



# POLICY BRIEF

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ON BASELINE ASSESSMENT  
OF THE MOBILISING ACTIONS  
TOWARDS THE ABOLITION OF  
INFANTICIDE (**MATAI**)  
**PROJECT** IN THE FCT.

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# Introduction

**W**ith funding from the European Union (EU), ActionAid Nigeria (AAN), an affiliate of ActionAid International, is implementing the Mobilising Action Towards the Abolition of Infanticide (MATAI) project in the FCT. The overall goal of the project is to contribute to the protection and promotion of the rights of Children in Nigeria. The strategic objectives are:

- Strengthened legal and policy frameworks that address infanticide practices in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).
- Improved awareness in the FCT on infanticide practices especially among practicing communities.
- Mechanism established to safeguard unborn babies and infants susceptible to being victims of infanticide, as well as those that are currently ostracized at Vines Heritage Home (VHH).

A baseline assessment of the project was conducted with the overall objective of providing baseline data that will inform the implementation and monitoring/evaluation of the project.

## **Specific objectives of the baseline assessment:**

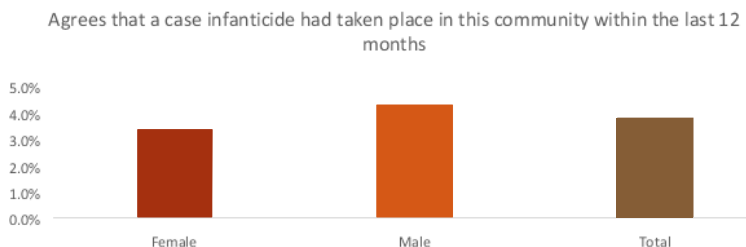
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- To determine the level of awareness of infanticide practices in the FCT; especially among practising communities.
- To ascertain the existence and functionality of child rights structures within selected communities in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).
- To identify and document various mechanisms to safeguard unborn babies and infants susceptible to being victims of infanticide, including the provision of quality maternal and child healthcare.
- To document on the status of implementation of the Child Right Act (CRA) in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).
- To suggest a robust and workable Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism for the implementation of the MATAI project, as well as monitoring and evaluating the existing legal and policy frameworks that address infanticide practices in the FCT.

A variety of research methods were used to collect data for the baseline assessment. The assessment was carried out in selected communities namely: Abaji, AMAC, Gwagwalada, Kuje and Kwali Area Councils in the FCT, where the MATAI project is to be implemented. Data was sourced through desk review and interviews (key informant interview and survey). Participants of the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were community leaders, administrators of Vine Heritage Home (VHH) and key Government officials at the Area Councils and Federal Capital Territory Administration. In all, 20 key informant interviews were conducted. Selection of participants for the KII sessions was purposive and the sessions were facilitated using a structured discussion guide.

The sample size for the survey was 385 assuming a confidence level of 95%, standard deviation of 0.5 and confidence interval of 5%. The sampling procedure was multi-stage sampling aimed at selecting eligible persons. Respondents were men and women of reproductive age (age 15 to 60). Five communities were randomly selected from each of the five Area Councils, resulting in a total number of 25 communities. Ultimately, 16 respondents were randomly selected from each community.

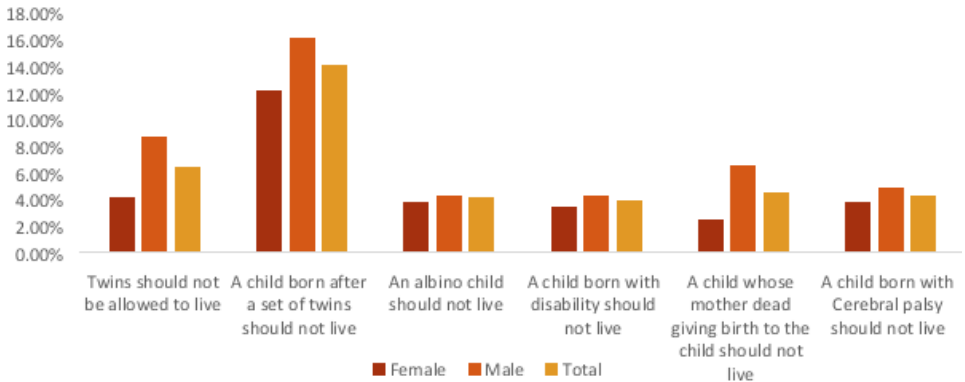
## Awareness of infanticide practices in the FCT



Cases of infanticide are evident in these communities as 4% of the respondents agree that they are aware of infanticide cases in the community. While the percentage may appear low, it is a very strong indicator that infanticide is practised in these communities.

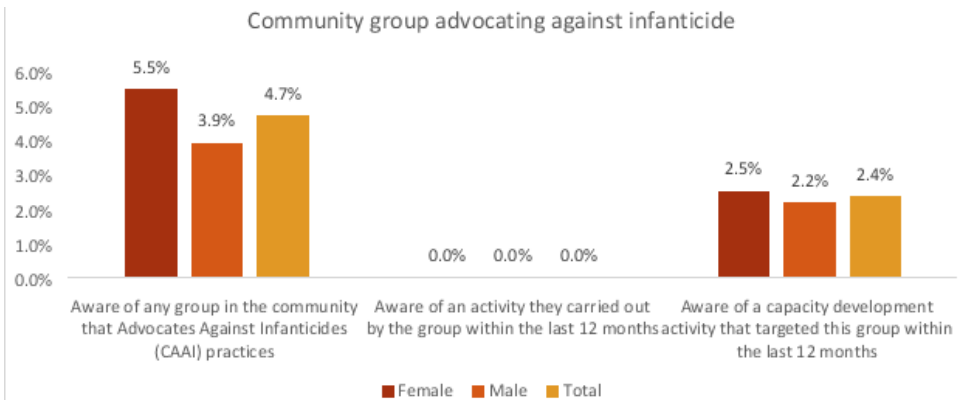
The baseline assessment sought to find out the opinion of community members in order to determine whether they agree that a child with some form of conditions should be killed or not. Shockingly, as high as 16% of male respondents agreed that a child born after a set of twins should be killed. Also, almost 9% of males agreed that a set of twins should be killed. While the overall percentage is less than 5% for the other conditions for killing an infant, more males than females appear to agree to killing an infant for whatever reason compared with females.

