowered LWROs to take ownership of their initiatives. It showed that even small funds could significantly impact local communities, emphasize the importance of easing grant criteria, and promoted innovative approaches to tackle complex challenges. Integrating capacity development with financial sub-granting enhanced the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of these organizations, while strategically managing fragmentation amplified the reach and influence of the women's rights movement in Nigeria.

The rooted community organizations supported and strengthened by the project, strong relationship and Mult stakeholders' structures and the national state and community levels established, strengthened by the project, strong relationship with government and LWROs and networks strengthen capacity for resource mobilization provide a pathway for the project's sustainability. In conclusion, the WVL project model has proven that increased resources in the hands of women-led organizations, networks and movements has proven to have a greatly contribute to increasing enjoyment of rights of women and girls as well as advancing gender equality in Nigeria.



# Background and Context

## The Gender Equality Landscape In Nigeria

### » Political Participation

An appraisal of women in politics and decision-making positions indicated that women in Nigeria were politically marginalized and under-represented in the political scene. The lack of an appropriate legal and policy framework was identified as a significant factor in the high failure rate of women's political endeavors, among other socio-cultural and economic factors that continued to undermine women's participation. The Constitution and the Electoral Act serve as guiding documents on what political parties should do and who should contest elections, but these legal frameworks do not contain any direct provisions intended to encourage women's political participation and increase their representation in government like those found in international and regional instruments. Despite this, political parties had the opportunity to adopt and implement affirmative action, that was done for zoning key leadership positions. Furthermore, eliminating political violence and engaging with traditional and religious institutions, including cultures opposed to women's leadership, was considered imperative to encourage women to take active roles in politics.

### » Economic Empowerment

An analysis of the economic environment revealed that numerous constraints hindered women's economic participation in Nigeria, including access to education (formal or informal), landed properties, financial services, and medical services, which could lead to maternal mortality. Other barriers included cultural practices, child marriage, child labor, legal, regulatory, and policy frameworks, gender norms, and discriminatory social norms.

Data revealed that women were more financially excluded than men. The literacy rate among young women was significantly lower than that of their male counterparts. Majority of women in Nigeria live in rural areas and are predominantly engaged in the informal economy, with jobs in petty trading, subsistence farming, artisanry, and beauty services, which were often neglected by government interventions. In situations where government intervention occurred, either the programs were usually menial packages that did not meaningfully empower these women or there was limited information and awareness about the existence of such government economic interventions for women. At other times, soft loans offered to these women were diverted by their husbands, who were the decision-makers at the household level. Unpaid care work done by women in households remains highly undervalued as men rarely acknowledge women's roles and contributions within households; this needs to be quantified and valued as productive work. When women were empowered, they could afford better health care for themselves and provide more for their families. The lack of economic power among women contributed to low political participation and was one of the factors that led to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV).

### » Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

Women and girls in Nigeria were vulnerable to physical, sexual, and psychological abuse that cut across lines of income, ability, class, geographical location, socio-economic status, religion, age and culture. The most prevalent SGBV issues in Nigeria included female genital mutilation, trafficking in persons, widowhood practices, disinheritance of women and girls, and domestic violence/wife battery. Surprisingly, data revealed that spousal abuse and sexual violence were experienced more by educated women than by their low-income counterparts. Unfortunately, law enforcement agents often treated domestic violence lightly, dismissing it as a family matter that should be resolved at

home. The lack of data, illiteracy, and poverty were some of the factors that hindered interventions on SGBVs.

## » **Emerging Issues on Sexual and gender Based Violence**

An emerging type of SGBV in Nigeria involved violence against women in conflict situations and political settings. The emergence of insurgency and insecurity and the spread of violence opened up new avenues for this new form of gender violence, including sex slavery, forced marriages to terrorists, and ‘sex-for-food’ practices, especially in Internally Displaced Persons Camps.

Socio-political violence also emerged. In the 2019 elections, thugs disguised as political supporters under the influence of drugs took control of roads, streets, and wards or settlements, wielding dangerous weapons to scare and force people, especially women, to surrender their valuables, including bags, phones, and other items or adornments, under the threat of being killed or maimed. In other situations, these groups of bandits resorted to the rape of women indiscriminately—married and unmarried—under the guise of political support. Pressured voting also emerged as another type of violence against women. There was an incident where a husband divorced his wife simply because she refused to vote for the candidate of his choice, preferring to vote for the candidate that suited her. Technology-facilitated GBV which includes shaming and abusing women on social media, including the portrayal of allegedly concocted nude photos, became ways of deterring women from participating in public life. Violence within online spaces by women who shamed other women or by intimate partners also emerged as a form of violence perpetrated by women against other women.

## » **Funding of Women Movements and Organizations**

Women were organized for economic, political, and social reasons as networks, professional groups, cluster groups, groups with common interests, or observer groups. However, most women organized for gender equality and empowerment. Despite this, funding was identified as a major challenge for the advancement of gender equality and empowerment. Donors’ funding priorities were usually focused on thematic areas within the donors’ mandates. Calls for funding were typically issued in specific areas, and relevant local NGOs responded to these calls depending on whether the area aligned with their own mandate as well. There was no flexibility for addressing issues considered a priority by local women’s groups.

Funding interventions were needed to raise awareness and consciousness about SGBV issues like FGM, rape, domestic violence, harmful widowhood practices, denial of inheritance rights, and trafficking in persons. Interventions also needed to address patriarchy by engaging traditional and religious leaders with human rights approaches. Cooperative groups were seen as a good mechanism for revolving funds for the empowerment of women, as they acted as guarantors for one another.





## About the Project

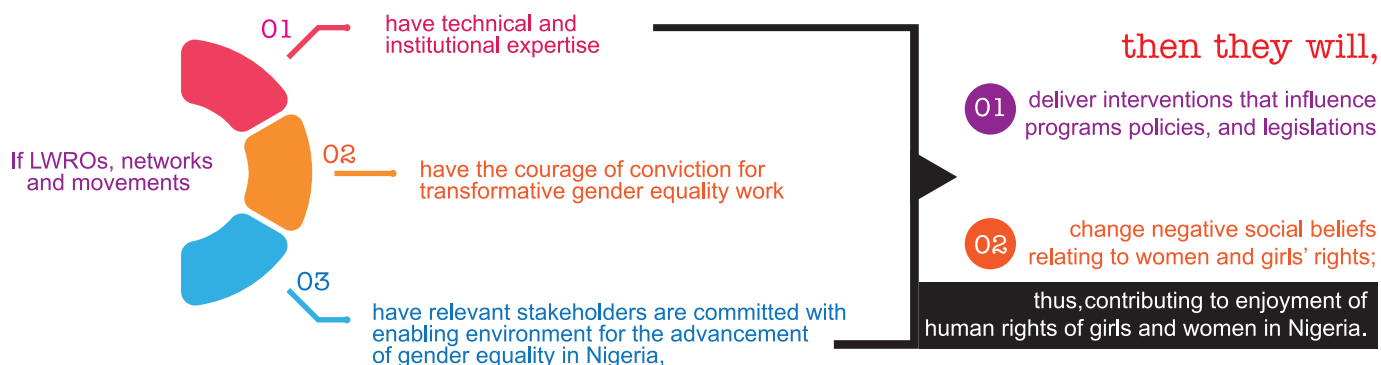
The Women's Voice and Leadership Nigeria (WVL-Nigeria) project, funded by Global Affairs Canada, spanned five years (2019-2024) and was a key component of its Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP). Implemented by ActionAid Nigeria, the project aimed to enhance the capacities and activities of local and national women's rights organizations and movements. Its goal was to empower women and girls, advance their rights, and promote gender equality in Nigeria through innovative approaches and activities.

The project addressed the challenges these organizations face in combating discrimination, rights violations in policy and legislation, inadequate service provision, harmful social and exclusionary beliefs and practices. Through the WVL-Nigeria Project, ActionAid Nigeria demonstrated its capability to effectively manage sub-granting initiatives and strengthen local women-led organizations by providing multiple layers of funding and tailored capacity-building support to over 100 local women-led organizations, networks, and movements.

Through this project, women's rights organizations received essential tools, resources, and mentoring to bolster their financial, technical, and organizational capacities. The project also supported national-level feminist platforms to enhance networking among the Nigerian women's rights community, fostering greater cohesiveness within the movement. Additionally, mid-sized women's rights organizations (LWROs) in six states (representing the six geo-political zones) received capacity-building support to implement programs and manage and monitor sub-grants to community-level LWROs.



## Our Theory of Change



## Strategies





# Expected Result/Outcomes

## Ultimate Outcome

Increased enjoyment of human rights by women and girls and the advancement of gender equality in Nigeria.



## Intermediate Outcome



1

Improved management and sustainability of local women's rights organizations.



2

Improved effectiveness of LWROs to deliver programs and advocate for women's rights, including innovative approaches.



3

Increased effectiveness of local women's rights platforms, movements, and networks to influence policy, legislation, social beliefs, and practices in favour of gender equality and innovative approaches.



# Our Partnership

Multi-Year Grant							
SN	Bauchi	Kebbi	Kwara	Enugu	Lagos	Cross River	FCT
1	Fahimta Women and Youth Development Initiative	Nana Girls and Women Empowerment Initiative	GLOWHOC	Women Aid Collective (WACOL)	Women's Rights and Health Project, WRAHP	Neighborhood Care-Well Foundation (NCF)	Women in Politics Forum
2	ASHH Foundation	ASWHAN	NUFAT	Women Information Network (WINET)	Center for Gender Economics Initiative (CGE Africa)	Child Care and Adult Protection Initiative (CCAPI)	100 Women Lobby Group
3	RAHAMA	KTMDI	OCDI	Women Empowerment and Peace Building Initiative (WEPBI)	Women Radio 91.7	Gender and Development Action-Centre for Training and Development Activities (GADA-CETDA)	SWOFON
4	FOMWAN	Yauri Women Development Association (YAWDA)	Omu-Aran Women Forum	Udi Progressive Union	NECA's Network of Entrepreneurial Women (NNEW)	A Well-Informed Adolescent Initiative (AWA)	NILOWV
					*Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA)		
5	Aid Connect for Development (AIDCODE)	Bright Capacity Initiative for community Enhancement	Health is Wealth Women's Wing	Ogene Ifunanya Women Association	Almanah Hope Foundation	Akpabuyo Women Development Association (AWDA)	CWEENS
6	Khairi Women and Youth Upliftment for Development Association (KWAYUDA)	Jega Women Multi-purpose	Golden Heart Women Forum	Njikoka Women Association	Bisi Adebayo Networking Gems	Double Grace Chapel Inc. (DCC)	FIDA
7	Reproductive Health Initiative and Support Association (RHISA)	H. SARNA Women Arise	Gender Emancipation Support	Health Care Support Services	Catholic Sisters United in Christ Foundation	Nka Iban Uko Foundation (NIUF)	
8	Small scale women farmers organization in Nigeria	Mar'attussaliha Widows and Orphans Initiative (MWOI)	Golden Sisters	Global Mission International	Edda Women Progressive Development Initiative	Radiant Women Association (RAWAS)	



