



# **Spotlight** Initiative

To eliminate violence against women and girls

## **Interventions & Impacts**

Initiated by the European Union and the United Nations

















# Background

bonyi State is one of the states in Nigeria with high prevalence of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Harmful Practices. In particular, Female Genital mutilation (FGM) has a high prevalence of 74% (NDHS 2018) and 43.2% (MICS 2016/17). Most survivors are from the lower class who live in silence and have accepted violence against women (especially intimate partner violence) and girls as social and community norms.

Similarly, prior to the intervention of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls in Ebonyi State, there was high incidence of negative social norms which encouraged violence against women and girls (VAWG). Gaps existed in access to services for most primary and secondary school adolescents especially girls, because of various reasons ranging from user fees, stigma, lack of confidence, parental/caregiver influence, and peer pressure, among others. Limited knowledge of the consequences and how to handle GBV such as FGM, rape, early and child marriage, money marriage, teenage pregnancy was among the factors fuelling the spread of the menace which most time was rooted in culture and tradition.

Following the launch of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls, Ebonyi State recorded a reduced FGM prevalence from 43.2% (MICS 2016/17) to 20.4 (MICS 2021) among women aged 15-49. This could be credited to Spotlight Initiative stepping in to support implementation of the State's VAPP law, Ebonyi State Child Rights Law and other related interventions and projects to end the practice. Furthermore, the project supported the establishment of a fully furnished Sexual Assault Reference Centre (SARC) also known as the 'One-stop-centre for GBV issues'; Safe spaces and shelter for survivors; and second chance education, among other contributory services.

With the Spotlight Initiative Project, most Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and Service Providers (SPs) began focused engagements with the women groups to strengthen their capacity on women action towards ending GBV in the state. As at present, a good number of groups are now registered with the state's Ministry of Women Affairs, in the state and consequently educate and engage their members on ending GBV in the state.

# Laws & Policies

#### **Key Interventions**



Knowledge of relevant laws and policies aimed at protecting women and girls was strengthened amongst stakeholders mainly from supply side of justice - government officials, judges and prosecutors, women's rights advocates, and human rights institutions. Similarly, entrenched negative attitudes among personnel within the formal and informal justice systems was changed, making them more gender sensitive and render decisions in consonance with women's rights as recognized nationally (Ebonyi stater VAPP Law 2018; Ebonyi state Child Right Act 2010; National Gender Policy; Abolition of Harmful Traditional Practices Against Women and Children Law No. 10 of 2001; Protection Against Domestic Violence and Related Matters Law No. 003 of 2005; Nigeria 1999 Constitution), regionally (African Charter's Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa) and internationally (as proclaimed in Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women - CEDAW, and Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action.

Spotlight Initiative supported training of key government officials for increased awareness of human rights standards and obligations; including strengthened capacities to develop laws and policies that guarantee the ability of women's rights groups, CSOs and women human rights defenders to advance the SRHR and women human rights agenda. Participants were also exposed to the concepts of VAWG/GBV/HP, especially as related to MDA sector mandates; the use of Project/Programme Design, inclusive/responsive budgeting, project planning and implementation, monitoring and evaluation; as well as performance analysis, documentation and reporting.

The mass media were efficiently and effectively deployed to create public awareness and enlightenment on SGBV and support services available. Traditional and religious leaders, including other influential stakeholders were engaged and mobilized towards zero tolerance to SGBV. Billboards and Information, Education and Communication materials were developed and printed as part of awareness raising campaigns. These contained information about prevention measures and actions to take in case violence occurs.



# Development of State Action Plans

On VAWG/HP/SGBV and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for service provision; while strengthening referral pathways. Real-time legal support was also provided for lots of female victim of domestic violence through virtual and e-based platforms/spaces all through COVID-19 lock-down, globally acknowledged to have contributed to skyrocketed incidences of VAWG.

