

Ford Foundation

SLOCVAWG
COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

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Rewriting Women's Stories

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES:

A SLOCVAWG PROJECT REPORT



JUNE 2023

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Foreword

Celebrating Accomplishments and Inspiring Change

It is with great pleasure and a sense of profound accomplishment that I write this foreword for the Strengthening Capacities of Local Women's Right Organizations to Address Violence Against Women and Girls (SLOC-VAWG) end-of-project report of AAN. This report signifies the culmination of immense dedication, hard work, and unwavering commitment to our mission of bringing positive change to the lives of Women and girls of in 14 LGAs within Imo, Gombe States and he FCT.

At ActionAid Nigeria, we are unapologetic about women advancement and gender equality, and we firmly believe in the power of collective action and the ability of individuals to make a lasting impact. The SLOC-VAWG project has been an extraordinary journey, filled with challenges, triumphs, and moments that have touched the lives of countless individuals. Throughout this report, you will discover the stories, insights, and accomplishments that have unfolded over the course of our project.

Some of the core objectives of the SLOC-VAWG project is to Improve institutional capabilities of women's rights organizations to strategically design, implement and manage actions on GBV for vulnerable women and girls in project states, and Increase effectiveness of women's organizations in delivering GBV interventions and affecting social change in project states through provision of multi-year grant and this project has been able to achieve that. We have sought to address critical issues that have affected our target communities, empowering women, and girls to take charge of their own rights and build a better future. The success of our project lies not only in the completion of tangible milestones but also in the transformational experiences we have witnessed among the people we served.

Throughout the project, we have striven not only to understand the multifaceted nature of violence against women and girls but also to identify effective strategies to combat it. By combining our collective knowledge, expertise, and resources, we have endeavored to make a meaningful impact on the lives of those affected, as well as society at large.

While this project signifies the culmination of a specific timeframe, let it serve as a catalyst for sustained efforts in the long run. We firmly believe that eradicating violence against women and girls requires a collective responsibility one that extends beyond the confines of this project. It necessitates ongoing collaboration, dialogue, and a commitment to challenging the societal norms and structures that perpetuate such violence.

This report serves as a reflection on the achievements of our project, it is also a call to action. Our journey does not end here; it is a steppingstone towards even greater endeavors. We enjoin you to be inspired by the stories and outcomes of the project. Let them serve as a reminder that, despite the obstacles we face, we can make a difference.

As we conclude this project, we remain steadfast in our commitment to making the world a better place. The lessons we have learned, the impact we have created, and the relationships we have forged will continue to guide our future endeavors. Together, we will build upon our accomplishments and forge a brighter future for all.

Thank you for joining us on this remarkable journey.

Ene Obi

Country Director

ActionAid Nigeria

Acknowledgement

The implementation of the SLOC-VAWG project and its accompanying achievements would not have been possible without the financial support of Ford Foundation. The remarkable efforts and contributions of Dabaseki Mac-Ikemenjima, a former senior project officer with the foundation who initiated this engagement, working tirelessly with Nkechi Ilochi-Kanny, ActionAid Nigeria's (AAN) current Head of Programme who pioneered the design and implementation of the project at that time as the Manager of the Women's Rights Unit. Your efforts sphere-headed the path that made this project a reality.

The supervisory technical guidance provided by Ms. Olufunke Baruwa, program officer for Gender, Racial, and Ethnic Justice who leads work on ending violence against women and girls have been invaluable to the project implementation team.

Without the professional and passionate commitment of the 12 Women's Rights and Community Based Organizations who implemented tailored interventions across targeted communities in the 3 project States of Gombe, Imo and the FCT, the outstanding benefits of the project's outcomes being enjoyed by women and girls in these communities may not have been experienced.

We recognize and commend work put in my Initiative for Women and Girls Right Advancement (IWOGRA), My Take Initiative (MTI), Sexual Offences Awareness & Response Initiative, (SOAR Initiative) and Teenage Education and Empowerment Network (Teenage Network), who implemented the project in the FCT. Communal Care Centre (CCC), Honourbirth Foundation (HBF), National Council of Women's Societies, Imo State (NCWSi) and Virgin Hearth Foundation (VHF), in Imo State and Faida Community Development Initiative (FAIDA), Knightengale Women's Health Initiative (KWHI), Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN) and MotherHen Development Foundation (MDF), in Gombe State.

I take use this opportunity to specially appreciate members of the Women's rights team which I lead 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:

Rukaiya Ibrahim, Prince Egba and Maria Effiwat, who all served as Project Officers on the project at different points in time, Ruth Chinke, Ezzine Oseni & Anthony Madumelu, Henr Anuforo who also served as Finance officers/consultants and Head of Finance at different times.

Vivian Efem-Bassey (Manager, Projects & Lagos Field Office), Noro Bature (Project Coordinator, WR Unit), Paul Samuel (MEL Advisor, WR Unit), Amina Aliyu Adamu (Manager IASL, AAN), for their technical and programmatic support provided to partners. Eghosa Gbadegesin and George Ugwo who provided financial coordination. Kehinde Afolabi (former Communications Officer, WR unit), Anastasia Duru, (current WR unit Communications Officer), Adeyinka Adepoyigi (Current WR Hub Manager), Toluwalase Bello (Current WR Visual Consultant), your efforts towards ensuring proper documentation of all project work for dissemination and learning purposes are acknowledged.

The Invaluable support of Suwaiba Mohammad Dankabo (Director Programmes), Andrew Mamedu (Director of Resource Mobilization and Diversification Unit), Collin Chinyere (Director of Finance) and Ene Obi (Country Director) are immensely appreciated and same goes for all members of the Senior and Central Management Team of ActionAid who in some ways have supported the project.

To all relevant stakeholders: State 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, provided guidance and support and participated actively in project activities, your efforts are appreciated.

Thank you all!