9	Child Is Gold Foundation	Abban Aisha Women initiative	KW.ST Association Marketer Women Wiong	lyom Njoku Eji Women Association	Ejigbo Grinding Machine Association	Women Directorate Initiative (WODI)	
	Foundation	for better tomorrow initiatives	Foundation	Women Organization St Charles Umudim Imezi Owa	Help Association	Farmer's Association (IFA)	
11	Karofi Hazaka Ethics and Values Multipurpose cooperative	National Council for Women's Society	Community Need Care Development	Oji River Urban Women Association	Havilah Impact Women Initiative	True Beauty Foundation (TBF)	
	Society (KHEV-MS)		Initiative (CONCED)				
12	Women Wing Christian Association of Nigeria (WOWICAN)	Maginga Women Development Association	Asiri-Abo Women Development Association	Obige Obukpa Widows Care Foundation	Healthy Living Women and Empowerment Initiative	Catholic Women Organization of Nigeria	
13	Awalah Women of Wisdom Farming Cooperative Society (ABWW-FCS)	Zaki gem	Ifedara Women Group	Widows Support Group Imezi Olo	Humanity Family Foundation for Peace and Development	Voice of Ejagham Women Association (VEWA)	
14	Women Empowerment Initiative (WEIN)	Equity Destitute Child Right Women Initiative	Wanru Suuru Women Community Based Organization	New Life Community Care Initiative {NELCCI}	Ogo-Oluwa Women Association	Perfect Future International Foundation (PFIF)	
15	A Syndicate in Supporting Women and Children Initiatives (SISWACHI)	FOMWAN	Gesthemane Grace and Mercy Women Development Centre	Felicitas Women Advocacy for Development Initiative {F-WADI}	Women Liberation and Transformation Group	Enye Iribe Ibiang Akpoji Association (EINGA)	
16	Nigeria Women's Rights and Empowerment Network (NIWOREN)				Women of Wisdom		

#### LIST OF STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY FUND (SOF) GRANT

S/N	ACRONYM	FULL NAME OF ORGANIZATION	STATE
1		100 Women Lobby Group	ABUJA.
2	WARDC	Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC)	Lagos
3	CCAE	Centre for Creative Arts Education	Lagos
4	CF	Cedarseed Foundation	FCT
5	CPI	Challenged Parenthood Initiative	LOKOJA,
6	KTMDI	Kungiyar Tallafin Mata Development Initiative (KTMDI)	KEBBI
7	WACOL	Women Aid Collective	Enugu
8	ASHH Foundation	Attah Sisters Helping Hand Foundation (ASHH)	Bauchi
9	WRAHP	Women's Rights and Health Project	Lagos
10	DF	Dinidari Foundation	ABUJA, NIGERIA
11	NCF	Neighborhood Carewell (NCF)	Cross River
12	DNF	Dorothy Njemanze Foundation	Abuja.
13	ADF	ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE FOUNDATION	Anambra state
14	CEWHIN	Centre for Women's Health and Information (CEWHIN)	Lagos State.
15	EH	ElectHer	Lagos
16	EVA	Education as a Vaccine (EVA)	Abuja.
17	GAT	Gender Awareness Trust (GAT)	Kaduna State.

18	WOLDI	WOMEN, LAW AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE [WOLDI]	FCT, Abuja
19	PDA	Participatory Development Alternatives (PDA)	
20	OWACDO	Okaha Women and Children Development Organization (OWACDO)	Benue State
21	HDI	Hopes and Dreams Initiative	FCT, Abuja
22	WPF	Women in Politics Forum	FCT, ABUJA
23	GLOHWOC	Global Hope for Women and Children Foundation (GLOHWOC)	Iorin, Kwara
24	OCDI	Olive Community Development Initiatives (OCDI)	KWARA STATE
25	CWEENS	Christian Women for Excellence and Empowerment in Nigeria Society	FCT Abuja
26	DAF	DATALEAD AFRICA FOUNDATION	ABUJA,
27	FIDA Nigeria	International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA Nigeria)	FCT, Abuja
28	GADA	GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT ACTION (GADA)	Calabar, Cross River
29	GRADE	GRASSROOT PEOPLE AND GENDER DEVELOPMENT CENTER (GRADE)	Lagos
30	NAWOJ	NIGERIA ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS	FCT
31	NCWS	NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR WOMEN'S SOCIETIES NIGERIA IMO STATE	IMO
32	PCIC	PARENT-CHILD INTERVENTION CENTRE (PCIC)	Ebonyi State.
33	SAFEPATH	SAFEPATH ALLIANCE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS (SAFEPATH-NIGERIA)	ANAMBRA STATE
34	SWOFON	SMALLSCALE WOMEN FARMERS ORGANIZATION IN NIGERIA (SWOFON)	ABUJA
35	WARDC	Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre	Abeokuta
36	FTF	FAB TREASURE FOUNDATIO	FCT Abuja
37	MHF	Mountains of Hope Foundation	Pleatue State
38	NFF	NEXUSFARE FOUNDATION	Kaduna State
39	NABWW	NIGERIA ASSOCIATION OF THE BLIND WOMEN WING	FCT Abuja.
40	SSI	SAFE SPACE INITIATIVE	FCT, Abuja
41	SIDEC	Social and Integral Development Centre (SIDEC)	Anambra State
42	WHF	WEB OF HEARTS FOUNDATION	Lagos
43	VGCVPF	VOICE OF THE GIRL CHILD AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE FOUNDATION	FCT, Abuja.
44	AGEF	ADDA GIRL EDUCATION FOUNDATION	FCT, Abuja.

LIST OF STRATEGIC INNOVATION FUND (SIF) GRANT			
S/N	ACRONYM	FULL NAME OF ORGANIZATION	STATE
1	TLI	Teens Lead Initiative	Oyo State.
2	YLWAC	Yes, to Life for Women and Children	Abuja FCT Nigeria
3	TSSA	Total Stage2Screen Academy	Jos, Plateau
4	NANA	NANA Women and Girls Empowerment Initiative	KEBBI STATE.
5	WOFILS	Women Foundation for Improved Living Standard (WOFILS)	Anambra State
6	MHR	Media and Health Rights (MHR)	FCT Abuja
9	TN	Teenage Network	FCT, Abuja
10	SERI	Stand to End Rape Initiative	Lagos
11	FIRC	FEMALE INMATES AND RETURNED CITIZENS (FIRC)	FCT Abuja
12	ACI	AGAPE CARE INITIATIVE	FCT Abuja.
13		COMMUNITY ADVOCATE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT	Bauchi

14	DAF	DIFFERENTLY ABLED FOUNDATION	Ondo State.
15	FGEI	Female Gender Empowerment Initiative	Kaduna state.

NAME OF COVID-19 TOP UP LWROS			
S/N	ACRONYM	FULL NAME OF ORGANIZATION	STATE
1	WRAHP	WOMEN'S RIGHT & HEALTH PROJECT	LAGOS
2	PROJECT ALERT	PROJECT ALERT	LAGOS
3	GLOHWOC	GLOBAL HOPE FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN FOUNDATION	KWARA
4	CGE AFRICA	CENTER FOR GENDER ECONOMICS INITIATIVE	LAGOS
5	OWACDO	OKAHA WOMEN AND CHILDREN DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION	BENUE
6	BCROF	BARRISTER CHIKA RITA OKWUOSAH FOUNDATION (BCROF)	ANAMBRA
9	FIDA	INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN LAWYERS	AKS, RIVERS, EBONYI & ANAMBRA
10	WADHI,	WOMEN ARISE DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN INITIATIVE (WADHI)	FCT
11	ASWHAN	ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV AND AIDS IN NIGERIA	FCT - to - Kebbi
12	DNF	DOROTHY NJEMANZE FOUNDATION	FCT
13	MOGCI	MOTHER OF GOOD COUNSEL INITIATIVE	RIVERS STATE
14	CWEENS	CHRISTIAN WOMEN FOR EXCELLENCE AND EMPOWERMENT IN NIGERIA SOCIETY	FCT
15	DINIDARI FOUNDATION	DINIDARI FOUNDATION	FCT
16	WACOL	WOMEN AID COLLECTIVE	ENUGU
17	SAHEI	SANITATION AND HYGIENE EDUCATION INITIATIVE	BORNO
18	BAF	BABA AZIMI FOUNDATION	JIGAWA
19	NCF	NEIGHBORHOOD CARE-WELL FOUNDATION	CROSS RIVER
20	ASHHF	ATTAH SISTERS HELPING HANDS FOUNDATION	BAUCHI

## Project's Results and achievement: Impact and Outcomes

The goal of the Women's Voice and Leadership project in Nigeria was to support the capacity and activities of local and national women's organizations and movements seeking to empower women and girls, advance the protection of women's and girls' rights and achieve gender equality.

In addition to other efforts made towards achieving the goal, the project focused on strengthening both institutional and programming capacities through provision of tools, resources, and mentorship opportunities to project partners to strengthen and sustain their financial, technical, and organizational capacity in advancing the rights of women and girls and address gender equality barriers more effectively. Additionally, the project supported feminist platforms at the state and federal level for more effective networking and greater cohesiveness in the advancement of women and girls' rights. All partners located in six states and FCT received a wide range of capacity building to implement programmes and sustainable manage their respective organizations.

### Strengthened Institutions



Over 90% of the 72 Community Based Organizations on the WVL-Nigeria project, now have legal status and recognition through registration with the relevant National, State and local government mandated ministries, departments and agencies positioning them to partly meet the requirements of granting agencies and donors.



All 100 partners have put in place at least 5 of the basic organizational policies (Financial policy, Human Resource policy, Sexual Harassment Exploitation and Abuse (SHEA) policy, Gender policy, Strategic/Annual plans, Monitoring and Evaluation plans), with some reporting that the existence of these policies contributed to high scores during assessments carried out by potential donors.



100 partners on the project now have social media handles across various social media platforms with some having fully functional interactive websites.

### Improved Women's Rights Programming



100 partners (28 LWROs and 72 CBOs) currently demonstrate capacity to implement women's rights and feminist interventions.



10 Local Women's Rights Organizations (ASHH Foundation, CCAPI, FAWOYDI, GLOWHOC, KTMDI, Nana Girls, NCF, WACOL, WEPBI and WRAHP) managing CBOs, now demonstrate capacity to disburse grants and support CBO grant management across all the 6 project states.



100 LWROs now demonstrating capacity to set their agendas and manage delivery of their programs.



# 1 Addressing Gender Based Violence/Violence Against Women and Girls

The project has been instrumental in addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) across 6 states and the FCT. By working through Local Women's Rights Organizations (LWROs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), the project adopted a multi-faceted approach in addressing GBV using response and preventive measures. The responsive measures included access to justice, provision of essential psycho-social and medical support, establishment of Safe Spaces and Shelters for women and girls while the preventive measures included organized school group training for community stakeholders, public awareness campaigns, coordination sessions, town halls that advocated for policy influencing and implementation. There were also community dialogues that seeks to shift societal norms and promote a culture of respect and equality. The project has recorded remarkable achievements in addressing GBV and VAWG through a range of outcomes and impact recorded in project implementation states:

## Key Milestones Achieved

- 1 Over 4,781 people were directly reached in the 6 project states (Bauchi, Cross River, Enugu, Lagos, Kwara, Kebbi) and the FCT. through GBV/VAWG services such as legal support, medical services, psychosocial support and empowerment activities for survivors Over 4 million people were indirectly reached in the 6 project states (Bauchi, Cross River, Enugu, Lagos, Kwara, Kebbi) and the FCT. through media campaigns, awareness raising session, school group therapy, GBV club sessions, community dialogue sessions, townhall meetings
- 2 4,683 GBV cases were handled and managed, with 178 GBV court cases filed, leading to 114 successful court judgments secured across the project states.
- 3 Economic empowerment was provided to 335 GBV survivors, and 5 safe shelters were supported in the WVWL project state.
- 4 School-Related Gender Based Violence (SRGBV) sensitization reached 68,492 students, 2,715 schoolteachers, and management staff across 26 schools and 10 LGAs in Kebbi State.
- 5 At the state level, a WVWL-CBO Coalition Against GBV was established, comprising seven CBO members. Additionally, 44 paralegal structures and three youth advocate groups were set up at the community level in Kebbi, Enugu and the FCT.
- 6 The initiative also established 12 safe spaces, including GBV Orange Groups, 37 GBV awareness clubs, 16 SRGBV school response committees, and 16 guidance and counselling units in Kebbi, Bauchi, Kwara, Lagos and the FCT.
- 7 Sensitization/capacity building efforts reached 472 traditional and religious leaders and 306,230 women and girls in Bauchi, Cross River, Enugu, Lagos, Kebbi, Kwara, and the FCT. 9 peer education groups were formed, enrolling 95 women. Moreover, during the COVID-19 lockdown, 118 vulnerable women and GBV survivors received economic support through palliatives.