## Opinion of respondents on selected reasons of infanticide



## EXISTENCE AND FUNCTIONALITY OF CHILD RIGHTS STRUCTURES

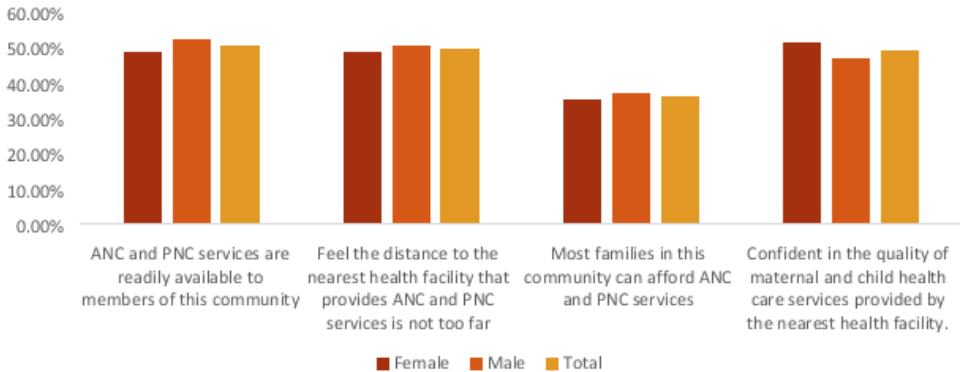
Community voice against infanticide is very critical if the issue is to be addressed. Most community members (over 95%) are not aware of any group in the community advocating against infanticide. Of those that are aware of any group, none reported he or she is aware of any activity the group has carried out within the last 12 months to advocate against infanticide. Only about 2% reported they are aware of a capacity building effort targeted at this group.



## MECHANISMS TO SAFEGUARD UNBORN BABIES AND INFANTS SUSCEPTIBLE TO BEING VICTIMS OF INFANTICIDE, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF QUALITY MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTHCARE.

Almost half of the respondents reported that Ante Natal Care (ANC) and Post Natal Care (PNC) services are not available in their community; the distance is too far; and they are not confident of the quality of services being offered. As high as 64% feel ANC and PNC services are not affordable.

## Access to maternal and child health services



However, this lack of access to quality maternal and infant health care services can be perceived as an avenue to promote the mortality of infants.

## STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHILD RIGHT ACT (CRA) IN THE FCT

Three out of the five Area Councils visited (AMAC, Gwagwalada and Kuje) reported that they have constituted the Child Rights Implementation Committee. Membership includes: Secretary of the Area Council (Chairman of the Committee), Supervisory Council of Education, Supervisory Council of Health, Social Welfare Officer, Market Women's Leader, Chairman of Market Men, Religious Leaders, Information Officer, Community Development Officer and other members.

Although, these committees have been constituted in these Area Councils, they face several challenges ranging from paucity of funds to differences in the opinions of members of the Child Right Committee.

In the other two Area Councils, the committee has not been constituted, due to “ignorance” on the part of the leadership of the Area Councils.

Funding remains the biggest challenge experienced by Child Rights Committees in all the Area Councils, as none of the Area Council reported that budgets were allocated and/or released for the implementation of the CRA.

# Key Recommendations

- The project should be specifically designed and implemented with targeted community level communication efforts to re-enforce and promote the rights of a child especially as it relates to infanticide.
- The project will need to raise champions in the community who will voice their rejection of the practice of infanticide. The project should innovatively implement targeted interventions that will help empower individuals in the community to raise their voices against infanticide.
- The myths and misconceptions driving the practice of infanticide should be addressed in a culturally, legally and politically sensitive way(s).
- Area Councils without the Child Rights Implementation Committees should be supported by the project to set up these committees. For Area Councils that have formed their committees, evidence-based advocacy targeted at decision makers both at the Area Council and the FCTA should be carried out to ensure the committees are adequately funded.
- Access to quality maternal and child healthcare services can be the gateway to addressing the incidences of infanticide in the communities. Currently, just about three out of every ten respondents feel that there is access to quality maternal and child healthcare services. It is recommended that deliberate efforts should be made in order to engage relevant Government bodies, to improve access to maternal and child health care services, while also focusing on the long-term goal of changing the cultural beliefs and practices promoting infanticide in the communities.
- The project needs to develop a routine Monitoring Information System (MIS) to track the performance of the project on a periodic basis. Mid-term and End-line Evaluations are recommended to know whether the project is on course to deliver its objectives, and also determine whether it delivered the objectives of the project at the end of the project. Lastly, it is suggested that some of the indicators should be reworded.

ActionAid is a global movement of people working together to further human rights for all and defeat poverty. We prioritise works with the poor and excluded, promoting values and commitment in civil society, institutions and governments with the aim of achieving structural changes to eradicate injustices and poverty in the world.

ActionAid Nigeria believes that a Nigeria without poverty and injustice is possible.

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