Niri Goyit

*Manager, Women's Rights Unit
ActionAid Nigeria*

Group 3

Unwanted Practices
Female Genital Mutilation
Forced Sex

1. Enlightenment has been made against the dangers of Unwanted Practices
 - We have made the Society see reasons why female Circumcision Should be Prohibited
 - We have been able to convince married men to stop using Sex Consent from their wives before having Sex
 2. Proper Education given to the female child to know her Private Parts
 - Public Caring
 - Prohibits the father and should encourage young and women to know when their Privacy is threatened
 - Use of Social Media to Emphasize on VAWG
 3. Dearest culture, Parents and youths, show we under the action and plead and you to always give ^{listen and give} support the CPRO have a say in family or community matters. Their rights should be respected and not to be isolated in any form cause both have equal rights. It will be appreciated to teach you (with) body Autonomy, and show them equal love irrespective of their gender. Finally, all hands should be on deck to curb VAWG.
- • Thanks



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List of Acronyms

AMAC	Abuja Municipal Area Council
AAN	ActionAid Nigeria
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CRT	Community Response Team
CCC	Communal Care Centre
CBOs	Community Base Organizations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRT	Community Response Team
FCDI	Faida Community Development Initiative
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FOMWAN	Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HBF	Honourbirth Foundation
HRBA	Human Resource Base Approach
IWOGRA	Initiative for Women and Girls Right Advancement
LGA	Local Government Area
LIG	Local Interactive Groups
MDA	Ministry's Departments Agencies
MTI	My Take Initiative
NCWSI	National Council of Women's Societies, Imo State
NDHS	Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey
PAM	Partnership Assessment Monitoring
PLWD	People Living with Disabilities
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SMT	Senior Management Team
SOAR	Sexual Offences Awareness & Response Initiative
SLOC-VAWG	Strengthening Local Women's Right Organizations to Address Violence Against Women and Girls
Teenage Network	Teenage Education and Empowerment Network
THP	Traditional Harmful Practices
VAPP	Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act/Law
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Associations
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
VHF	Virgin Hearth Foundation
WROs	Women's Right Organizations
WVL	Women Voice and Leadership Project

Executive Summary

ActionAid Nigeria presents the end-of-project report for the Strengthening Capacities of Local Women's Rights Organizations to Combat Violence Against Women and Girls (SLOC-VAWG) Project, implemented from June 2020 to May 2023. The project aimed to challenge harmful socio-cultural norms exacerbating violence against women and girls in Nigeria. Indigenous community-based Women's Rights Organizations (WROs) partnered with ActionAid Nigeria, with funding from the Ford Foundation, to implement the project across Gombe, Imo, and FCT.

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a prevalent issue in Nigeria, with harmful practices and socio-cultural norms placing women and girls at risk. The SLOC-VAWG project employed a gender transformative approach, providing technical and financial support to Women's Rights Organizations (WROs) to challenge these norms and practices. The project aimed to bring about changes in social norms, strengthen organizational capabilities, and facilitate sustainable responses to GBV.

A comprehensive baseline assessment revealed deeply rooted harmful practices within the project communities, including forced or early marriages, widowhood practices, and female genital mutilation. In response, the SLOC-VAWG Project implemented tailored capacity-building trainings, coaching, and mentorship sessions to enhance the effectiveness of WROs in preventing GBV and developing interventions. The project also conducted awareness campaigns, training programs, and engaged community leaders to challenge discriminatory norms and practices. It focused on improving access to justice and support services, advocating for policy reforms, and involving men and boys as allies in ending violence against women and girls.

Engagement of traditional and religious leaders played a crucial role in promoting acceptance of the project. Working with community leaders and gatekeepers, WROs reviewed laws, customs, and traditions that deprived women of their rights. This approach empowered communities to drive the need for change, resulting in the selection of Community Response Teams and peer facilitators to monitor the cessation of harmful practices.

The impact of the SLOC-VAWG project is evident in over 32 communities, with positive changes in behavior, self-esteem, political awareness, inclusive governance, women and girls' participation in decision-making, increased modeling of positive masculinity, and reduced harmful socio-cultural norms and practices. The project also improved the institutional capacities of WROs for GBV programming and proposal development.

Despite several challenges such as strong patriarchal cultures, power imbalances between women and men, institutional barriers, limited resources, and insecurity, great results were achieved, and transformation happened in the lives of women and their communities. Future projects should consider incorporating financial support for referrals, strengthening of service providers, and sustainable funding for WROs and community structures. It is crucial for WROs to monitor and continue to mentor Community Response Teams to ensure professionalism and appropriate roles in preventing and addressing GBV. Additionally, engaging young people through social media platforms and events like the teens' concert, football matches, and community theaters is recommended for raising awareness.

A key lesson learned is the importance of involving men and boys, especially traditional and religious leaders, in developing programs to prevent and address sexual and gender-based violence, as they play a significant role in perpetrating and eliminating these harmful norms and practices against women and girls.

Project Overview

Strengthening the capacities of local women's rights organizations to combat violence against women and Girls (SLOC VAWG) Project is a 3-year project funded by Ford Foundation implemented by ActionAid to support local women's rights organizations (WROs) in their work of advancing gender equality in Nigeria. Specifically, the project seeks to provide technical and financial support to WROs as they seek to challenge oppressive socio-cultural norms and practices that exacerbate gender-based violence (GBV) and the fear of it in project states and national.

Through capacity building and sub granting. The project works towards improving organizational and institutional capacities of WROs to strategically design, implement and manage action on prevention of gender-based violence for vulnerable women and girls. Thus, contributing to women and girls living with reduced violence and fear of it in the project states.

The SLOC-VAWG is a 3-year project which run from 2020 to 2023, was targeted at engaging 12 women rights organizations comprises of 6 NGO's and 6 CBO's respectively. These organizations are empowering partners with the communities they served to address the roots causes of GBV-harmful traditional practices that exacerbate gender- based violence against women and girls.