### »» Provision of Protection Services through Temporary Shelters

Temporary shelters are critical in providing protection and support to GBV survivors. Under the WVL-N project, five temporary shelters were supported across Kwara, Enugu, Cross River, Lagos States and the FCT. For instance, CWEENS operated a safe space in the FCT where survivors and their children received mentoring, trauma counseling, psychotherapy, and other essential services. GLOWHOC managed the Amoyo shelter home, offering survivors of SGBV not only a secure place to stay but also nutritional support, medical care, and vocational training aimed at promoting social and economic empowerment. These shelters were crucial in helping survivors recover and rebuild their lives.

Women Aid Collective (WACOL) in Enugu State, for the first few years, used funds from project to manage the Tamar Sexual Assault and Referral Centre (Tamar SARC). The center is a one-stop-shop registered subsidiary initiative of WACOL (RC 1539768) that started in 2014 with the support of Justice for All (J4A) funded by DfID, UK. WACOL Tamar SARC focuses its work to provide rapid response and provision of integrated services (Medical, Legal, Counselling, Shelter, Financial and Psycho-social support) for victims and survivors of sexual violence in Nigeria. However, multi-year grants from the WVL-Nigeria project, contributed towards keeping the operational for about 3 years.

In Lagos State, the Women's Rights and Health Project WRAHP currently manages the Ireti Resource Centre. Though not a shelter, the safe space provides integrated legal and psychosocial support in a safe space for women, survivors of domestic violence, and other vulnerable persons across communities in Lagos State. Though the setting up of the Centre was done with grant from the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) programme in 2020, the multiyear grants from the WVL-Nigeria project have kept the Centre operational since then.

### »» Provision of Psychosocial Support Services and Medical Care

Psychosocial support was a critical component of the WVL-Nigeria project. GLOWHOC's Clinical Psychotherapy Unit conducted sessions involving psychoeducation, counselling, relaxation techniques, and cognitive restructuring. These sessions were designed to help survivors manage anxiety, depression, and stress, fostering their mental well-being.

WRAHP utilized Psychological First Aid to offer respectful and supportive questioning, promoting calmness and reassurance among survivors. The Ireti Resource Centre employed the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS) in therapy sessions to address the emotional states of survivors, providing one-on-one counselling to female survivors using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). The ASHH Foundation conducted monthly therapy sessions for survivors, offering group counselling and creating a safe space for survivors of GBV to share their experiences and receive support. In Kwara State, the psychosocial unit of the Organization for Community Development Initiative (OCDI) also provided counselling, access to justice, and mediation services.

### »» Structures Established

The structures established within this project include a diverse range of committees, coalitions, and support groups aimed at addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and supporting survivors. These include Paralegal Committees in Kebbi, Enugu and the FCT, WVL CBO Coalition Against Gender Based Violence in Kebbi, and various school-based initiatives such as the Guidance and Counselling Unit, School Response Team on GBV, and GBV Clubs in Bauchi, Lagos, Kebbi, Cross River, and Enugu State.

»» Additionally, there are community-driven efforts like the Girl Child Protection Committee, Community Watch Women, and Community Advocates, alongside specialized groups such as the Interfaith Coalition Committee in Cross River, Rape Support Group, and Prevention Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Advocacy Group.

Other key initiatives include the State Sexual and Gender Based Violence Committee in Bauchi and Kwara, State SGBV Prosecution Committee in Kwara, Multi-sectoral GBV Committee in the FCT, Sexual Gender Committee on WPS in Kwara, State Committee on Trafficking in Kwara and the FCT. These efforts are further supported by the Gender Inclusive Club and mentorship platforms such as the "I Support Her" Club thus ensuring a comprehensive approach to GBV prevention and response.

These efforts are further supported by the Gender Inclusive Club and mentorship platforms such as the "I Support Her" Club in Akai Effa community, Calabar thus ensuring a comprehensive approach to GBV prevention and response.

## 2 Women Economic Justice and Empowerment Programme

Over the five years of implementation, 30 organizations (LWROs and CBOs) developed interventions aligned with their agendas related to Women's Economic Justice and Empowerment programs. These interventions included a range of activities such as training, mentoring, and coaching; supporting innovative approaches to women-owned businesses; facilitating access to markets and credit; forming cooperatives to federate women-owned businesses; promoting economic and financial literacy; and raising awareness and sensitization on Women's Economic Justice and Empowerment.

### »» Economic Empowerment and Business Ownership

A total of 22,455 women and girls across project states were directly impacted by economic justice and empowerment initiatives, leading to 6,500 rural women establishing or owning businesses through interventions such as VSLA schemes and start-up grants or equipment.

In Kwara State, GLOWHOC provided the Small Holders Women Farmers group in Ilorin South with Garri processing start-up kits. These kits were designed to reduce labour intensity, save production time, increase output per production cycle, and boost sales.

In Cross Rivers, CWO, a CBO provided startup support for 27 women within the age bracket of 18 and 45 in Ugep community, to kickstart coconut oil production businesses and enrolled 4 women into a tailoring school.

In Kebbi, a CBO (FOMWAN) facilitated the opening of bank accounts for 50 women and older girls in Takalau community, Birnin Kebbi LGA, providing each with a grant of ₦5,000 to start or expand their businesses. Additionally, NWBTI supported 50 women by providing 25 of them with 5 bags of groundnut each to boost their groundnut cake (Kuli-Kuli) and oil extraction businesses, while the remaining 25 received ingredients and packaging materials for spice production.

Child Care and Adult Protection Initiative (CCAPI), in Cross River State, supported the registration of 10 women cooperative groups in export trade business with the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC). The NEPC certification plays a vital role in identifying legitimate exporters and providing them with valuable opportunities, including access to funding, trade fairs, and business promotions.

### »» Financial Inclusion and Savings

The result from the VSLA scheme impacted 39 women's rights organizations across 6 WVL-N project states (Bauchi, Enugu, Cross River, Kwara, Kebbi and the FCT) and helped to promote women's economic empowerment. This initiative led to the formation of 532 groups, involving a total of 13,911 women from 233 communities in 69 Local Government Areas (LGAs). Collectively, these groups saved a total of ₦408,802,652.00 million Naira and shared out a total of ₦417,517,352.50 million Naira over the five-year period.

Within the lifespan of this project, new businesses were also created, while existing ones were enhanced through the VSLA. For instance, the project provided support to 7,563 women and some of these women's businesses transitioned from small-scale, informal businesses to registered and more formal enterprises. Some examples include women moving from street vending to establishing registered businesses in various sectors such as agriculture, retail, and services. Other types of



## »» Economic/Financial Literacy and Capacity Building

Engaging in income-generating activities is crucial as it fosters self-sustainability and plays a vital role in the economic empowerment of women. As such, some partners organized training sessions aimed at equipping women and girls with the necessary knowledge and skills to generate much-needed income. Many women had no prior personal source of income before these sessions, while others were interested in diversifying their businesses to increase their earnings. The training content primarily focused on activities that utilized the participants' existing skills and accessible local materials, ensuring they had viable options when other resources were unavailable. Below are some of the capacity building results:

In Kebbi State, the Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) AAWI, FOMWAN, NCWS, and NWBTI collectively implemented a range of economic empowerment activities. These included training 184 women and older girls on paddy rice processing using locally improved technology. The women were also trained on the processing of locally sourced raw materials like cow milk to yogurt, and packaging of products to enhance generation.

In Cross River State, a consortium of CBOs and the lead LWRO including TBF, CWO, EINGA, PFIF, VEWA, IFA, and CCAPI conducted various skills acquisition and income-generating trainings. These training courses covered a wide range of skills such as cosmetology, tailoring, pastry production, shoemaking, makeup artistry, headgear tying, coconut oil production, and palm kernel processing. Participants also received training in marketing, customer service, financial management, and business planning to further enhance their capacities to manage and sustain successful businesses. Also, EINGA a CBO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, trained 3 women in poultry farming and supported 11 women with fertilizers and herbicides for their agricultural activities. CCAPI also played a significant role by training 20 participants on micro-enterprise fundamentals, conducting business development training for 16 Women Cooperative Groups, and providing business startup kits to previously trained women and girls. Additionally, CCAPI supported women in the export trade by organizing training sessions on export certifications, distributing weighing scales to 6 cooperative groups, and assisting 10 women cooperative groups with the renewal of their Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) certificates.

As part of strategy towards engaging men and boys in the promotion of gender equity in n Bauchi State, SWOFON organized a forum for women and men in micro businesses to share experiences and strategies for running efficient and thriving businesses. A key suggestion from the forum was the importance of diversifying products to increase the customer base and sales, especially given the current economic realities.

In the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), SWOFON trained 24 smallholder women farmers on tomato processing and preservation, equipping them with the skills needed to manage tomato paste production businesses. Startup kits were provided to support these ventures. Additionally, in collaboration with the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NIMET), SWOFON conducted disaster flood mitigation training for 21 women farmers, aimed at raising awareness about the impacts of climate change and strategies for promoting climate resilience, among small holder women farmers who have experienced significant losses of farm crops to flooding. Additionally, 8 skill acquisition centers were established in Cross River, Lagos and Kwara States where 4,379 women received training in income-generating skills. 3,944 rural women were provided with start-up grants or equipment to help launch or expand their business ventures.

## »» Supporting innovative approaches to women-owned businesses

On the drive to digitalize VSLA groups in Bauchi State, FOMWAN facilitated the opening of personal bank accounts for 2,013 women and 28 cooperative accounts for VSLA groups. The need for these

bank accounts was in response to the need for women from VSLA groups to conduct their saving activities digitally and reduce the risk of moneys stolen or missing from their savings box. The accounts opening process is also to help the women learn how to transact business in a way that allows for effective and seamless payments.

During the Nigerian government's implementation of the cashless policy, Naira notes became scarce, making economic transactions increasingly difficult. In response to this challenge, one of the LWRO's in Kebbi State, NANA Girls Initiative, developed a training manual for Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) focused on financial technology (FINTECH). NANA introduced FINTECH to several VSLA groups to facilitate smoother transactions.

NANA also engaged with Payment Service Bank (PSB) operators in Kebbi, including Momo (owned by MTN Nigeria), Money Master (owned by Globacom), SmartCash (owned by Airtel Nigeria), Opay, and Money Point.; The NANA team learned about the various services offered by these PSBs and linked their VSLA groups to these operators. This initiative enabled the groups to register and open accounts, ensuring continuous saving activities and addressing the challenges posed by the cashless policy.

In Bauchi State, FOMWAN, merged some of the VSLA groups formed into 8 VSLA Federations. These federations provide a platform for individual VSLAs to collaborate, share resources, and advocate for common interests. The federations often help in scaling up the impact of VSLAs by offering additional services such as access to larger loans, financial education, and connections to formal financial institutions. In addition to the federations, 22 VSLA cooperatives were formed and registered as cooperatives with the Ministry of Women Affairs and Ministry of Commerce and Industry, giving them an advantage to be recognized by financial organizations such as the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) for further support and access to economic empowerment benefits.

