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ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN THROUGH FINANCING START-UPS/ INITIATIVES BY WOMEN

The global community, in its race to achieve the 5th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) by 2030 has engaged undying efforts and innovative strategies in its advocacy for equality and freedom of every individual. Yet, in recent times, the global community has been on an edge with the revelation of countless gender based abuse against women in some of the most prolific sectors of nations; such as politics and the entertainment industry. These have occurred despite the numerous campaigns and sensitization activities that have occurred within the last decades, to make citizens aware of the issue and eliminate the practice worldwide.

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POSITIVE ACTION FOR CHILDREN FUND (PACF) PROJECT



The CFHI Team with the Royal Father of Obi LGA- His Royal Highness (HRH) Orume Aghu Dangwan

The global race to end new transmissions of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) disease by 2030, as embedded in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is well underway; and the Positive Action for Child Fund- a 10-year endowment by Viiv Healthcare, plans to achieve this by focusing health interventions towards ending Paediatric HIV especially through Mother-to-Child-Transmissions (MTCT). As such, the Initiative awarded CFHI a 2-year grant to carry out Prevention services tailored to children and adolescents, particularly those of the female gender. The project also targets Positive Mothers and their families with Support

services geared towards improving their socio-economic vulnerability status.

This PACF and CFHI collaboration is targeted towards these two groups because the "Start free, Stay free, AIDS free" strategy of eliminating new HIV infections among children and keeping positive mothers alive is a proven method of attaining the desired goal faster and sustainably. Therefore, the project would be focused on ensuring that positive mothers, particularly those who are still birthing children, are given access to information, psychosocial support and financial services that will enable them adopt and adhere to necessary treatment therapies, so that they have HIV free babies. Similarly, adolescents will be provided with prevention facilities tailored to their peculiar needs so that their risk of contracting the disease is reduced; which is important because this group of individuals tend to engage in behaviours that could increase their susceptibility to HIV.

Some strategies that would be employed in this project include the creation of Peer support groups; establishment of youth friendly centres, where free and confidential HIV and STI testing services would be made available to the adolescents; the facilitation of frequent sensitization meetings in school and community based clubs; and the

linkage of mothers to financial institution and resources such as small grants. Furthermore, the location for this project is Nassarawa state in Obi LGA, because it is the area with the highest prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS in the state- which accounts for the 4th highest incidence rate in Nigeria.



The CFHI Director and Project Manager in a meeting with the Deputy Director Personnel Management (DDPM) of the Obi LGA Secretariat

In order to ensure that CFHI properly enters into the target location and attains a high level of community engagement and KIs buy-in, a team of 7, including the Director, undertook courtesy visits to several relevant institutions and individuals in the area. At first, a visit was carried out to the Obi LGA Secretariat, where the team held meetings with one of the institution's Health Department Officer and then its Deputy Director Personnel

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Dear Friend of the Family,

I am excited to introduce the 11th edition of our monthly newsletters.

In this publication, we explore the subject of **Violence against Women (VAW)** – the current statistics and global incidence, viable preventive and response strategies towards eliminating the practice and the positive outcomes of implementing these strategies. Through the article, **ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN THROUGH FINANCING START-UPS/INITIATIVES BY WOMEN**, we propose that the provision of start-up grants, linkages to financial institutions, and skills training to the women should be employed in programs aiming to eliminate VAW in societies.

Other information included in this edition of our publication is a report on the newly begun Positive Action for Child Fund project in Obi LGA, Nasarawa state; and other capacity building trainings attended by various staff within the month.

As always, I hope you have a pleasant time reading the 11th edition of our monthly newsletter.

Kind regards,

Princess Osita-Oleribe
Director,
CFHI

POSITIVE ACTION FOR CHILDREN FUND (PACF) PROJECT

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Management (DDPM). Afterwards, the team met with the Royal Father of the LGA and the members of his cabinet. At these meetings, the CFHI team introduced the project, its objectives, activities and the desired outcomes. In response, the KIs expressed their support for the project and future meetings are to continue so as to ensure the essence of the project is fully understood.

ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN THROUGH FINANCING START-UPS/INITIATIVES BY WOMEN

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The commonness of this negative practice is largely due to the perceived women's subordinate status in our society. As a result, at least 1 in 3 women have been physically beaten, coerced to have sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime. This finding is further corroborated in the 2013 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, which states that 3 in 10 Nigerian women have experienced physical violence by the age of 15; as a result of forced marriages and other discriminatory cultural norms in the society.

With the current expose of these high profile cases, there has been an increase in the call for concrete and feasible worldwide action against an enduring society scourge – Violence against Women (VAW). The argument being stated is that all development issues are interlinked and for the SDG17 to be attained in time, focus needs to be placed on present gender and inequality issues. As such, interventions towards ending VAW should invariably have a positive ripple effect on multiple development program areas such as health, education and a state's economy.

With **35% of women** across the world being susceptible to physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence, various prevention and emergency response programs have been developed and implemented

using various strategies. These strategies typically involve anti-violence campaigns using various media channels and educational programs, to inform the public and elicit positive behavioral changes among the people. While these programs have caused a decrease in the practice, even at grassroots levels, much still needs to be done for the decline to be sustained.

3 in 10 Nigerian women have experienced physical violence by the age of 15.