Using a multi-pronged approach to community engagement they WROs worked to establish and strengthen community structures such as girls and boys schools clubs, women peer education circles, community response committees, men's peer groups, faith based groups and organizations, age groups and traditional councils amongst others to shift harmful archaic and patriarchal perceptions that put women and girls at risk. Through strategic community wide awareness creation, interrogation of the origin of these practices, elimination of some of them, putting in place sanctions that curb future actions. The SLOC VAWG project partners have recorded significant successes and change across Gombe Imo and FCT.





Context Specific Gender Based Violence

To ensure that solutions were tailored to the specific context in project communities, a community baseline survey was conducted by AAN, along with individual assessments conducted by 12 WROs, to identify the root causes of VAWG. The outcomes of these assessments informed the SLOC interventions. Common VAWG issues across Imo, FCT, and Gombe were identified, included rape, domestic violence, and denial of girls' education, which were addressed in the three states.

Additionally, the project unveiled harmful practices unique to certain communities and states that have sustained gender-based violence for decades. In many communities, women and girls have lived under these oppressive norms with no end in sight. Some of the contextual acts of VAWG occurring in the communities identified and addressed by the SLOC project are:

Breast Ironing

01

One such contextual GBV issue is breast ironing, widely practiced in indigenous communities of the FCT. In the Pigba-sama community in FCT, it is normal for mothers to iron the breasts of young girls to slow down breast development, believing that this will protect them from men. One in three girls in Pigba-sama has experienced breast ironing, and the SLOC project challenged this act of violence against girls in Pigba-sama.

Denial of resources

02

In Lapan, a farming community in Gombe, both husbands and wives usually do the farm work during the rainy season, but after the harvest is sold, men keep the income without taking care of the needs of the family. Lapan women silently endured this violation of their rights until it was identified as an issue through the SLOC project.

Barema

03

Similarly, Barema is a common practice in the Garko community in Gombe that was identified as increasing the risk of violence against girls. Barema is the custom of sending children, including girls, to look for farm work and earn stipends for the family. Usually, girls face sexual harassment and exploitation on the way to these farmlands and while working on them. SLOC interventions in Garko supported the community in setting up safety measures that protect girls during Barema.

Chirani

04

Also, in Ligi community and other parts of Gombe state, the practice of Chirani was identified. Chirani is the custom of the husband being away throughout the dry season for most of the year, leaving the wife and children behind without support. The women have to carry the responsibility for the upkeep of the children alone because of Chirani. SLOC VAWG interventions addressed this norm in Ligi.

05 Women not allowed to farm Melon

In some communities, women are restricted from engaging in certain businesses. In Akabor community in Imo state, women are banned from farming melon, even though it is a staple food in the country. Melon seed is the main ingredient for the popular Egusi soup in Nigeria. This ban on women in Akabor community has been in place for many years. Legend has it that men farmed yam, and women grew melon on the same piece of land. There were instances of men trampling on the melons, which grieved the women. To settle the dispute, a law was passed banning the farming of melon in that community. Through the project, groundwork has been laid to lift this ban in Akabor.

06 Female Genital Mutilation

Certain communities believe that Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) will limit the sexual urges (libido) of girls and make them less promiscuous. In Oguta, Ozuh Omuma, Amawuihe, Ogbenneisii, Oforola, and Olaukwu communities in Imo State, these communities usually partially mutilate or fully cut off the external genitalia (clitoris or labia minora) of female children. The SLOC project focused on eliminating FGM in these communities.

07 The Osu caste system and labeling

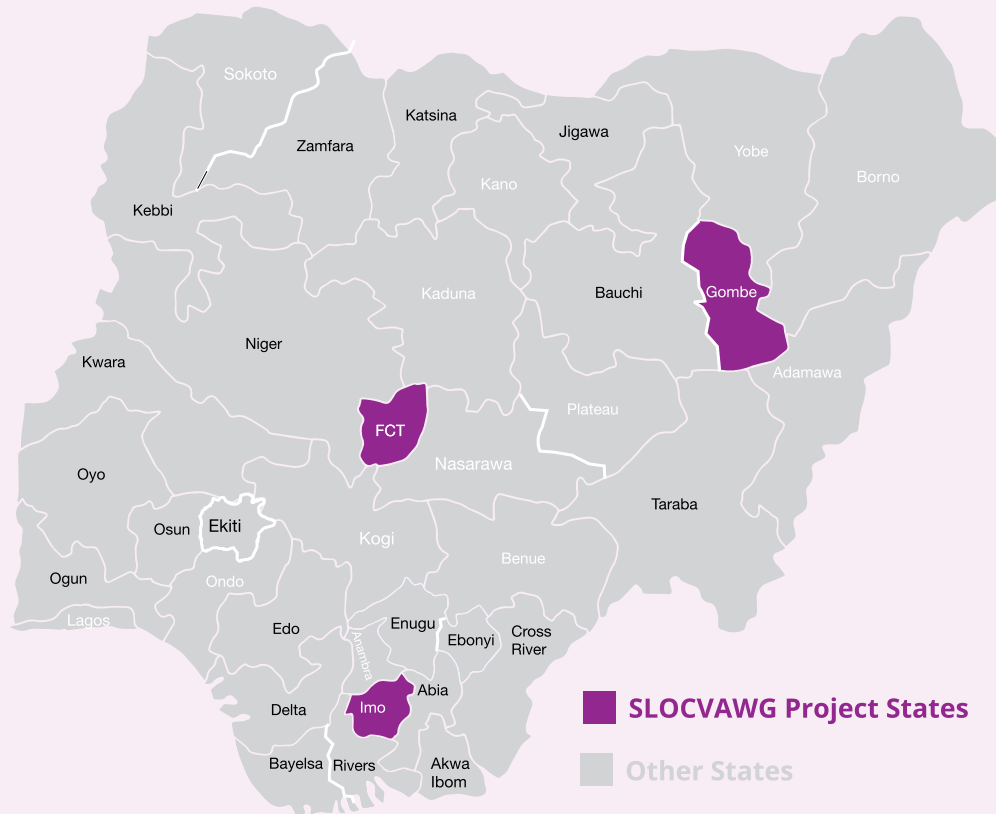
In Oforola community and Olaukwu communities there are harmful and discriminatory traditional practices. In the olden days, Osu people in these communities were considered property of idols and slaves to chief priests of idols. As such, Osus are restricted from interacting and contracting marriages with other members of the communities. Osus are barred from becoming members of the traditional ruler's cabinet (Ezes cabinet) and are not allowed to participate in leadership and decision-making on matters that concern them. They are not allowed to own land and can only buy goods in the market from other Osus. These acts of violence against Osus were challenged in these communities through the assistance of the project.