## Sensitization and Community Engagement

### Advocacy for Policy Influence

- In Cross River and Lagos, project partners advocated, campaigned and lobbied for levies and taxes to be reduced for market women at grassroots level from ₦11,000 to ₦6,000 annually. Through the taxation and levy policy; 50 female petty traders were enrolled in the National Health Insurance Scheme.
- In Cross River, the project influenced the inclusion of the informal sector in the revised MSME National Policies, ensuring that microbusinesses like petty traders are included in government plans.
- In Lagos, CGE Africa supported the elderly women to have access to social services and benefit from welfare programs that will provide financial support to them through the Lagos State Residents' Registration Agency (LASRRA) – (This agency is responsible for registering all residents of Lagos State, when it comes to identifying and providing targeted social services to elderly individuals). The registered elderly residents can benefit from various social welfare programs and health schemes provided by the state government.

- Combined efforts of WVL partners and key stakeholders in Cross River State assessed the impact of government efforts in reducing high taxation on women in the market; findings revealed that in one of the prominent markets in the Calabar Municipality called Marian market, there has been significant reduction in tolls/tickets from N300 per day to N100 per day. This prompted a letter of appreciation from the market association addressed to the Commissioner of Commerce.

### 3 Women Political Participation and Leadership

To contribute towards more women in strategic and decision-making leadership positions, efforts of some WVL project partners focused on increasing women's political participation at all levels through capacity building for women and young female political aspirants (including trainings, mentorship, and coaching programs), advocacy actions targeting political parties and election management bodies for increased spaces and participation of/for women, media engagement, and leadership programmes for women and girls at levels among others.

Their combined efforts resulted to the following:

- 190 women make history as members of traditional leadership councils in Bauchi, Cross River, Enugu, Kebbi and Kwara States. The first of its time in most of these communities.
- 2,566 women were opportune to vote for the first time through mobilization efforts of project partners.
- 40 women through verifiable support from the project, vied for and won political elective positions.
- The project supported the development of Gender Policies in 5 Nigerian Universities.
- 3 young female students became President of the Student Union Government in their tertiary institutions for the first time. Names of the institutions are, Enugu State College of Education, Technical and Peace Land College, Enugu and the University of Calabar.
- The appointment of the 1st female deputy Chief Judge, student senate, IMT, Enugu State.
- The election of the 1st female president in computer science department, IMT Enugu State
- The election of a female as the President of the National Association of Akwa Ibom State Students (NAKISS) in the College of Health Technology, Calabar.
- The election of a female as the Vice President, Student Union Government, University of Cross River State (UNICROSS).

64 young women won several seats in the SUGs of their colleges and universities in Kebbi State as a result of KTMDI's young women mentors program. Some of which are:

- The election of the 1st female Vice President, Student Union Government, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Kebbi State.
- The election of a female as the Vice President, National Association of Kebbi State Students (NAKSS)



## 4 Legal Framework and Policies that Promote Gender Equality

The third intermediate outcome of the project is Increased effectiveness of local women's rights platforms, movements, and networks to influence policy, legislation, social beliefs, and practices in favor of gender equality and innovative approaches. To achieve this, project partners especially women's rights networks and movement at national and state levels were trained on advocacy and policy influencing in addition to other complementary knowledge and skills that would make their work effective. Below are the results of the combined achievements.

Frameworks, policies and laws contributed towards by WVL project partners:

### ■ 5 Gender Bills for Constitutional Amendment on:

- *Advocated for 35 percent affirmative action on Political Parties' Bill (35 percent of Executive positions in Political Parties). 111 seats assigned to women.*
- *Inclusion of at least ten percent affirmative action in favour of women in Ministerial appointments.*
- *Advocated for the passage of the Indigene ship bill to law (married women should have a choice on state of origin and can take up indigene ship of their husbands' state after 5 years of marriage).*
- *Advocated for the passage of the Citizenship bill (a bill which proposes the granting of citizenship status to foreign-born husbands of Nigerian women) into law. Already a Nigerian man's foreign-born wife is automatically a Nigerian citizen).*

- Influenced the Domestication of the Maputo Protocol on women's rights in Africa.
- Influenced the enrolment of elderly persons in the Lagos State Health Insurance Scheme (LSHIS) "Ilera Eko" (Elderly individuals enrolled in the scheme can access a range of healthcare services).
- Influenced the registration of elderly persons in the Lagos State Residents' Registration Agency (LASRRA) – (This agency is responsible for registering all residents of Lagos State and helps in identifying and providing targeted social services to elderly individuals. Registered elderly residents can benefit from various social welfare programs and health schemes provided by the state government).
- Influenced the inclusion of the informal sector in the reviewed Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) National Policies. This will ensure that microbusinesses, like petty traders, are included in various government plans.

Advocated and pushed for the translation Kebbi State Penal Code into Hausa Language for better understanding of Kebbi people and facilitated the dissemination of the penal Code across 170 local communities in the state.

- Advocated and pushed for the implementation of the National Gender Policy on Agriculture.
- Participated and supported in updating the INEC Gender Policy at the National Level.
- Campaigned, advocated and lobbied for the passage of the 2022 Electoral Act Bill.
- Support and provided technical input for the development of Gender Policy Amendment for the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).
- Contributed towards the passage into law of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Laws in Bauchi, Cross River, Enugu, Imo, Kebbi, Kogi and Kwara States.
- Contributed towards the advocacy on passage of Enugu State Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill into law
- Contributed towards the passage of the Enugu State Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities Prohibition Law
- Partners advocacy actions contributed to the declare of a State of Emergency on Gender Based Violence/Rape by the Nigerian Governor's Forum in 2020.
- Advocated for cattle damage insurance policy for farmers as an insurance cover for smallholder women farmers.
- Supported and provided technical input for the development of the 1st State Action Plan for Implementation of United National Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security in Kwara State.
- Supported the Class Action Lawsuit against the University of Calabar, citing negligence of duty regarding a sexual harassment case involving female students. This legal action was made possible through the support of the Women's Voice and Leadership (WVL) Strategic Opportunity Fund.



## Increased Access to WVL Acknowledgement Platform-The Feminist Hub

Women's rights and women-led organizations in Nigeria faced significant challenges, particularly in accessing the resources needed for effective programming. Despite their critical role in advocating for gender equality and empowering women and girls, these organizations often operated with low visibility, insufficient technical support, and restricted access to reliable data. These constraints hindered their ability to design, implement, and scale impactful initiatives. Recognizing these challenges, the Feminist Hub was established to make the WVL-N project accessible to all, providing a centralized repository of information and resources on women and girls' rights. This platform not only supported the learning needs of individuals and organizations dedicated to gender advocacy but also maximized the use of technology to disseminate vital messages to a broader audience. By creating a one-stop-shop for information on critical areas of gender and women's rights, the Feminist Hub enhanced the reach and impact of women's rights organizations, helping them overcome resource limitations and drive meaningful change.

The strategy to develop the website guided project communication activities and contributed to the attainment of Immediate Outcome 1210 (Improved knowledge of sustainable approaches and practices to address issues of rights of women and girls) and Intermediate Outcome 1200 (Enhanced delivery of programming and advocacy to advance gender equality by local women's rights organizations in Nigeria) on the project.

Content for the Feminist Hub was generated through rigorous research, including specific studies related to WVL Nigeria, such as the project mapping report, political economy analysis report, and other research conducted by partners. In addition to these core resources, the hub featured success stories and case studies from within the project. These were presented in various formats—publications, articles, infographics, and audiovisual materials—that highlighted learnings and key outcomes.

To ensure the hub remained a comprehensive and dynamic repository of information, content was also sourced from other women's rights projects. This approach guaranteed that the hub not only reflected the latest insights from the WVL Nigeria project but also provided a broader perspective on women's rights issues globally. By integrating diverse content, the hub served as a valuable tool for knowledge sharing and strategic learning within the women's rights space.

### ■ Key Objectives and Features

#### **Central Repository:**

The Feminist Hub acted as a one-stop-shop for information on all critical areas of gender and women's rights. It was designed to support women and girls, as well as organizations working on women's and girls' rights, by providing access to essential information and resources.

#### **Technology Utilization:**

By leveraging technology, the Feminist Hub aimed to spread messages to women's rights organizations, women and girls, and other stakeholders, thus enhancing the project's reach and impact.

### Audience-Centered Approach:

The strategy emphasized an audience-centered approach, ensuring responsive feedback to better achieve project objectives and outcomes. It outlined how stakeholders and various audiences would be reached with relevant information, and how achievements would be publicized.

### Donor Acknowledgment:

The Feminist Hub was created to give visibility and acknowledgment to Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and ActionAid Nigeria (AAN), the primary and secondary donors, throughout the project lifecycle. This helped raise the profile of the WVL project in Nigeria and positioned it as a model for other WVL project countries.

### Sustainable Impact:

With a clear and consistent strategy, the Feminist Hub aimed to position the project for sustainable donor funding, increase AAN's eligibility for more donor funding, individual sponsorship, and media partnerships.

## Reach and Achievements



Total Visitors:

**22,844**

people accessed the hub over the past four years. This indicated a steady stream of visitors and reflected the reach of the website.



Page Views:

**41,923**

page views were recorded, showcasing the overall popularity of the website. The higher number of page views compared to the number of visitors suggested that users explored multiple pages and engaged deeply with the content.



Publication Downloads:

**9,714**

The publications were downloaded 9,714 times, highlighting the value and usefulness of the content provided on the site. This high number of downloads, with a daily average of 9 downloads, indicated that users found the publications valuable and relevant to their needs.



Uptime:

**100%**

uptime was achieved, demonstrating the reliability and availability of the website. Consistent uptime ensured a positive user experience and helped maintain trust with the audience.



Registered Organizations:

**406**

women's rights and women-focused organizations registered with the Feminist Hub. This showcased the active engagement and participation of the target audience, indicating that the website served as a valuable resource and community hub.

In summary, the Feminist Hub was a vital tool in bridging the information gap and boosting the technical capacities of women's rights/women-led organizations (LWROs), making the WVL-N project accessible to all and maximizing its impact on advancing gender equality in Nigeria.



## 5 Sexual and Reproductive Health Right

In Kebbi State, significant improvements in maternal and child health were achieved through targeted interventions across several communities by Nana Girls and Women Empowerment Initiative. A total of 420 women successfully delivered their babies in hospitals, while 3,071 women ensured the immunization of their infants, contributing to enhanced child health and survival rates. Additionally, 40 adherence counselors were trained, reinforcing support for women living with HIV (PLHIV) and promoting adherence to antiretroviral therapy.

Eleven communities took proactive steps to improve maternal health by establishing bylaws that encourage hospital deliveries. These bylaws, which include sanctions and rewards, have positively impacted 52 women who have benefited from delivering in health facilities. As a result, there was a notable increase in the number of women attending antenatal care (ANC), with 1,695 women receiving care. Hospital records indicate an overall rise in the uptake of ANC (27%), immunization services (41%), hospital deliveries (14%), and family planning services across all 11 communities.

In a collaborative effort with CBOs, NANA Girls in Kebbi State targeted pregnant women by raising awareness in 347 households, encouraging antenatal care attendance and facility-based deliveries. The CBOs also played a significant role in establishing community bylaws that incentivize hospital deliveries. As a result, there was a dramatic increase in hospital deliveries, with the average number of daily births rising from 20 to 47. These efforts contributed to improved maternal health outcomes and a reduction in maternal mortality.