#### Development of a 5-year Strategic Plan for the Ministry of Women Affairs



#### **Major Impact**



#### Shelter and other social protection services provided

The spotlight project created a space for institutionalization and effective implementation of relevant legal instruments in the state that led to the establishment of Safe spaces in schools; Nduru Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC); and Ebonyi state GBV Taskforce.



#### Increased number of convictions

Testimonies from the legal personnels trained showed that they engaged more GBV cases and recorded more convictions since the spotlight intervention opened the opportunity to reviews of the laws and policies applicable.



#### Effective delivery of Justice

The review of the extant laws – VAPP Law 2022; Administration of Criminal Justice Law in Ebonyi state and domesticated international legal instruments aided effective and broader range of justice administration on GBV cases.

#### **Lessons Learned**



There is need for implementing partners to synergize actions to influence political will in order to genuinely support legal reforms with regard to GBV cases.



Scaling up colloquium with the judges and magistrates in response to GBV services will go a long way in getting justice for victims/survivors to obtain justice.



Financial interest/benefit expectations drives stakeholders' response to making commitments, taking and sustaining actions for change.





# Institutional Strengthening



**Key Interventions** 



Capacity building over 1000

Built capacities of over 1000 women groups, CSOs, men groups, traditional and religious gatekeepers, individual advocates on VAWG/SGBV/SRHR.

Designed & Published New Training Manual

Designed and published a comprehensive training manual on **SRHR** in **2020**. This manual was co designed with the beneficiaries in supporting an inclusive process and also reflecting the key areas the beneficiaries require strengthening.

**65%** of CSOs/CBOs/networks/groups and coalitions have used the training module.



Established a GBV network/coalition in the state in 2020 which have been strengthened to receive six months grants in the first year.



Developed a model State Action Plan (SAP) on preventing VAWG in 2021. From the mapping conducted in the state and outputs from several consultative dialogues, saw the importance of having a framework in the state that addresses VAWG.

Currently, the SAP have been endorsed in Ebonyi state and working towards integration into the state government framework.

Developed a draft GBV Referral Protocol in the year 2020 in close collaboration with the Ministry of Women Affairs and other relevant stakeholders. This document is a key document in the draft budgeted SAP on preventing VAWG.

#### Established support groups in Odukpani and Akamkpa LGA of Cross River

State and Onicha and Ohaozara LGA of Ebonyi State LGA to respond to issues of GBV 2023.



#### 500women's rights groups, CSOs/NGOs,

networks capacities were built in social accountability tools and mechanisms, understanding the importance of social accountability tools in ending VAWG.



Built capacities of 30 lawmakers, women's rights groups, CSOs/NGOs, networks capacities on relevant skillset in the design of policies and laws on EVAWG 2023. Also Built capacities of 30 service providers in both states on integrating VAWG response into sexual and reproductive issues 2023.

Strengthened capacities of 300 stakeholders on advocacy, leadership and monitoring skills to hold MDAs accountable on sustainable response and prevention of VAWG/SGBV/HP and promote SRHR in the state.



Strengthended Capacity



Built capacities of 120 women groups on generating shadow report and monitoring the government's execution of its obligation in relation to human rights for VAWG/SGBV/HP

- Built capacities of 800 CSOs/CBOs, women groups and networks, individual advocates design, implement/manage  $\langle V \rangle$ interventions to end violence against women and girls (EVAWG) and promote SRHRs for women and girls.
- Built capacities of 150 women organizations, Media and Women right defenders on advocacy and demanding accountability for budget allocations and monitor utilization.
- Built capacities of 40 women groups/networks, CSOs in fund raising, proposal writing and monitoring and evaluation.

- There should be improved data collection and statistics of reported cases. This is to help keep track of progress and also monitor cases and offenders.
- Continuous engagement of Judges and Magistrates. Scaling up colloquium with the Judges and Magistrates in response to GBV services will go a long way in getting justice for victims/survivors to obtain justice.
- There is need for implementing partners to synergize actions to influence political will in order to genuinely support reforms.