08 Incest

Incest is when sexual relations occur between people closely related or within the same family. This crime of incest occurs in Umuezeala Nsu community in Imo state. In this community, when an uncle sleeps with his niece and she gets pregnant, she is married off to an aged man. The girl suffers, but the perpetrator only pays a goat as a fine. Incest was also tackled in the project.

SLOC Project did not impose on the community but supported communities to address harmful norms that were issues to them.

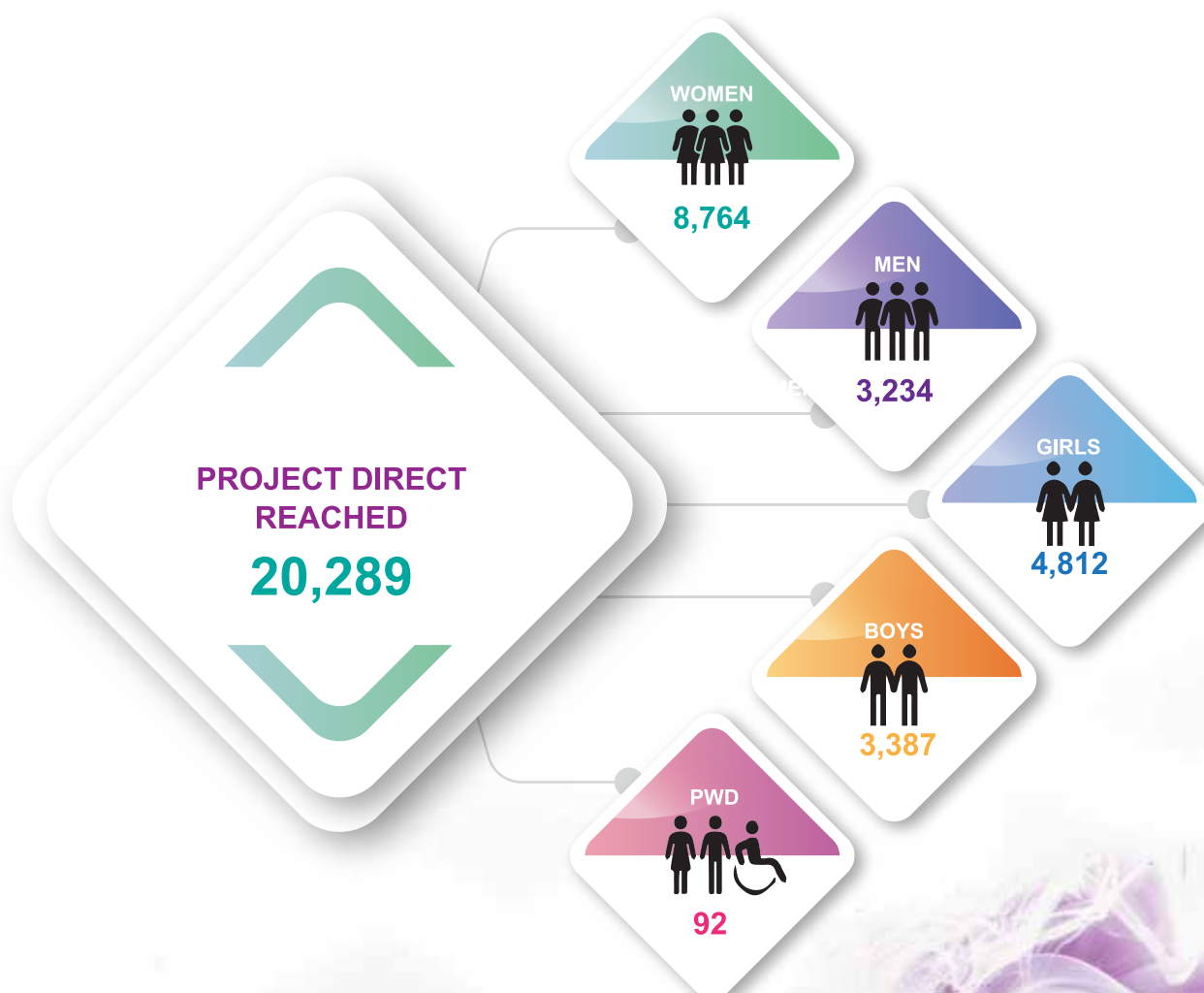
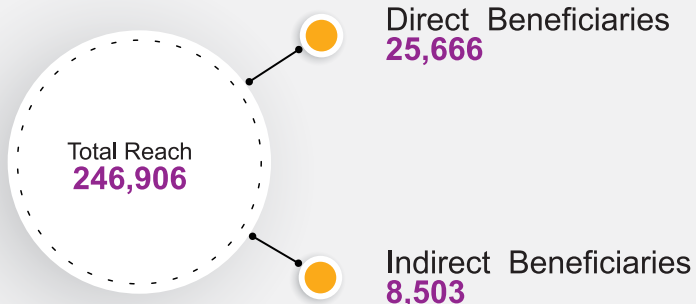
Project States



Implementing Partners



Project Reach



Results and Achievements

01

Organizational level results

10

System strengthening and programmatic training conducted for WROs.