To further support PLHIV women, three additional support groups were formed by ASHWAN, bringing the total number of groups to nine. A total of 550 PLHIV women were trained, leading to improved adherence to antiretroviral therapy among group members. Women in the community have become more vocal about the quality of health services they receive, holding policymakers accountable in Kebbi State. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) played a crucial role in reporting complaints from women, such as the lack of beds, unavailability of drugs, and poor attitudes of health workers, to the Ministry of Health for necessary action.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, Women Rights Organizations (ASHWAN) provided palliatives to 140 HIV-positive women in support groups; this motivated the women and boosted membership in the support groups. Moreover, ASWHAN reached over 1,500 adolescent girls across three secondary schools and treatment centers in Birnin Kebbi, educating them about their rights and the importance of education.

The Nigeria Feminist Forum (NFF), while still a partner on the WVL-Nigeria project, developed a Road Map on the State of Women's Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in Nigeria, looking at the Clinical Management of Rape and its effects, using a feminist perspective. The document serves as an advocacy tool with identified relevant stakeholders in the health sector at national and state levels.

## Promoting Socio-Economic Inclusion of Elderly Women.

As people age, the lack of connection with others due to ageism, discrimination and a diminishing social life could cause an increase of depression as well as a multitude of other health problems. Self-esteem fluctuates over the course of one's life, this personality factor begins to decline somewhere between ages 60 and above. However, achieving and maintaining a positive sense of self-worth came from learnings from the Well-Being Parties innovatively created by the Centre for Gender Economics Initiative in Africa (CGE Africa) in Lagos State, targeted at wading off some of these negative effects of aging. CGE Africa also carried out policy influencing actions targeting relevant government institutions to implement existing laws and policies that would create an enabling environment for the aged.

Their efforts achieved tremendous impact as reflected below:

1

Successfully reduced social behaviours of excluding older women in Itedo and Maiyegun communities through strategic sensitization and community advocacy efforts.

2

Reduced abuse of older women in Lagos state through comprehensive strategies, including policy dialogues, stakeholder engagements, media partnerships, and impactful online campaigns.

3

Achieved a remarkable transformation in the well-being of nearly 100 older women in two communities, through learning and sharing within the monthly wellbeing parties.

4

Established Pioneering Safe Spaces for older women. The Senior Women Association (SEWA) was founded in project communities.

5

Successfully amplified older women's voices on pertinent issues through engaging in participatory filmmaking and active involvement in policy advocacy.

## 6 Climate Justice

In Nigeria, smallholder women farmers, particularly in the six area councils of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), encountered profound difficulties because of escalating conflicts between farmers and herders, as well as the pervasive threats of banditry and insecurity. These challenges severely impacted their ability to maintain their livelihoods, leading to a noticeable decline in food and livestock production and a subsequent rise in the cost of living in rural areas. The precarious situation left many women farmers struggling to sustain their communities and families.

In response to these pressing challenges, the Women's Voice and Leadership (WVL) Nigeria project, in collaboration with the Smallholder Women Farmers Organization in Nigeria (SWO-FON), has played a pivotal role in empowering these women to overcome the obstacles they face. By leveraging a multifaceted approach that combines community engagement and capacity-building initiatives, the project has worked to create safer and more sustainable farming environments.

### Women Peer Education Programme

The ActionAid Nigeria Women Peer Education Programme is a response to the obvious capacity gap and needs of women at community level to mobilize and organize around issues that affect their lives politically, socially, and economically. This programme uses its Women Peer Education Resource Kit which focuses on the advancement of women and girls' rights in Nigeria to strengthen peer educators across the project states. On the WVL-Nigeria project, partners in Bauchi, Cross River, Enugu, Kebbi and Kwara States adopted and implemented the programme. Efforts of women who participated in peer education circles resulted in the following:

- Advocacy efforts of women in the peer education circle led to the abolishment of an age-long practice of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting through a proclamation by the Traditional Ruler of Amagu Akegbe-Ugwu Community, His Royal Majesty, Igwe Ignatius Ugwu.
- Following reports and incidences of misbehavior by children and teenagers in the Ugwuanyiovu at night, the Traditional Rulers council issued a proclamation banning teenagers and children from being in the market from 7.00pm to 6:00am. This is to check harassment of girls, acts of impunity and immoral acts in the market.
- Women peer education members now have increased awareness on the issue of inclusion of women, girls and persons with disabilities in leadership & decision making.
- Women in Ugwuaji, Amagu Akegeb-Ugwu & Umuatugbuoma learnt how to mobilize, organize and take collective actions on issues that affect their lives politically, culturally, socially and economically, while bringing changes to their communities. Some have started income gen-

erating businesses.

- Through the peer education programme community women in Kwara State learnt the importance of keeping their environment clean and maintain a stable marital relationship

- As a result of the peer education programme Kwara Women have also learnt the importance of skills acquisition and income generation to support their family's income, this has led to harmonious living in the home since women no longer depend solely on their husband for the family upkeep.

- In Kwara State, 50 girls were re-enrolled back in school by members of women peer education circles through payment of school fees, and provision of school materials.

## Use of Radio as a tool for development

WFM 91.7 MHz is a Nigerian gender sensitive and specialized radio station licensed by Nigerian Broadcasting Commission to broadcast programs for women and their family. It is the first female-oriented radio station in Sub-Saharan Africa. Their vision is to use WFM91.7 as a tool for WOMEN Development and become the most reliable, trusted and leading source of information. As partners on the WVL-Nigeria project for 5 years, the following were achieved:

01

Through 834 'HerVoice' production of 138 radio episodes, 480 radio jingle spots, 78, audio-visuals, 120 IEC materials, HerVoice increased women education on issues of gender-based violence and connected women to help centres. Male Listeners also got involved on the ills of GBV on women and girls; Increasing the emergence of male champions with our Men's Conversations.

02

Partners used Radio to influence the increased visibility of WVL-N projects on social media platforms with over 372,400 engagements.

03

There was enhanced partnership with WVL partners on different platforms and live coverage of protest to lobby for the demands of the Nigerian women for the passage of the 5-gender bills.

04

Radio programs supported and gave visibility to female political candidates ahead of the 2023 elections that resulted to Rukaiyat Shittu the youngest lawmaker emerging winner in Kwara State.





## 7 Innovation

### Our Innovation Journey

For Global Affairs Canada, innovation in international assistance is a process, mindset and means to enable new or improved locally driven solutions for better results and greater impact, which benefit and empower the poorest and most vulnerable, including women and girls. Innovative solutions can include business models, policy practices, approaches, partnerships, technologies, behavioural insights, financing mechanisms or ways of delivering products and services.

For the Women's Voice and Leadership Initiative, development innovation is about finding new ways of tackling the barriers to gender equality and supporting the empowerment of women and adolescent girls. It also means encouraging, promoting, and scaling up these ideas when they are successful. Demonstrating the effectiveness of innovation requires both experimentation as well as innovation to show proof of impact.

On the Women's Voice and Leadership – Nigeria Project, innovation was both mainstreamed into conceptualizing project designs by women's rights organizations and as a standalone granting stream.

### Mainstreaming Innovation in Project Design

During onboarding and targeted training sessions, project partners acquired knowledge and skills on how to integrate innovative practices into their management, programming capacity, and/or organization's sustainability, adopt innovative approaches to meet their annual work plan targets and use of new knowledge in being innovative in engaging policy makers, legislative instruments, and framework towards changing social systems.

Actions of partners on innovative approaches to management, programming capacity and policy engagements were as follows:

#### **Women Radio (WFM 91.7 MHz),**

the first women centric radio station in West Africa and a WVL project partner based in Lagos/Ogun States, used her platform to advance the need for increased women's participation in Politics and Leadership through HerVoice program. 'HerVoice', a radio program designed specifically for the WVL-Nigeria project had 792 productions, 120 radio episodes, 480 radio jingle spots, 72, audio-visuals and 120 IEC materials. Unlike mainstream media, Women Radio dedicated 100% to providing a platform to support women-led organizations address issues on women inclusion and leadership. The program also addressed issues on Gender Based Violence, Women Economic and Financial Inclusion among others topical women's rights related issues. As a feminist organization, they shared their power and space with other sister women rights organizations and supported the increased visibility of their efforts on the WVL project through the HerVoice 60 secs audio-visual on all social media platforms and gathering over 368,000 engagements.



Fahimta Women and Youth Development Initiative (FAWOYDI) in Bauchi State, established a Women's Leadership Forum (WLF) at the community level which is a collective of female politicians committed to advancing the interests of potential candidates for political positions. This forum acts as a center for grassroots women, connecting them with forums at the local government level and a coordinating body at the state level. It is housed within the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Development.

**Center for Gender Economics, Africa (CGE Africa)**, innovatively channeled her programing towards addressing the social marginalization of elderly women. Their intervention christened Promoting the Socio- Economic Inclusion of Elderly Women through Well-being Parties in Lagos State, for women 50 years and above, encouraged actions that would improve well-being, increase elderly women's knowledge about volunteering, improve their employability status. They also worked with relevant stakeholders to ensure elderly women's inclusion in politics, economics and access to social protection plans. Worth of mentioning among their innovative activities was the formation of Senior Women Association (SEWA) and the initiation of a football tournament, themed 'My Football, My Therapy'. the elderly and intends to make it a bi-annual or quarterly event which would include the participation of more elderly women from more communities if more funds were raised.

**Abbah-Aisha Women Initiative (AAWI)**, a CBO in Kebbi State, provided training to 35 women and girls on utilizing local farm residues, such as maize foliage, husk stocks, millet bran, rice bran, cowpea hays, and groundnut hays, to produce livestock feed. This initiative helped reduce the cost of breeding livestock and purchasing feed, thereby enhancing their economic activities and resources, and further improving their livelihoods. Additionally, 22 women received training on rice processing using local technology, resulting in reduced production costs, and enabling them to generate profits.

'Glow Up' sessions, an innovative psychosocial support initiative that facilitates the healing process for female survivors of domestic violence, using make overs, spa and beauty treatments, photoshoot sessions among others, was conceptualized by the Women's Rights and Health Project's (WRAHP) in its Ireti Resource Center 'Glow Up' sessions are now one of the products offered in the center as they serve female survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). WRAHP introduced the Rotter Incomplete Sentence Blank College Form in therapy session for survivors. The tool is administered on survivors that present signs of anxiety, depression, and stress. Another innovative methodology that WRAHP employed in the course of her work is the use of Dance and Exercise therapy where survivors were taken through different techniques during the Safe Space session. They also institutionalized Board and Senior Management Retreat and Capacity Building for improved performance.



## 8 Strategic Opportunity Intervention

As part the WVL-Nigeria project design and implementation strategy to cope with the burden of emergency situations and unplanned occurrences, the WVL-Nigeria project also maintained a rapid response fund that can be accessed by Women's Right Organizations and their Networks for the promotion and protection of women and girls' rights. This basket of fund is designed to enable women organizations respond to rights violation as well as seize unanticipated opportunities to create change in the lives of women and girls. The grant positions LWROs to be nimble in responding to issues in any location. Through this strategy the WVL-Nigeria project has awarded 44 SOF grants to 31 Women's Right Organization across 15 states including the FCT (Lagos, Lokoja, Kebbi, Enugu, Bauchi, Cross River, Anambra, Kaduna, Kwara, Benue, Imo, Ebonyi, Abeokuta, Plateau, and the FCT) thereby improving the quality of life for women and girls beyond the WVL-focus states and the FCT. Impact of the WVL-Project SOF grants over the cause of the last 5 year include:

### 1. Enhanced Awareness and Employment Rights for Women with Disabilities:

The SOF funding to DATALEAD AFRICA helped increase awareness of employment rights for women with disabilities, leading to the establishment of commitments from both public and private sector organizations towards greater inclusivity. This intervention also fostered collaboration among key stakeholders, resulting in actionable strategies to improve the participation of women with disabilities in the workforce.