# Prevention

#### Key **Interventions**

#### Advocacy

High level interactive meetings with relevant state; LGA and Community Stake Holders.



Community Mobilisation & Awareness reation:

Periodic (Weekly and Monthly) Assembly Talk in project Schools on GBV prevention and the Standard operating procedures (SOP) of the safe spaces established. Parents-Child Communication Talk during school's PTA meetings. Use of co-curricular activities such as games and inter-schools competition on School Related Gender Based Violations.

- Peer Education: Outreach by trained peer educators, Edutainment by Peer educators during club activities in school, Referral of cases by peer educators.
- Capacity Building: Identification and engagement of 16 health facilities for linkage and referral, Training of 143 Teachers in 21 schools (in four LGAs) on Sexual and Gender Based Violence Prevention, Training of secondary school girls and boys on life skills and Peer Education, Training of 18 service providers to reach out to schools and accept referral.
- · Linkage and Referral: Referral of vulnerable girls to health facilities and CSOs, Referral of abused boys, girls and women for services, Linkage of schools to health facilities
- Messages.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Baseline and end-term surveys were conducted.



#### **Major Impact**

#### Creation of enabling environment and safe spaces

The project established platforms that encouraged the prevention of GBV prevalence. At risk persons (Girls, boys, etc) liable to any form of sexual violations were given the opportunity to feel empowered to rise against any form of abuse.



Safe Spaces established in educational institutions and non-formal spaces



#### Behavioral change among gatekeepers

The project saw a buy-in from the community gate keepers and even religious stalwarts who had jointly enacted some local laws and by-laws to institutionalize the fight against GBV in these local settings.

20.365 women, men, girls and boys who regularly attend community programmes to promote gender-equitable norms, attitudes and behaviours, including in relation to women's and girls' sexuality and reproduction.



#### Skill acquisition and development

it was recorded that the prevalence of GBV cases dropped drastically due the fact that the women and girls were enrolled in one form of skill acquisition exercise or the other.

1328 young women and women (SGBV survivors) acquired vocational skills

- If students are to be encouraged to access referral services in health facilities, such facilities must be youth-friendly with service providers trained in youth friendly service provision.
- With proper training and support, teachers are ready and capable to deliver programme interventions on school-related gender-based violence that have direct impact on their students. This is irrespective of the culture and tradition.



Peer Educators of Modern Girls High School, Ndiofutu after an outreach activity to the school neighbourhood





Group photograph of Dignities with some peer educators at the Abakali and Ezza South Inter-schools competition site

## Services

#### **Key Interventions**







Spotlight Initiative was implemented in 33 communities out of the 34 communities of the 4 SI project LGAs (Abakaliki, Ezza South, Onicha and Ohozara) namely: Obegu-Omege, Azuofia-Edda, Ndumbam, Ameji, Enyadilogu, Ndi Okenyi (All in Abkaliki LGA). and Amana, Ezzama, Idembia, Ameka, Amuzu in Ezza South LGA; Akanu, Oshiri, Igboeze, and Enouguruguru, Amakporo, Amanato Isu, Ikwuano in Onicha L.G.A; Ugwulangwu central, Mgbom in Ohaozara L.G.A.



#### The major interventions include:

- **⊘** Mapping of Second Chance Education (SCE) centres across the 4 target LGAs
- Trained 168 SCE facilitators
- ♥ Conducted 6 months basic/post literacy and numeracy trainings across 19 SCE centres reaching 25,583 beneficiaries for SCEs.
- Trained 596 beneficiaries on vocational skills ranging from shoe making, fashion design, Beading, polythene bag making, hair dressing, make up, gele tying, confectionary, soap making, photography etc.
- **⊘** Conducted Financial literacy trainings for 526 beneficiaries.