12

Women-Led, Women Rights Organizations & CBOs equipped with knowledge and skills to design, implement and monitor Gender Transformative Programmes.

All 12 WROs & CBOs supported to create and effectively & efficiently manage organizational systems and structures that will sustain their organizations & programmes

02

Functional community structures established and strengthened

2,046

women enrolled on peer education scheme.

2,062

girls active in girls' rights clubs.

773

enrolled in men's peer education and capacities strengthened on positive masculinity.

394

boys engaged on changing harmful social norms.

344

persons functioning on VAWG community response teams.

9

community byelaws passed.

21

VSLA groups were established with a membership of 630 women and funds raised.

4,847

GBV cases reported and referred for appropriate services.



Upholding Women's Rights, Transforming Communities

01

Community Bye-Laws Passed

Partner organizations dialogued and sensitized traditional leaders, men, and boys in project communities. As a result, traditional leaders saw the need to support the development or revision of community by-laws to prohibit negative socio-cultural norms on VAWG. SLOC-VAWG project influenced the establishment of by-laws in 19 communities (4 in FCT, 7 in Gombe and 8 in Imo). These are some of the by-laws established and adopted by communities which changed long-standing harmful traditions.

a.**By-laws in FCT**

By-law Kuchiko Bwari Community FCT- Anyone who is reported for domestic violence and continues after warning would be sent out of the community.

By-law Dutspe community FCT - The by-law states that 'If a girl drops out of school because of pregnancy, the boy responsible for the pregnancy if schooling will also drop out of school and return to school when the girl returns.

b.**By-laws in Gombe State**

By-law Garko Gombe – Garko established guidelines for Barema and sanctions for anyone who ignores the guidelines. Girls who must go to work on farm lands must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

By-law Kaltungo/Shongom Gombe- These communities reviewed sharing of inheritance in the by-law. The bye states that women or girls can inherit from their husbands or father.

c.**By-laws in Imo State**

By-law Oguta community Imo state - The oldest woman in Oguta and the traditional council endorsed more favorable laws for widows which state that:

- Mourning period for women and men should be the same.
- A widow during mourning should not be restricted to being indoors.
- A widow is now allowed to move freely, without restrictions
- The widow and the children of the dead man have equal rights to inherit his properties without interference from his relatives.

By-law Amandugba Imo state- Reviewed by-laws for widowhood.

By-law Oforola community and Olaukwu communities in Imo state - The law states that "Women and girls will henceforth inherit land and other properties from parents and family".

All widowhood practices are abolished:

- Osu caste system abolished.
- FGM abolished.
- Women will be represented in the cabinet.

By-law Umuezeala Nsu community – Revised law contained provisions against incest and was signed by the Eze. The perpetrator of incest will be booked by the police rather than just appeasing the gods with a goat. The person that commits incest will be shamed. The girl victim must continue her education rather than excommunicating her from the community.

The effectiveness of the by-laws and Response Team was described by a religious leader in Garko Gombe:

“Garko community has been transformed by the SLOC-VAWG-VAWG project. The by-laws and discipline for defaulters have highly discouraged perpetrators who do not want to be brought in front of the council. We preach against violence, but it wasn’t having an impact like it is now that we have Community Response Team and by-laws. Things have changed because people know that if they go against the law they will be disciplined”.

02 Public Declarations Against VAWG

Following the establishment of by-laws in 19 communities, the SLOC project supported 9 of these communities to hold ceremonies to publicly declare zero tolerance to GBV. These declarations were made by the traditional leaders and witnessed by Human Rights Commission, LGA officials, media and the entire community.

a. VAWG Public Declarations in FCT

- Open declaration by the chief of Kuchiko Bwari community in FCT on zero tolerance for GBV.
- Open declaration by the chief of Pigba-Sama in FCT prohibiting breast ironing and other VAWG.
- Chika traditional leader made a public declaration at a town hall meeting against any form of VAWG.

b.

VAWG Public Declarations in Imo

Public declaration by the Eze to end FGM in Ozuh Omuma community, Imo state.

Public declaration on by-laws approved by the eldest woman and the Eze council ending harmful widowhood practice in Oguta community, Imo State.

Public declaration by the Ezes of Olaukwu and Oforola communities on ending FGM and Osu cast system.

Umuezeala Nsu traditional ruler in a public ceremony openly declared and signed by-laws to back actions that protect women and girls against VAWG.

The Traditional Ruler, Ogbennesiii Community, made a public declaration against harmful cultural practices that impede women's rights and signed the by-laws.

Public declarations also raised awareness widely across the communities on GBV and the revised laws. It demonstrated that the changes in harmful norms had the backing of traditional leaders and government agencies such as LGAs, Human Right Commission etc.

SLOC project through public declarations legitimized the by-laws and GBV Response Teams in the communities and influenced social change.

03

Reduction in Rape, Domestic Violence and Neglect

921 cases of VAWG were reported Community Response Teams, who inturn referred and followed up with other organizations in within the GBV Eco Systems cross the project states. These includes cases of rape, domestic violence, denial of inheritance, forced marriage, spousal and child neglect amongst others.

The actions of the response team set up by the SLOC project have drastically reduced incidences of domestic violence and cover-up of rape with money in project communities.

04

Cases of Child Trafficking Reduced

7 cases of child trafficking/ maltreatment cases handled by 2 protection committees (Baragoni Response Team in FCT and Amawuihe Local Interactive Group (LIG), Imo state). Amawuihe LIG handled A case of a stepmother who used hot water on her stepdaughter.

They also intervened in another case and returned a house help who was badly maltreated by her aunt to her parents.