### 2. Improved Response to Gender-Based Violence (GBV):

The capacity of criminal justice actors to respond to GBV cases was strengthened through targeted training and shared learning platforms. This initiative, led by FIDA Nigeria, has contributed to a more informed and coordinated response to violence against women, particularly in terms of legal recourse and protection measures.

### 3. Increased Implementation of the Imo VAPP Law:

The SOF funds were instrumental in countering misinformation about the Imo VAPP Law and provided support for its implementation. The intervention led by NCWS resulted in a broader awareness and understanding of the law and strengthened collaboration among civil society organizations to ensure its effective enforcement.

### 4. Promotion of Safe Public Transportation for Women in Lagos:

Female drivers in Lagos State have benefited from enhanced support and protection against illegal extortion and harassment, thanks to the engagement of key stakeholders like LASTMA and the Federal Road Safety Corps. The intervention has also empowered these women through training on road safety laws and created a referral pathway for lodging complaints, thereby improving their working conditions and economic opportunities.



## 5. **Strengthened GBV Response Mechanisms in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT):**

CWEENS in FCT's SOF intervention has reinforced the capacity and collaboration of the multi-stakeholder Observatory Steering Committee (OBSTEC) to better respond to GBV cases. The training provided has led to improved coordination among GBV actors, ensuring that survivors receive appropriate medical, legal, and psychosocial support. Additionally, the SOF funds have supported the immediate needs of three GBV survivors, including safe relocation and ongoing therapy.

## 6. **Empowering Girls through State-Level Consultations:**

The initiative empowered over 200 girls across four states (Bauchi, Enugu, Kebbi, and Kwara) by providing platforms for them to voice their concerns and aspirations. This engagement led to the inclusion of girls in decision-making processes, advancing their rights and promoting gender equality in their communities.

## 7. **Urgent Intervention on SOP for Prosecuting School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV):**

The intervention at the University of Lagos successfully raised awareness of SRGBV among over 1,000 female students and secured formal commitments from university leadership to address gender-based violence. This has fostered a more vigilant environment and empowered students to advocate for their rights.

## 8. **Empowering Blind Women through Inclusive Programming:**

For the first time in its 54-year history, the National Association of the Blind Women Wing (NABWW) integrated gender perspectives into its programming. This milestone has increased awareness of disability-related gender issues among its stakeholders and led to a firm commitment to include persons with disabilities (PWDs) in its current and future programming going further.

## 9. **Exploring Nigeria's Economic Outlook:**

The roundtable convened by the Small-Scale Women Farmers Organization in Nigeria (SWOFON) produced a comprehensive document with strategic solutions for sustainable economic development. This blueprint is set to guide future engagements with government entities, advocating for inclusive economic policies that address the country's current macroeconomic challenges.

## 10. **Class Action Lawsuit against the University of Calabar:**

In response to the sexual harassment scandal at the University of Calabar (UNICAL), the interventions by NAWOJ, GADA, and WACOL mobilized national attention and action which set a precedent for addressing sexual harassment in Nigerian universities, leading to the suspension of the implicated professor and an ongoing legal case to ensure justice for the victims. Moreso, class action lawsuit against the University of Calabar was seen as a critical step towards securing justice for survivors of sexual harassment. This legal action will lead to the establishment of protective systems for female students in the institution and set a precedent for other institutions to learn.

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### 11. Increased Public Awareness and Advocacy Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV):

Through the SOF grant, WACOL in Abuja successfully drew national attention to the brutal assault of a female police officer by a prominent individual. This event catalysed a strong response from civil society and media representatives, leading to heightened public awareness and a call for justice. The immediate outcome was a commitment from relevant stakeholders, including law enforcement, to ensure a swift and fair legal process. The event underscored the importance of continuous media engagement in the fight against GBV and reinforced the need for a multi-sectoral approach to fight and prevent such acts of violence.

### 12. Empowerment and Advocacy Training for Young Girls Across Nigeria:

The State of the Nigerian Girl Summit (SONGS), facilitated by CCAPI with sub-grants to 10 organizations across various states, empowered young and adolescent girls to advocate for their rights and participate in societal decision-making. Through capacity-building sessions, and focus group discussions, the girls were able to articulate their needs and aspirations, particularly in the areas of education, protection from GBV, and participation in governance. The summit's feedback highlighted critical issues such as the need for prioritizing girls' education, enacting and enforcing punitive measures against violators of girls' rights, and involving young girls in decision-making processes. These outcomes demonstrate a significant step forward in equipping the next generation of women to be advocates for their rights and active participants in their communities.

### 13. Strategic Engagements to Tackle Sexual Harassment in Learning Institutions:

The advocacy efforts led by WACOL resulted in significant commitments from government bodies, including the resuscitation of the Sexual Harassment Bill and commitment to launch an Independent Panel and Toll-Free Line for anonymous reporting. These actions mark substantial progress towards addressing sexual harassment in Nigerian universities.

### 14. Promoting Gender-Responsive Climate Resilience in Flood-Prone Areas:

Through the SOF grant intervention in Anambra State, SAFEPATH-NIG facilitated advocacy engagements with State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) and Local government Authority on the need for the establishment of a gender sensitive and inclusive local emergency management committee in flood prone communities. As a result of this intervention, five women now serve as committee members and hold leadership roles in Ogbaru Local Government Area emergency management Committee. This initiative has also enhanced the capacity of both women and men in gender-responsive climate resilience, leading to more inclusive disaster management strategies. Additionally, the distribution of relief materials and menstrual hygiene kits to vulnerable groups has provided essential support during flood emergencies in the state.

**BREAKDOWN OF WVL-PROJECT DIRECT, INDIRECT AND TOTAL REACH BY STATE AND THEMATIC AREAS**

	CROSS RIVER	BAUCHI	FCT	KEBBI	KWARA	ENUGU	LAGOS	TOTAL REACH
<b>Sexual Reproductive Health Right (SRHR)</b>	0	0	-	56,386	0	0	31,564	<b>87,950</b>
<b>Women Economic Justice &amp; Empowerment</b>	243,975	264,169	80,008	173,945	203,254	195,322	325,745	<b>1,486,418</b>
<b>Women Political Participation &amp; Leadership</b>	203,075	96,175	242,125	100,027	161,113	309,124	196,515	<b>1,308,154</b>
<b>Prevention and Response GBV</b>	284,874	157,021	123,975	290,564	104,763	94,132	144,684	<b>1,200,013</b>
<b>Direct Project Reach</b>	731,924	517,365	446,108	620,922	469,130	598,578	698,508	<b>4,082,535</b>
<b>Total Project Reach</b>	<b>1,097,889</b>	<b>1,001,352</b>	<b>1,066,008</b>	<b>965,922</b>	<b>994,963</b>	<b>898,578</b>	<b>1,125,441</b>	<b>7,150,153</b>
<b>Indirect Project Reach</b>	365,965	483,987	619,900	345,000	525,833	300,000	426,933	<b>3,067,618</b>



# Success Stories





## Shifting the Tide: Women in Bauchi State Challenge Political Norms Despite Election Losses

In Bauchi State, as of 2023, there were no female representatives in the House of Assembly, nor were there women holding councillorship positions in the local governments of Alkaleri and Giade. The political landscape had long been dominated by men, with women relegated to the sidelines, excluded from the corridors of power. However, a quiet revolution began to take shape in 2020, thanks to the efforts of Fahimta, a Local Women's Rights Organization dedicated to empowering women and challenging deeply entrenched gender norms through the WVL-Nigeria project funded by Global Affairs Canada.

Fahimta's journey began by establishing women peer education groups in Giade and Alkaleri communities. These groups provided a safe space for women to learn about their rights, develop leadership skills, and build confidence in their ability to participate in public life. But Fahimta didn't stop there. Recognizing that lasting change requires the support of the entire community, the organization also mobilized a core group of male advocates. These men were trained in stakeholder relationship management, advocacy skills, and community engagement, enabling them to become allies in the fight for gender equality.

One of Fahimta's most impactful strategies was to engage religious leaders in dialogue about the importance of women's involvement in decision-making processes. In many communities, religious leaders hold significant influence, and their support was crucial in shifting the cultural norms that had long kept women out of politics.

By June 2022, the women peer groups, alongside the male gender advocates, organized a town hall meeting for women to sensitize them on the importance of grassroots political participation. They also paid advocacy visits to political parties, emphasizing the need for the inclusion of women in party leadership. These efforts were groundbreaking, as they marked the first time in the history of these communities that women were being encouraged to step into the political arena.

The results of these interventions were both inspiring and historic. In 2023, for the first time ever, three women from Alkaleri and Giade contested for councillorship positions. Although they did not win, their candidacies represented a monumental shift in the political culture of their communities. Before the intervention of the Women's Voice and Leadership (WVL) project, women in the region never even considered running for political office. But now, women are not only participating in politics but also getting more involved in decision-making processes at various levels.

The significance of these women's candidacies cannot be overstated. While they may not have secured electoral victories, they succeeded in something perhaps even more important—they

began to change the way their communities view women in politics. The courage and determination of these women have sparked a gradual shift in community orientation around women's participation in public life. This shift is enhancing the enjoyment of human rights by women and girls in Alkaleri, Giade, and beyond.

The women peer groups in these communities are not resting on their laurels. They are using the momentum generated by their political campaigns to continue pushing for greater involvement in decision-making processes at all levels. Their story is one of resilience and hope, a testament to the power of collective action and the importance of challenging the status quo. The story of these women, who dared to challenge deeply ingrained norms, serves as a powerful reminder that change is often slow and hard-fought, but it is possible. Their journey is a beacon of hope for women in other communities, showing that even in the face of defeat, progress can be made. By breaking the silence and stepping into the political arena, these women have paved the way for future generations to continue the fight for gender equality and representation.

The tide is slowly turning in Bauchi State, and the participation of women in politics is no longer a distant dream but a growing reality. As the women of Alkaleri and Giade continue to push boundaries and challenge norms, they are not just changing their communities—they are changing the world.







## Empowering Change: Combating Gender-Based Violence Through Community-Led Initiatives in Bauchi

In the Kofar Dumi and Kandahar communities of Bauchi Local Government Area, gender-based violence (GBV) was once a silent crisis. Despite a high incidence of GBV, including rape, there were no interventions or support structures in place to address the issue. Cultural norms and the fear of stigma often silenced survivors and their families, preventing them from seeking justice or support. The lack of awareness, coupled with the absence of mechanisms to report and manage GBV cases, left many victims in the shadows, suffering in silence.

The Women's Voice and Leadership (WVL) project, in partnership with RHISA, recognized the urgent need for intervention. In 2022, they embarked on a mission to harness the power of existing, culturally accepted community structures to combat GBV. The project team identified the Zauren Sulhu committees—local youth groups traditionally tasked with resolving communal disputes—as a valuable resource. These groups were already respected and trusted within the community, making them ideal allies in the fight against GBV.

The WVL project team began by training 20 members of the Zauren Sulhu committees—comprising both women and men—on GBV case management. This training covered crucial aspects such as recording incidents, understanding reporting channels, and making appropriate referrals to legal and medical services. Additionally, a two-day training session was conducted for 20 members of local youth groups, focusing on the implications of GBV and how to effectively communicate these dangers to their peers.

The impact of these training courses was immediate and profound. The Zauren Sulhu committees, now equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills, became pivotal in improving the community's response to GBV. Their ability to record, document, and refer cases led to a significant reduction in rape attacks in both communities. Women and girls, who once feared retribution or stigma, began to come forward, reporting incidents of GBV with newfound confidence. They trusted that their cases would be handled with care and referred to the appropriate authorities for legal action.