- **♡** Conducted graduation for the SCE beneficiaries

#### **Major Impact**

- Improved literacy and SRHR knowledge and skills for 1620 Second Chance Education (SCE) beneficiaries.
- 1328 young women and girls (SGBV survivors) acquired vocational skills
- 1296 women and young women and women gained Business Development and Entrepreneurial skills
- 18 multipurpose cooperatives were formally registered for beneficiaries in Ebonyi through the Ebonyi state Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ezzama, Idembia and Ameka, Amuzu in Ezza South LGA.
- Collaborative partnership built between Second Chance Education (SCE) facilitators and the Ebonyi state agency for mass education (SAME). The facilitators now have improved knowledge and skills to facilitate SCE sessions utilising the National Literacy and Numeracy curriculum while main-streaming sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and VAWG/HP.
- Learners can now identify and read the English alphabets, write words such as two letter words, four letter words etc. learners can now write the 26 English alphabets, form two, three, and 4 letter words as well as the days of the week.
- 8 Project support and advocacy committees, with a total of 40 members (5 members per community) were formed. They supported monitoring of SCE sessions and provided feedback/reports on progress and challenges in their various communities to GPI.

- Working with and building on existing community structures is very critical for interventions on ending SGBV especially when these are hinged on cultural practices.
- **⊗** Collaborating with other partners was very helpful for rescue and reintegration
- ⊗ Having trainers from within communities also reduced the level of attrition during the vocational skills training.
- ♥ Formation of project support committees were very helpful for monitoring of project activities and dealing with challenges that arose in good time.
- **⊘** Provision of nannies during trainings also help to keep trainees in attendance.
- © Development and adherence to selection checklist and progression charts for SCE supported monitoring of progression of beneficiaries
- Whaving the PSCs in place is very critical to monitor project activities in communities as they provide timely feedback on project activities. Mentoring Sessions with the cooperatives brought out challenges the cooperatives are having and this will help them be more active and sustained.





### Data

Before the commencement of Spotlight Initiative Project in Ebonyi State, there was no sufficient disaggregated GBV data for the state; and no detailed data of GBV incidents.

Similarly, few organizations that kept minimal records, had little information of perpetrators and their relationship with survivors of GBV.

The GBV data from the National report GBV dashboard of the federal Ministry of Women Affairs have shown that Ebonyl State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development and other GBV responders have uploaded a total of 3,376 cases since April 2020 to September 2023:



Out of **3,376**cases since 2020 **2,613**of the respondents are women and girls.



There were

68
fatal cases, but there have been only 18 convictions.



Some survivors experienced and reported more than 1 violence. The 5 most prevalent violence according to reported cases are:



Physical violence **1,388 (42%)** 

Emotional Violence 1,299 (39%)

Child abuse and neglect 942 (29%)

Denial of resources and services

762 (23%)

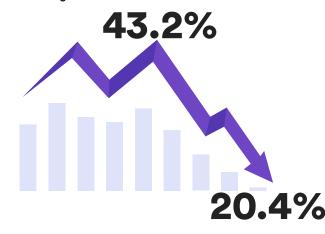
Defilement -365 (11%)

It is important to note that FGM and forced marriage are also among the reported GBV that goes on in the state.

The 10 MDAs/CSOs/SPs that reported most of the cases are:

Human Right and Conflict Resolution Centre (HRCRC)	505	15.40%
Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (MOWA-SD)		14.33%
National Obstetrics Fistula Centre (NOFIC)	378	11.53%
Mother-Child Care Development (M-CCAD) Forum	349	10.64%
National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)	325	9.91%
Ebonyi Gender Based Violence Taskforce	248	7.56%
Abakaliki Local Government, Education/Social Welfare Department	160	4.88%
CIVIL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT & DOCUMENTATION CENTER (CIRDOC)	143	4.36%
Community Health and Development Initiative (CHAD)	113	3.45%
FAMILY SUCCOUR AND UPLIFTMENT FOUNDATION	101	3.08%
Other 35 MDAs/CSOs/SPs		14.86%
TOTAL	3296	1009

Ebonyi State recorded a reduced FGM prevalence from 43.2% (MICS 2016/17) to 20.4 (MICS 2021) among women aged 15-49.