05

Gender lens in tackling Teenage Pregnancy

The revised by-laws for Dutspe FCT prohibit drop out of girls from school because of pregnancy and prohibits forced co-habitation because of teenage pregnancy. A community court was established in Dutspe to enforce the provision of the by-law. 3 Girls who dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancy are back in school. Mothers in Dutspe who forced their pregnant teenage daughters to cohabit with some man, brought their daughters back home.

Females Entitled to Inheritance

In Oforola community Imo state, every male is entitled to community land but not females. If a young girl is pregnant out of wedlock, the father of the child is only interested if it is a male child because the child is entitled to land. If the baby is a girl, the father pays N10,000 and abandons the mother and the baby. The by-law was reviewed to address female inheritance.

OPI Committee handled 30 cases of denial of females' inheritance, wife battery and neglect. 6 women have been able to get their inheritance through the assistance of the OPI Committee set up by the SLOC project.

Similarly, 5 female siblings in Gombe who were robbed of their father's inheritance, contacted CRT and were linked to FIDA to handle their case. The court awarded them their inheritance of 2.97million and farmlands.

06

Reduced Harmful Widowhood Practices

When men lose their wives, they are not affected by negative mourning customs, but this is not the same for women. Widows were not allowed to go out until after the husband's burial. In Imo state, it could take one year before the burial is done. Throughout that time the widow remains indoors. She also doesn't inherit her husband's properties. SLOC WROs partners supported communities to review by-laws on widowhood. They set up response teams that address cases of maltreatment of widows. In 3 communities, 12 widows reported incidences of denial of inheritance, and they were addressed.

07

Eradicated Osu Caste System

In the olden days in Oforola community and Olaukwu communities some people were used as sacrifice to the gods. The rest of the people do not marry them. They also do not inherit land. By-laws established in these communities abolishing Osu. 2 Osu discrimination cases were reported to CRT and taken to court. Students of Community Secondary School Oforola, reported that because of the SLOC project, they now relate with Osu children in school.

08

Female Genital Mutilation Reduced

Due to SLOC interventions it is a crime to circumcise a girl in Oguta Olaukwu and Oforola communities. Oganihu Amawuihe VAWG response committee has handled 3 cases of FGM, outcome of these cases reduced the practise of FGM.

09

Reduced Incest

Incidence of incest was on the rise in Umuezeala Nsu Community, Imo state. SLOC partners engaged men, boys, elderly women etc to sensitize them on the issue. Umuezeala Nsu LIG handled 5 cases of incest.

Therefore, SLOC partners strengthened community structures to respond to GBV.

10

Achievements of School Clubs and Community Clubs

SLOC partners implemented the project in 42 schools and established school clubs in 40 schools. Girl clubs provided safe space in schools and communities for girls to discuss issues including GBV. One boy's club was established in Oforula Community Secondary School Imo because boys were motivated by the girls' club and demanded their club. These are some of the achievements of SLOC interventions for girls and boys.

11

Improved Vocational/ Career advancement

SLOC school interventions have built girls' confidence to speak and brought out leadership qualities in girls. The leadership qualities observed in these girls caught the attention of school authorities and changed the mentality that girls cannot be senior prefects. In Pricilia Memorial Secondary School Oguta, Imo state, 2 females were made prefects. 15 female students from St Patrick Mission School Club Ogbe and Brilliant Comprehensive Secondary Ogbenneisii School Club in Imo state were recognized in various school prefect positions. This was the first time this number of girls were given school positions in these schools.

Similarly, there was a 75% increase in enrollment of girls in Katrina International Academy – Dutse Alaji, FCT because the school publicized the activities of the girl's VAWG club.

Also, the sensitization done by the girls' club established by the SLOC project in Government Comprehensive Secondary School Gombe resulted in the enrollment of 30 girls in the school.

12

Enabled Self-Reliance

School clubs and other community activities implemented by the SLOC project enabled adolescents to discover their hidden talents. Through the SLOC interventions for adolescents, 20 young boys and girls in Oguta, Imo state learnt to use ART, poetry and drama to express themselves.

A SLOC partner set up a girls' club in Government Comprehensive Secondary School Ligi, Gombe state. The school club trained girls in business skills like making perfume, pomade and sewing. A girl from the club enrolled to learn tailoring after the training and currently sews after school to supplement her income and another girl from the club is learning to sew under her.

Clearly, SLOC interventions reduced the vulnerabilities of girls and boys to GBV

Innovations

OPI FESTIVAL



Different communities in Nigeria are known and recognized for their festivals. A festival is a celebration of the traditions of a particular people or place.

Honor Birth Foundation in Imo state, organized the OPI festival that brought Oforola and Olukuwu communities together to celebrate the change, reform and freedom to women that has occurred in their communities. The OPI festival was a major attraction for both communities and their neighboring communities because it represented their customs.

OPI festival raised awareness widely on VAWG. At this festival, someone supported the production of 500 copies of the VAPP law. A second OPI festival was organized the following year independently by OPI Response Team in Oforola and Olukuwu communities and from the festival they raised money to register the OPI Response Team. OPI festival is innovative because it has become a symbol in these communities of the end of harmful norms and practices against women and girls.

EGWUONWA

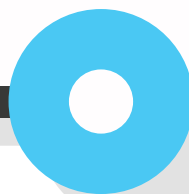


Egwuonwa is a gathering for young people to come around to hear or tell folk tales, dance, and play, share experiences, talent building and admonish themselves. This was a usual trend that happens mostly in the night in the years past where children come out from their homes to relate and know themselves better.

NCWS in Imo state, rejuvenated this gathering and used it as a tool for young people peer education session to enhance young people's knowledge on best practices on ending VAWG in their community.

This was done for 150 young persons in 3 communities (Amawuihe community, Amandugba Community and Umuezeala Nsu community). This innovative approach domesticated the peer session and improved acceptance of information on VAWG among young people.