One of the most effective strategies employed by the Zauren Sulhu committees was the use of mass gatherings, such as marriage and naming ceremonies, to educate the public about the dangers of GBV. These events, which traditionally drew large crowds, became platforms for raising awareness and advocating for the prevention of GBV. The committees' efforts in these gatherings helped to change the narrative around GBV, shifting it from a taboo topic to one that could be openly discussed and addressed within the community.

The youth awareness groups also played a critical role in this transformation. These groups provided a platform for young people to pass information to their peers, fostering a culture of



vigilance and support against GBV. The youth, often at the forefront of community change, became advocates for a safer and more equitable society. Their involvement ensured that the message of the dangers and consequences of GBV reached every corner of the community, from schools to social gatherings.

As a result of these concerted efforts, the level of awareness about GBV issues has increased significantly in Kofar Dumi and Kandahar. The community's proactive approach to GBV has not only led to a reduction in the number of incidents but has also empowered women and girls to stand up for their rights. They no longer suffer in silence; instead, they have the support of their community and the assurance that their voices will be heard, and their cases addressed.

This transformation in Kofar Dumi and Kandahar is a powerful example of how community-led initiatives, supported by strategic interventions like the WVL project, can bring about lasting change. By tapping into existing, respected structures like the Zauran Sulhu committees and empowering them with the knowledge and tools to combat GBV, the project has created a sustainable model for addressing gender-based violence in culturally sensitive environments.

The journey from silence to action in these communities is a testament to the power of collective effort and the importance of localized, culturally aware strategies in the fight against GBV. It shows that with the right support, even the most deep-seated issues can be addressed, leading to a safer, more just society for all. The women and girls of Kofar Dumi and Kandahar now live in a community that stands with them, ready to protect their rights and uphold their dignity.







## Breaking Tradition: How Mass Media Empowered Women to Claim Their Land Rights

In the heart of Obioma community in Udi Local Government Area, Enugu State, traditional norms had long dictated that only men could inherit family land and property. This deep-rooted belief left many women, like Ifeoma Onuorah, unaware of their rights and resigned to a fate of exclusion. Ifeoma, a married woman and mother, had always believed that as an Igbo woman, she had no claim to her father's land. Her male siblings had inherited everything after their father's death, leaving her and her sister with only occasional, insignificant sums of money whenever their brothers chose to share the proceeds from land sales.

This was the reality for many women in Obioma, who silently accepted these norms as unchangeable. But everything changed one day when Ifeoma happened to tune in to a radio program produced by the NELCCI (Network for the Empowerment of Less Privileged Children & Women), under the Women's Voice and Leadership Nigeria (WVL-N) Project. The program was part of a larger initiative aimed at sensitizing communities about gender-based violence (GBV) and women's rights, including their rights to land and property inheritance.

As Ifeoma listened to the broadcast, a new world of possibilities opened to her. For the first time in her life, she learned that the customary exclusion of women from inheriting family property was not only unjust but also against her legal rights. The program emphasized that women, just like men, have the right to inherit and own land, a revelation that struck a deep chord with Ifeoma.

Empowered by this newfound knowledge, Ifeoma approached her sister to share what she had learned. The two women, who had previously accepted their roles as mere recipients of their brothers' occasional generosity, decided it was time to claim their rightful inheritance. They began to hold meetings with their brothers, initially facing resistance as their siblings were reluctant to acknowledge their sisters' claims. The brothers, steeped in tradition, found it difficult to accept that women could have any legitimate claim to the family property.

However, Ifeoma and her sister were undeterred. Bolstered by the information and confidence gained from the NELCCI program, they stood their ground, insisting on their rights. Their persistence eventually paid off. After several discussions, their brothers conceded, and each of the women was granted three plots of land. For Ifeoma, this victory was not just about the land itself, but about the empowerment and validation of her rights as a woman.

Ifeoma's story is a powerful testament to the role of mass media in challenging and changing deeply ingrained societal norms. Through a simple radio program, she and countless other women were equipped with the knowledge and courage to challenge the status quo. The impact



of this cannot be overstated—by claiming her inheritance, Ifeoma not only secured a better future for herself and her children but also paved the way for other women in her community to assert their rights.

This shift in norms around women's land rights is a significant step toward gender equality in Obioma and beyond. The NELCCI's efforts through the WVL-N project have demonstrated that when women are provided with the right information, they can challenge exclusionary practices and transform their lives. The power of the media, in this case, served as a catalyst for change, bringing about a ripple effect that will likely continue to influence the community for generations to come.

Ifeoma's journey from a woman resigned to her fate to one who boldly claimed her rights reflects the broader struggle of women across many communities. It underscores the importance of access to information and the critical role that mass media can play in shifting norms and empowering women. In a society where traditions often dictate the roles and rights of individuals, stories like Ifeoma's are a beacon of hope, showing that change is possible, and that women's voices, once awakened, can never be silenced again.





A smiling woman with dark skin and a black beanie is holding a large bundle of green leafy plants. She is standing in a rural, arid landscape with dry earth and some green vegetation in the background. The image is used as a background for the article.

## A Harvest of Hope: Empowering Women Farmers in FCT Through Land Rights

In the sprawling rural landscapes of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), where agriculture remains the lifeblood of many communities, smallholder women farmers have long been the silent backbone of the sector. Despite making up 60 to 80 percent of the agricultural labor force, these women have historically been denied the most basic right essential to their livelihoods: ownership and control of the land they cultivate. For decades, patriarchal norms and deeply entrenched cultural beliefs have dictated that land ownership and inheritance belong to men, leaving women landless and powerless in decision-making processes that affect their farming activities.

The statistics paint a grim picture: around 55 percent of female-headed households in FCT are landless, and an additional 29 percent own less than one hectare of farmland. Even when women do manage to secure ownership of land, they often lack control over it, with male relatives or husbands making key decisions. This lack of autonomy has stifled the productivity and potential of countless women farmers, trapping them in a cycle of poverty and dependence.

But in the face of these overwhelming odds, a ray of hope began to emerge. The Small-Scale Women Farmers Organisation in Nigeria (SWOFON), with support from the Women's Voice and Leadership Project funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC), took up the mantle of advocating for the land rights of these women. Their focus was not only on securing land but also on challenging the very structures that perpetuate gender inequality in land ownership. Through relentless advocacy efforts aimed at community leaders across the six area councils of FCT—Abaji, Kwali, Kuje, Gwagwalada, Bwari, and AMAC—SWOFON sought to ignite a transformative change.

The turning point came when, after sustained dialogues and negotiations, the council chief of Gwagwalada allocated 15 hectares of land to smallholder women farmers. This land, now used for cluster farming of cassava and maize, represented more than just a plot of earth; it symbolized a victory in the struggle for gender equality and women's empowerment. The Chief of Guto in Bwari Area Council soon followed suit, allocating an additional five hectares of land to women farmers for the cultivation of maize, groundnut, soybeans, and yam.

These allocations have had a profound impact on the lives of the women farmers. The newfound access to land has not only improved their productivity but also their economic independence. With control over their land, they no longer need to spend their meager earnings on rent, and their yields have increased significantly, allowing them to produce more food for their families and communities.



The ripple effects of this empowerment are evident in the words of Chijioke Peace Ihuoma, one of the beneficiaries: “Without land, we cannot farm. This land has helped us save money because we will no longer have to rent. We have access to and control of this land. We now have improved yields, and we produce more. Our membership has increased tremendously from 500 to over 1,500 now because more women are joining us; they are seeing the results.”

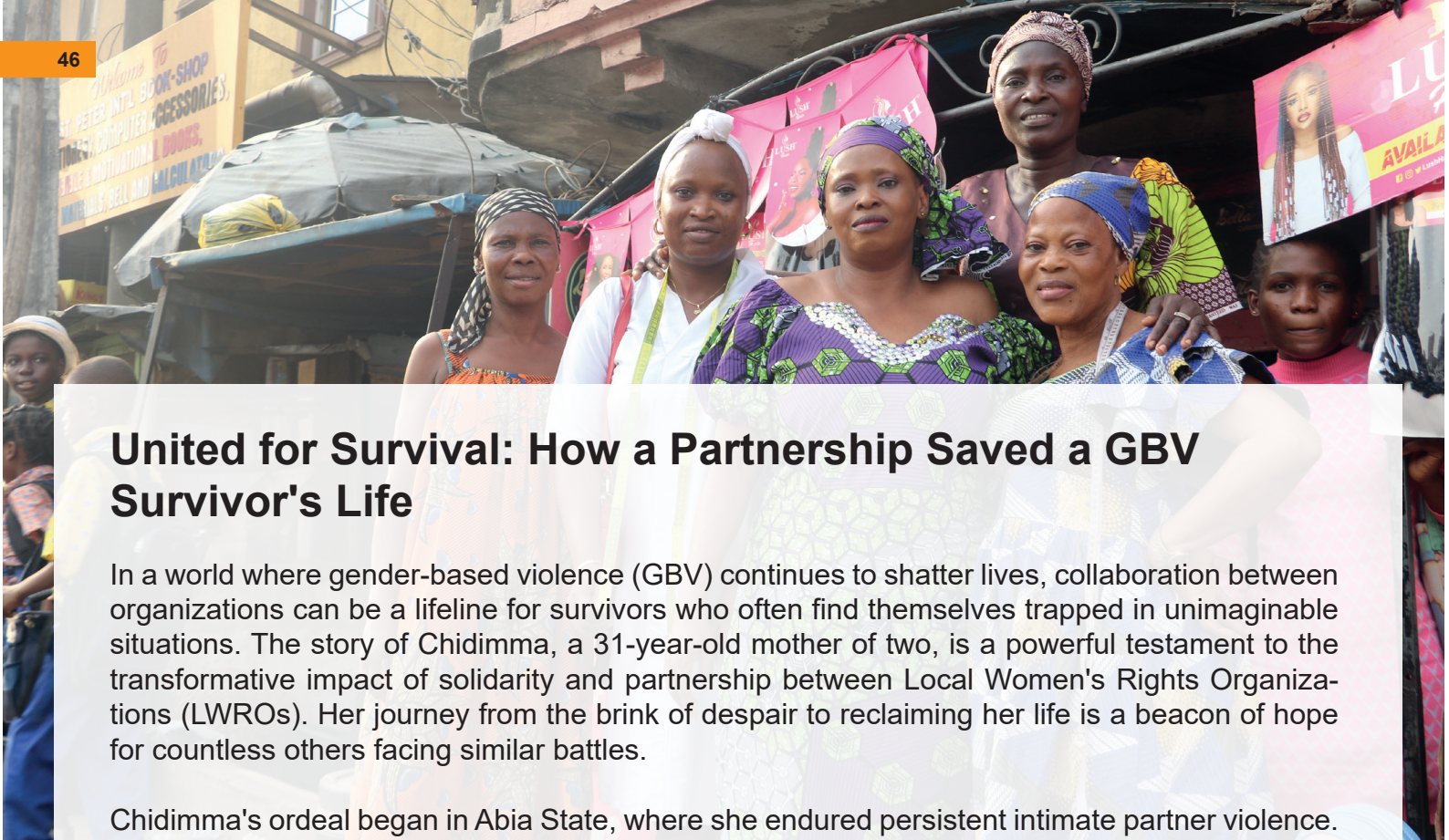
Chijioke’s testimony speaks to a broader narrative of change—one where women, once marginalized and voiceless, are now emerging as leaders and decision-makers in their communities. The allocation of land in Gwagwalada and Bwari Area Councils is more than just a practical solution; it signifies a gradual but powerful shift in societal attitudes toward women’s rights and their role in agriculture.