A World Health Organization (WHO) report have stated that in low resource settings, viable prevention strategies that have been employed include the socio-economic empowerment of women through a combination of microfinancing and skills acquisition training and group-based participatory educational forums. The provision of seed grants and feasible skills to women in these settings has not only improved their economic standing but has also inculcated a high sense of self confidence in them. Other benefits of these strategies include an increase in social networks for the women, fewer occurrences of conflicts among couples over money issues and improved women's participation in community leadership. When economic empowerment is added to the educational forums, where they are taught about their fundamental rights, they become more vocal about their personal experience with GBV and may make more demands for their rights to be respected. Furthermore, the awareness attained through the forums will change the norms, beliefs, and perceptions of the position of girls and women in the society, among all; especially the men, who are usually the perpetrators of VAW.

1 in 3 women have been abused

This is the reason that CFHI established the Women and Youths in Ngor-Okpala Empowerment (WYNE) in Imo state, as a means to eliminating violence and other discriminatory practices against women and girls in the area. The organization economically empowered 25 women in the area with seed grants; which they used to establish small and medium enterprises. These same women were also part of

various women groups that became advocates against practices such as domestic violence and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). In addition, in a new project in Nasarawa state, CFHI will be providing grants and linkages to other financial services to HIV-infected mothers, because they are not only discriminated against because of their gender but also their status. With this, the organization hopes to decrease their risk of being victims of abuse.

In conclusion, financially enabled women, especially those in poorer communities, would give them the ability to be confident, respected, and independent and negotiate. These qualities are beneficial to these women in reducing their risks of suffering any form of violence. There are also other enduring benefits that empowering women financially brings such as their active participation in grassroots politics and civic campaigns; and raising socially conscious younger boys and girls.

POSITIVE ACTION FOR CHILDREN FUND (PACF) PROJECT

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Afterwards, the team met with the Royal Father of the LGA and the members of his cabinet. At these meetings, the CFHI team introduced the project, its objectives, activities and the desired outcomes. In response, the KIs expressed their support for the project and future meetings are to continue so as to ensure the essence of the project is fully understood.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

With most of its projects' duration ending in the month of September and new projects beginning in October, CFHI and its team engaged in minimal implementation activities and continued various planning processes for its budding projects. For the organization's new fiscal year, some services that it plans to conduct include the provision of comprehensive care and support services to about 25,000 vulnerable children in the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC); the training of

Routine Immunization (RI) Supervisors in Kano state on technical skills such as Report Writing and Basic Project Management; and the aforementioned PACF project, which involves providing prevention services for adolescent girls and positive mothers; as well as financial empowerment to the women.



A cross-section of participants of the 3-day Step-down training

In preparation of the capacity building activity in Kano, a 3-day step-down training was organized at CFHI's office, for about 20 newly selected facilitating team members. This was due to the need for a larger team on the project, arising from significant changes to the training structure employed at the commencement of the project. During this cascading exercise, 7 members of the inaugural facilitating team presented two training modules on Effective Communication and Reporting, and Project Management 101. At the end of this Training of Facilitators (ToF), 18 other staff was integrated into the existing team, so that an effective group of 25 CFHI facilitators would attain the project's objective of improving the EPI managers' capacity; which will in turn improve RI services in the state, and then ultimately improve the children's health.



A group work session during the Step-down Training

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A group photograph of all participants of the CHISAN forum

enrolled in its OVC program, for the upcoming West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and National Examination Council (NECO) examinations. In order to ensure that best practices are continued in the implementation of the organization's OVC programs, the OVC/Networks Coordinator attended a 5-day training organized by the Child and Youth Protection Foundation (CYPF) on effective case management processes, various child protection laws and legal rights of children, and the judicial system that applies to children especially those at conflict with the law. As most children enrolled in CFHI's OVC program are either infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, improving the organization's HIV prevention and treatment services would strengthen the delivery of OVC related packages. For this reason, some officers attended the 2017 Civil

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Society Accountability Forum held by the coalition -Civil Society for HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (CISHAN); in which plenary discussions on enhancing HIV and TB programs in Nigeria occurred. Some discussions that occurred during this meeting included the shift from Health Advocacy to Health Activism by civil societies; capacity building for civil society workers; more funding for HIV and TB clinical services and research; and the use of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) as a preventive method among Most At Risk Populations (MARPs).

In Guidna, an indigent community in the AMAC area, CFHI established its first GEADOR circle; so as to test the efficacy of this strategy in addressing development issues in communities reached by the organization. The first GEADOR circle's meeting was held specifically for women from various major tribes present in the community; and some issues discussed were the lack of sanitation and hygiene facilities which makes it difficult for women and girls to adequately use public spaces; the absence of a government created hospital, market and school within the community or in close proximity; and the limitations the women face when trying to attain land and financial facilities. Accordingly, some actions were decided upon and they will be subsequently followed on in the next meeting to be held.

Grading our community road

Lastly, so as to uphold our commitment to improve people's health and protect their wellbeing, the organization saw it important to address the deteriorating roads enroute the head office. As the saying goes, "Charity begins at home", helping its immediate community to attain better health outcomes and improve survival rates through the provision of a good road network was of high priority. CFHI's hope is that with this new service, people working and living in the radius would have for instance, lesser chances of contracting body or head aches and spending countless hours and monies at the mechanics. To this end, a cost effective and sustainable method of clearing and grading the road was employed; and as a result, CFHI's local community can now easily access their businesses and homes.



The grading of the CFHI community road



The current state of the road, after the grading

Interested in helping in any aspect of our work ?

Persons interested in donating to our activities, offering volunteer services or partnering with us, are always welcome. All CFHI's projects are community based and family-centred, so that our beneficiaries are reached with activities that proffer sustainable solutions.

Therefore, persons or organizations concerned with improving community health, sustainable socio-economic empowerment and the development of family-centred policies should please contact us.

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