ANNUAL WHYTE TEEN CONCERT



CCC in Imo state organized annual Whyte Teen Concert to spread the information on GBV to young people and parents.

Information on VAWG is communicated at the concert through art, dance, drama, debate which is easily understood by young people. The concert brought together a large gathering of over 400 AYPs and parents.

A boy from Pricilla School Oguta said that the Whyte Concert helped him discover his talent in ART. He didn't know he could write scripts but he wrote the script for the drama that won an award at the concert. He also presented paintings and poems at the concert. Whyte teen concert is an innovative, exciting and fun way to communicate VAWG to young people. Young boys and girls recommended that in future GBV projects WROs should have more awareness on social media and more awareness like the teens concert for young people. This confirms that WROs utilized Innovative approaches to improve effectiveness of the SLOC Project

Best Practices

Engagement of Community participants and project stakeholders, especially traditional and religious leaders, gives the project a wider range of acceptance and ownership of the project by Community Members.

1

2

The establishment and strengthening of community structures, safe spaces for women and girls (Women peer education, community response committee/team and girls' clubs) gave the community a sense of belonging and inclusiveness.

Engagement and involvement of men and boys in the SLOC-VAWG Project were crucial factors that contributed to its successful outcome.

3

4

Developing an effective communication strategy is crucial for the success of any project

Feminist approach of Co-Creation is an effective tool for programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects that change social norms.

5

6

Capacity building, using well designed peer manuals is crucial for ensuring the sustainability of project activities and achieving project objectives.

Use of gender, and conflict sensitive, age-appropriate community feedback mechanisms to ensure timely identification, collection and referral of GBV cases across the project implementing communities.

7

8

Working in partnership with Local Women-led Right Organizations (WROs) and CBOs embedded in the communities and states have further enhanced the successful implementation of the project.



Lessons Learnt

01

The demand for incentives from communities was a challenge. WROs mitigated this through the community entry strategy of sensitizing the various stakeholders in the community and seeking their buy-in and being transparent about the lack of incentives.

02

A few WROs set up male peer groups and observed that women's peer groups were more sustainable than male peer groups because women already had the culture of regular meetings. Also, men are more inclined to show interest in things that bring financial reward and there was no incentives for peer groups.

03

WROs mainly engaged community the chief and district chief. If WROs engaged the ward chief of the area council, it would create an avenue where the results in project communities will be reported in ward council meetings and other chiefs can express desires for the same intervention. Also, if chiefs of project communities know they will report VAWG activities to the ward chief. This will keep them accountable and improve sustainability.



Project Sustainability

01

Communities Legalize
Community Structures

02

Communities Structures
are Independent of WROs

03

Institutionalization of
Girl Club

04

Women Participation in
Decision-making

05

Enabling Legal
Environment Established

06

Economic
Vulnerabilities
Addressed

07

Traditional Leader
Take the Lead



The Journey towards Positive Change

Our Success Stories





PARTNER: Communal Care Center, Imo State

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION ABOLISHED

History was made on the 7th day of May 2022 as Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), an age-long tradition, was publicly abolished in Ozuh Community, Oru-East LGA, Imo State.

Before this declaration, the act of cutting the genitals of female children is widely acknowledged by both men and women in the community as a vital tool for curbing promiscuity at adulthood. Despite the domestication of the Child Rights law which abolished Female Genital mutilation/cutting in Imo State, the business continued to flourish as maternity homes and traditional birth attendants keep at it, while some people revert to numbing or massaging the female genitals with petroleum gel to achieve the same aim.

In February 2021, Communal Care Center (CCC) introduced the SLOC-VAWG project to Ozuh Community, identified critical stakeholders and duty-bearers within the community and engaged them on the ills of (FGM/C) through intensive sensitization, training workshops, and townhall meetings. Leveraging on existing community structure, a VAWG Response Committee referred to as 'Ogene Committee' was set up comprising members of the Igwe's Council, the women group, men group, church group, community vigilante and youth group. The committee was saddled with the responsibility of formulating strategies to be used in addressing harmful cultural norms and practices fuelling violence against women and girls, especially Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, with a view to ending them.

The committee swung into action, engaging the Igwe and his cabinet, community village heads and women groups in the community. They conducted outreaches round the community targeting churches, markets, maternity homes, and traditional birth attendants, intimating them of the risk involved in FGM/C both to the victim, family, and the community. They also made it known to the populace that FGM/C is a criminal offence and has been abolished in the state; anyone caught in the act will be prosecuted in accordance with the law.

The efforts of CCC and Ogene Committee yielded positive results. After many sensitizations and deliberations with community members, the Traditional Ruling Council of Ozuh-Omuma community, under the leadership of His Royal Highness, Eze Philip Uzodimma, the Ononehi 1 of Ozuh community and Chairman of the Traditional Council in Oru-East LGA publicly abolished Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting in the community. A letter to that effect was made public and circulated to all the churches, villages, maternities, schools, health centres and hospitals in the community, while the town-crier went round the whole of Ozuh community to herald the new law passed by the Igwe and his cabinet.

The Response Team have constituted themselves into community surveillance team to monitor and track adherence to the new law, as well as report perpetrators of the dastardly act to relevant authorities for appropriate action.

KNOWLEDGE LIBERATES – A Community In ‘Distress’

PARTNER: Kningtingale Women Health Initiative

Women and girls of Lalaipido community of Shongom Local Government Area of Gombe state have had their fair share of violence and injustice encompassing rape, battery, harmful widowhood practices, denial of inheritance, male child preference, exclusion from education and decision making at family and community levels among others.

The fact that nobody cared to address these issues made the community vulnerable to being terrorized by a gang of notorious boys headed by the son of the village head (Dagaci), who is a well-known serial rapist. As such, reported cases were never prosecuted because of the influence of the chief. Sadly, a 10-year-old girl had been his victim for years. According to her parents, he had brazenly raped her multiple times without recourse.