#### **Key Interventions**

The intervention successfully built the capacities of 141 individuals from 71 MDAs/CSOs/SPs in the state. Some of the results of the Spotlight Project data intervention in Ebonyi State are these:

- The state can now comfortably and have consistently produce(d) provable disaggregated GBV data from the service providers that respond to GBV in the State.
- The project has built the capacities of relevant MDAs/CSO/SPs on GBV data documentation and upload.
- Some select Staff of Ebonyi State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development now have the capacity, like never before, to document and upload GBV data to the national report GBV dashboard.
- The HOD, Planning, Research and Statistics (PRS) of Ebonyi State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development now has the capacity to review and validate uploaded data without any support.

#### **Major Impact**

- Ebonyi State GBV data is on **2nd position** in terms of cases that have been reported on the National report GBV dashboard of the Federal Ministry of Women affairs. Since 2020, the Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Budget and Planning, and other IPs usually requested for and made references to the State's GBV data. These are proofs of the reliability of the data from the state, and the impact of the Spotlight Intervention in the state.
- The Spotlight Initiative Project was able to set up and inaugurated a GBV Stakeholders' Technical Working Group (TWG) Meeting in the State. Up to 10 MDAs/CSOs/SPs in Ebonyi State are currently up and doing in GBV data documentation and upload with or without follow-up/technical support from FRED staff and State DPRS.
- The reported services on the dashboard have clearly explained how lack of shelter homes in the state has contributed to case destruction and poor convictions in the state. This attracted USAID/Jhpiego through Momentum Country and Global Leadership (MCGL) to set up and inaugurate a shelter home for GBV survivors in the state.

- © Collaborating with government owned institutions like Ministry of Women Affairs and different coalitions like State GBV Taskforce, was a very big boost in coordinating the GBV response teams in the state.
- Ø Proper documentation and constant data upload keep service providers on track on what they do. These enable them to assess themselves and report progress or failure.



Practical session of the capacity-building of GBV responders in Ebonyi State, on 28th March 2023, at the Conference Hall of Ebonyi State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development.



Inauguration of member of Ebonyi State Gender based Violence Technical Working group Meeting on 27th March 2023, at the Conference Hall of Ebonyi State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development.



## Women's Movement

#### **Key Interventions**



- High level interactive meetings with relevant state LGA and Community Stake Holders meetings, Capacity enhancements, , group formation. awareness creations and sensitizations in schools, villages and communities of the selected LGAS.
- Established a GBV network/coalition in the state in 2020 which have been strengthened to receive six months grants in the first year of establishment and currently implementing a three-year project with the FCDO on supporting women's rights organizations programmatic interventions on GBV and women issues.
- Consultative dialogues with stakeholders on the GBV referral protocol and the SAP on PVAWG. The dialogue also afforded us the opportunity to get more information to feed into the draft SAP on preventing VAWG in both states. 2020-2023.

#### **Major Impact**

#### 500 women's rights groups, CSOs/NGOs

• 500 women's rights groups, CSOs/NGOs, networks now engage with social accountability tools and mechanisms, understanding the importance of social accountability tools in ending VAWG. Some of the social accountability tools include community score cards, citizens charter, social audit and participatory output monitoring. 45% of the participants who participated in the trainings took advocacy action in commemoration of 16 days of activism campaign to end violence against women and girls in 2020, 2021, 2022.



- Women's groups participate in the universal periodic review report writing in Nigeria following their capacities built on generating shadow report and monitoring the government's execution of its obligation in relation to human rights for VAWG/SGBV/HP SRHR.
- Women groups participated and supported the Development of a model State Action Plan on preventing VAWG in 2021.
- Established support groups as community champions to authenticate EVAW in Onicha and Ohaozara LGA of Ebonyi State in 2023 to respond to issues of GBV which has led to reduction in GBV cases.
- Women right defenders and Media participate in advocacy to demand accountability for budget allocations and monitoring utilization to the state's Legislature on budgeting for women and girls in the state during the international day for rural women.