This transformation is not just about improving crop yields or economic gains; it is about reclaiming dignity, autonomy, and the right to participate fully in society. The increase in membership of SWOFON, from 500 to over 1,500, reflects the growing recognition among women that their voices matter, and that together, they can challenge the status quo.

The journey is far from over, but the progress made so far offers a glimpse of what is possible when women are given the tools and opportunities to succeed. The story of the smallholder women farmers in FCT is a testament to the resilience and determination of women everywhere who are fighting for their rights, one plot of land at a time.

As these women continue to till the soil and harvest their crops, they are also sowing the seeds of a more just and equitable society—one where women’s contributions to agriculture are recognized, valued, and rewarded. The light at the end of the tunnel is growing brighter, and with it, the hope that future generations of women will inherit not just land, but a legacy of empowerment and equality.





## United for Survival: How a Partnership Saved a GBV Survivor's Life

In a world where gender-based violence (GBV) continues to shatter lives, collaboration between organizations can be a lifeline for survivors who often find themselves trapped in unimaginable situations. The story of Chidimma, a 31-year-old mother of two, is a powerful testament to the transformative impact of solidarity and partnership between Local Women's Rights Organizations (LWROs). Her journey from the brink of despair to reclaiming her life is a beacon of hope for countless others facing similar battles.

Chidimma's ordeal began in Abia State, where she endured persistent intimate partner violence. Her life, and that of her two young children, was in constant danger due to the relentless abuse she suffered at the hands of her estranged husband. With each passing day, the violence escalated, leaving her physically and emotionally shattered. By January 2022, it was clear that Chidimma needed urgent intervention to escape the clutches of her abuser.

It was at this critical juncture that the power of partnership came into play. The Women's Aid Collective (WACOL), under the Women's Voice and Leadership (WVL) project, acted swiftly. Recognizing the gravity of Chidimma's situation, WACOL's legal unit, known for its dedication to protecting GBV survivors, took immediate action to evacuate her from Enugu to Lagos. This was not a decision made lightly; it was a matter of life and death.

But WACOL did not act alone. They reached out to Project Alert, a fellow LWRO known for its shelter support in Lagos. Project Alert opened its doors to Chidimma, providing her and her children with a haven for three months. During this time, Chidimma was shielded from further harm and given the space to begin healing from the trauma she endured. The shelter became a sanctuary, a place where she could start to rebuild her life away from the shadows of her past.

The violence Chidimma had endured left her with more than just emotional scars. One of her teeth had been fractured during one of the many violent episodes. Recognizing the importance of comprehensive care, Project Alert ensured that she received the necessary medical assistance. She was taken to a dentist who repaired the damage, addressing a painful reminder of the abuse she had suffered.

Throughout this difficult time, WACOL continued to stand by Chidimma's side. They provided supplementary financial support to help her navigate the immediate challenges she faced. This assistance, combined with the shelter and care provided by Project Alert, created a foundation upon which Chidimma could begin to rebuild her life. It was a testament to the power of what can be achieved when organizations come together with a shared purpose.

As the months passed, Chidimma found the strength to move on. With the support she received,



, she was able to secure permanent accommodation and start a small trade, providing for herself and her children. The dark days of abuse began to fade into the past as she focused on creating a brighter future. Today, Chidimma is not just a survivor; she is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the power of community.

Chidimma's story is more than just a narrative of survival; it is a powerful reminder of what can be accomplished when organizations refuse to work in silos and instead join forces to protect and empower those who are most vulnerable. The partnership between WACOL and Project Alert exemplifies the strength that comes from collaboration. Together, they were able to provide Chidimma with the safety, support, and resources she needed to escape a life-threatening situation and begin anew.

In her own words, Chidimma expresses her deep gratitude: *"I am so thankful for everything that was done for me and my children. I never thought I would be able to escape, but now I have hope again."*

Her words resonate as a call to action for others: when organizations unite, they have the power to change lives, to offer hope where there was once only despair. The story of Chidimma is not just about surviving GBV; it is about the possibility of thriving in the aftermath, thanks to the unwavering support of those who care.

In a world where the fight against GBV is far from over, Chidimma's journey stands as a shining example of how partnerships can illuminate the darkest paths, guiding survivors toward the light at the end of the tunnel.





# Lessons Learned

I **Inclusive Approach to Local Women Right Organizations:** The project's strength lies in its inclusive approach; accommodating and collaborating with multiple Local Women's Rights Organizations (LWROs), Networks and movements. This inclusivity allowed for a diverse range of perspectives, ideas and experiences, effectively responding to the unique capacity-building needs of WROs. It acknowledges that there is no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to advancing women's rights. Some of the organizations who contributed to this approach include Advocacy for women with Disability Initiative (AWWDI), Association of Women living with HIV and Aids, Hill of Hope (association of the blind women) amongst others.

II **Flexibility and Non-Prescriptive Nature:** The non-prescriptive nature of the project is advantageous because it allows for adaptability and responsiveness of partner needs and aspirations. It recognized that each LWRO has its own specific context, challenges, and strengths. This flexibility enabled the project to tailor its interventions to suit the specific needs and circumstances of the selected organizations, enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of its support.

III **Tailored Training:** Tailoring training programs to the specific needs of partner organizations is highly effective. This approach ensured that training delivered was not generic but addresses the real challenges and gaps faced by LWROs. It empowered these organizations with the knowledge and skills they needed to make a meaningful impact in their communities and in advancing women's rights.

IV **Participatory Grant Making:** Embracing Participatory Grant Making is a powerful strategy. By shifting grant management to LWROs and fostering co-creation, the project empowered local partners to take ownership of their initiatives. This not only ensured that resources are used effectively but also strengthens the sense of ownership and commitment among LWROs, aligning with the broader goal of championing women's rights.

V **Impact of Small Funds:** Demonstrating the impact of small funds emphasizes the importance of resource allocation. It showed that even limited financial resources can bring about significant positive changes in the lives of LWROs and the women/girls they serve. This recognition underscores the need for continued and targeted funding to support local women's rights initiatives.

VI **Numerous LWROs Engagement:** Engaging many LWROs directly reinforced the commitment to advancing women's rights. It sent a strong message that resources are being placed in the hands of local partners who are best positioned to also promote inclusivity and diversity in the women's rights movement.

VII **Flexible Grant Criteria:** Easing stringent criteria for granting LWROs was crucial for their growth and development. This flexibility allowed organizations to access funding more easily, enabling them to focus on their core mission rather than struggling to meet rigid requirements. It reduced barriers and created opportunities for emerging and grassroots organizations.

VIII Integration of Capacity Development and Financial Sub-Granting: Combining capacity development and financial sub-granting is a holistic approach. In implementing the project, this enhanced the skills and capabilities of LWROs and provided them with the financial resources needed to put their knowledge into action. This integration promoted organizational performance and long-term sustainability.

IX Promoting Innovative Approaches: Using the term 'innovative' in granting encouraged LWROs to think critically about hidden issues and explore new, creative solutions. It fostered a culture of innovation and problem-solving, allowing organizations to address complex and evolving challenges effectively.

X Leveraging Fragmentation: Fragmentation, when managed strategically, can increase the visibility, and reach of LWROs. By supporting a diverse array of organizations and initiatives, the project amplified the women's rights movement's influence and impact, ensuring that a broad spectrum of issues and communities are addressed.

XI National Coverage and Presence of the WVL-Project

XII Ownership Nature of the WVL-Nigeria Project

## Project Sustainability

The Women's Voice and Leadership (WVL) Nigeria Project made significant strides in advancing the roles and recognition of women's leadership within various communities. As follows:

### » Strengthening Community Organizations

One of the core components of the WVL project was its commitment to empowering community organizations led by women, and national networks. These organizations served as the backbone for implementing initiatives that addressed the needs of women and girls at the local level. By providing targeted support and resources, the project enabled these organizations to enhance their operational capacities, thereby ensuring their longevity and effectiveness.

The capacity-building efforts facilitated by the WVL project included training in leadership skills, financial management, and advocacy strategies. As a result, these organizations became better equipped to address issues affecting women in their communities and gained credibility and influence within broader networks. This empowerment was crucial for ensuring sustained advocacy for women's rights and leadership initiatives. By strengthening grassroots organizations and fostering collaboration among key stakeholders, the project laid a solid foundation for sustainability that extended beyond its funding cycle.

### » Establishing Strong Multi-Stakeholder Platforms/ Relationships

The project successfully established robust relationships among various stakeholders, which was another critical factor in its sustainability. The WVL initiative fostered connections between community organizations, government entities, and women's rights organizations (LWROs) at national, state, and local levels. These partnerships were vital for leveraging resources, sharing knowledge, and advocating for policy changes that benefited women's empowerment.

These multi-stakeholder structures created an ecosystem of support that encouraged cooperation and collaboration. Some of the structures include, GBV State level multi-stakeholders' response committees in Kwara, Bauchi and FCT, GBV prevention and response coalitions, community paralegals, GBV interfaith coalition forum for prevention and response to GBV in Cross River, young women leadership programme and academy amongst others. As these relationships strengthened, they provided a platform for joint initiatives that could mobilize resources beyond the project's initial funding. This interconnectedness was key to ensuring that women's voices continued to be amplified and that leadership initiatives were sustained over the long term.

### » Capacity for Resource Mobilization

A significant aspect of the sustainability strategy was enhancing the capacity of women-led organizations and networks for resource mobilization. The project prioritized training and support in fundraising, networking, and strategic partnership development. By equipping these organizations with the necessary skills and knowledge, they became better prepared to secure funding from diverse sources, thereby reducing their reliance on any single donor.

This focus on resource mobilization created a pathway for sustainability, enabling women-led organizations to endure and thrive through securing their financial independence by getting new grants from other donors. Furthermore, increased resources allowed these organizations to expand programs and deepen their impact on women's rights and gender equality, ensuring continuity even after the project's conclusion.





### Provision of Land and Buildings

A significant aspect of the sustainability strategy involved securing physical spaces for women's rights organizations. The project successfully advocated for the provision of land and buildings by government authorities, philanthropists, and community members to serve as permanent bases for women-led organizations. These spaces not only provided a place for operational activities but also fostered a sense of community and belonging among women's groups.

Having dedicated locations enabled these organizations to conduct trainings, workshops, and meetings, facilitating further capacity building and fostering collaboration. The securing of these resources by LWROs ensured that women's rights organizations could maintain a consistent presence in their communities, strengthening their ability to mobilize support and resources for their initiatives. For example, in Bauchi state ASHH foundation was funded by a philanthropist who got impressed by their work on social media to secure a land and build and equip office building. Also, GLOWHOC and CCAP in Kwara and Cross River respectively got land donations from the communities they work in. To build office spaced that will be used to empower more women.

Women's Voice and Leadership Nigeria Project demonstrated a model of sustainability that hinged on empowering community organizations, building multi-stakeholder relationships, and enhancing resource mobilization capabilities. The interdependence of these elements created a resilient framework for women's advocacy and leadership that could sustain itself long after initial funding ceased.

The evidence was clear: when women-led organizations, networks, and movements were provided with increased resources, they significantly contributed to advancing the enjoyment of women's and girls' rights and promoting gender equality. The WVL project stood as a testament to the potential for sustainable change through collective action and empowerment, ultimately leading to more equitable societies where women's voices were heard and valued.



# Annex



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A smiling woman wearing a blue and yellow patterned headwrap and a matching top with a green patterned skirt is working on a craft project. She is surrounded by other people in a similar setting, suggesting a community or workshop environment. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the woman in the foreground.

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