Things took a new turn in Lalaipido when Kningtingale Women Health Initiative introduced the SLOC-VAWG project to the community. Through rigorous sensitization and awareness activities using flash mob/drama, street announcements, rallies, radio jingles, and talk shows, the community became informed and empowered to combat violence against women and girls. The sensitization effort was also supported with capacity building for traditional and community leaders, religious leaders, women, and women peer educators, schoolteachers, heads girls of schools, men and boys, and security personnel within the community.

In October 2021, the head of the gang-raped the 10-year-old girl once again. Her mother, a member of the women peer education group, and her father, a participant in the male engagement sessions, were women ‘determined to get justice this time around. Hence, they mobilized community members who acted and insisted that the case must be escalated to the state level. Demonstrating increased knowledge on referral pathways, the case was reported to the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, after which it was transferred to the state Central Investigation and Intelligence Division (CIID). The perpetrator was arrested, and he confessed to all the heinous acts he had committed against young girls in the community. He was charged in court, prosecuted, and sentenced to 27 years in prison.

This case served as a deterrent to members of the gang who were left with no choice but to sheath their swords as cases of rape have declined in the community. As opposed to a minimum record of four (4) cases weekly, the community now records at most one (1) case in a month. This also boosted the confidence of community members to report cases of violence against women and girls, which is gradually breaking the culture of silence in the community as the women from the peer education group continue advocating, sensitizing, and lobbying for the community bylaw reforms and women inclusion in decision making. This will ensure that their voices are heard and that there are documented penalties for violators.

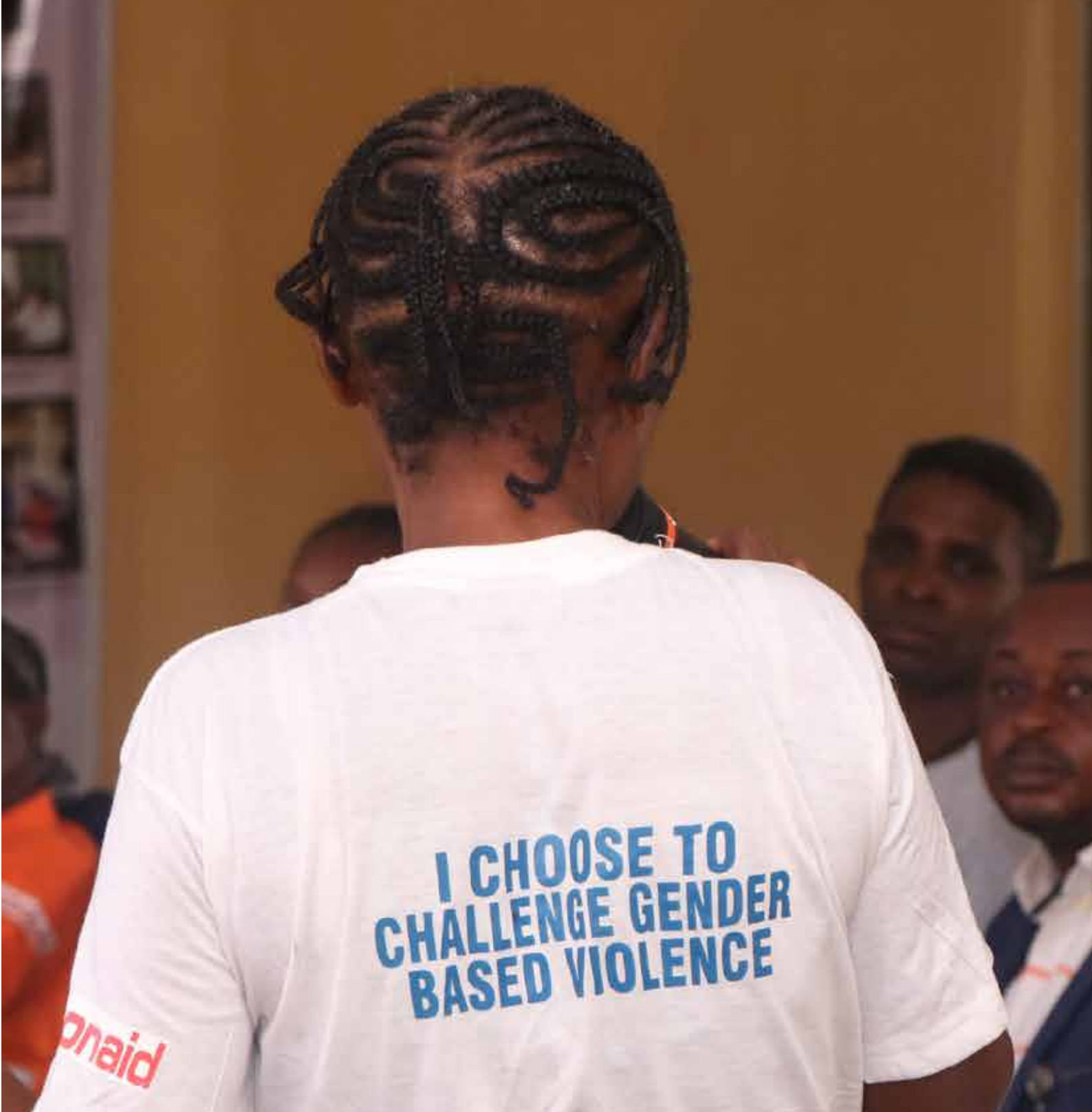
Kningtingale Women Health Initiative is also intensifying activities of the SLOC-VAWG project to continue creating a conscious thought in all intervention communities so that community structures will be strengthened to challenge and end all forms of violence against women and girls.





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Our Success Stories, Full Report and Project Photos



**I CHOOSE TO
CHALLENGE GENDER
BASED VIOLENCE**

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