- Continuous Collaboration with government owned institutions like Ministry of Women Affairs
- $oldsymbol{orall}$  Establishing and strengthening women led network/coalition will strengthen the end to GBV in the state.
- Proffering sustainability measures and funding alternatives, for women movements at all levels will help them support some emancipation processes for example Litigation.



tudents displays placards of end GBV and End female genital cutting



Traditional Leaders & Elders also participated in Spotlight Initiative in Ebonyi State

### Recommendations



- Work with the Chief Judges in all the implementing states on protection order under VAPP Law.
- Facilitate development, adoption and publication of practice directions for SGBV and guidelines for the implementation of Protection orders.
- Expand Advocacy and implementation of extant Laws and Policies prohibiting SGBV/VAWG/HP to traditional and religious leaders, especially their roles in curbing rising incidences of /and protecting victims of SGBVs and encouraging them to take action.
- Spotlight Consortium Partners to coordinate better the relationship between the Implementing Partners to ensure a more streamlined stakeholders' engagement, for more sustainable impact of project interventions.
- Future projects to provide for private sector-government partnership to enable leveraging on the social responsibility packages of private businesses, also support the review and implementation of their policies to contribute to ending VAWGs.
- Capacity building training should not be made a one-off AND one-day activity in the future programmes for better impact.
- An ecological model is required in addressing gender based issues among in-school young people. As students are being reached in schools, parents need to be reached in the community, policy makers reached to provide policies & systems that provide enabling environment, teachers trained to provide information & enforce the policies in schools while health facilities must be equipped to be youth friendly to take referral from schools.
- Proper coordination mechanism must be established among different implementers of the grant in order for them to be able to leverage on the strength of one another.
- Work closely with Mass Literacy and other IPs implementing Second Chance Education (SCE)
- Utilise adult literacy centres and facilitators for the SCE sessions
- Working with Ministry of Women Affairs on data collection and identification of SGBV survivors
- Working with Cooperative unit in the ministry of commerce and industry on mentoring and coaching for cooperatives
- Ebonyi State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development to include Monitoring and Evaluation of ongoing projects in their yearly budget. This will aid their ability to be accountable to funders on what implementing partners are doing in the state.
- The Office of the PRS to organize and conduct monthly GBV data review and validation meeting for GBV response teams in the state.
- Quarterly meetings with Judges and Prosecutors to be held to review and monitor issues that affect prosecution of perpetrators of GBV.
- Check-ins/mentoring sessions to be grafted into the CSRG mandate to uphold the group's viability as formed.
- The cooperative holds their meetings at least once a month, do weekly savings. The CSRG member assigned may be supported to attend these meetings and provide technical support when needed.

## **List of Acronyms**

CBOs Community Based Organizations

CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CEFM Child Early and Forced Marriage

CPIMS Child Protection Information Management System

CRA Child Rights Act

CRM Case Response Management

CSE Comprehensive Sexuality Education

CSO Civil Society Organization
CSRG Civil Society Reference Group

EU European Union

**EVAW** Ending Violence Against Women

**EVAWG** Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

FRED Foundation for Resilient Empowerment and Development

FGM Female Genital Mutilation

GAP Gender Action Plan
GBV Gender-Based Violence
HP Harmful Practices

IP Implementing Partner
LGAs Local Government Areas

MDAs Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MICS Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys

MPTF Multi-Partner Trust Fund

NDHS Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

OSC One-Stop Centre

PME Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
PME Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
PVAWG Preventing Violence against Women and Girls

SARC Sexual Assault Reference Centre

SCE Second Chance Education

SPs Service Providers

SGBV Sexual and Gender-Based Violence SRH Sexual and Reproductive Health

SRHR Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

VAC Violence Against Children

VAPP Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act

VAW Violence Against Women

VAWG Violence against Women and Girls

