



GRAB
THE
CHANCE

About Alliances for Africa



AfA is a women-led feminist, human rights, peace and sustainable development organization. AfA works with partners in, around and beyond the continent of Africa.

AfA was created to enhance, reconstruct and interface human rights and development with a vision to contributing innovatively to the task of tackling endemic poverty and exclusion of Africa.

AfA works with partners to advocate for protection of human rights, promote women's participation in leadership and governance; build institutional capacity, advocate for gender justice, equality and non-discrimination, as well as promoting peace, security and conflict resolution interventions.

Plot 75, Oppsite Rosy Kids
Montesori School, Area A,
World Bank, Owerri, Imo State

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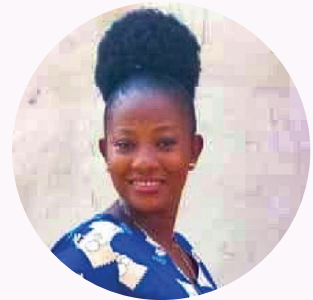
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EDITORIAL

Despite progress made on the emancipation of women, problems affecting women and girls continue to be an impediment to their full attainment on enjoying their full rights as citizens of Nigeria.

The Covid19 pandemic exacerbated the level of violence faced by Nigerian women and girls ranging from, sexual violence, sexual harassment in the work place and educational institutions, domestic violence and other forms of intimate partner violence, harmful traditional practices, early and forced marriages to political exclusion, and, discriminatory employment practices.

The list is not exhaustive, and current documented evidence indicates that the COVID19 pandemic and national lockdown mandated by the Federal Government made matters worse. Presently, there is need for continuous engagement with state actors at all levels, stakeholders in and outside the community, community based organisations, faith based organisations, traditional associations, women's groups and other relevant actors.

Grab the chance quarterly newsletter covers, the scope of work we do at Alliances for Africa. This publication reviews action plan, outcome of activities, news and event, published articles, as well as our social media engagements. However, the insecurity situation that has plagued Imo State a few months ago has affected the smooth operational implementation of some of our activities. However, great care has been taken to ensure we catch up to our expected targets and outputs.

This publication gives you a glimpse of our efforts in working towards addressing wider community and societal abuses towards ending violence against women and girls, whilst engaging in advocacy to engage in individual behavioural change.

NEWS & EVENTS

Alliances for Africa Kicks Off Livelihood Support for Vulnerable Women Impacted by Covid-19

In July 2021, AfA started her program on providing livelihood support for the most vulnerable women impacted by the covid-19, at Umuneke Ngor autonomous community in Ngor Okpala LGA. Imo state.

Funded by the the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women and Girls, (UNTF EVAWG), catered for 15 women in each local government , across the 27 local government area of Imo state.

In May, 2021 a call for nomination of beneficiaries was made and posted across all of AfA's social media platforms as well as on the networks and coalition platforms where AfA is represented, in order to reach women in dire need of the support.

Providing beneficiaries with a brief background of the organization, AfA's Program Officer, Faith Kalagbor, reassured everyone that the support was necessitated by the negative impact of the pandemic which resulted in dire consequences for women and girls.

Our organization concerned about the welfare of women and girls', saw the need of the most vulnerable women and girls especially widows, women living with disabilities, petty farmers and traders, orphans, survivors of violence, the aged, single mothers, women without a source of livelihood, sex workers, and those women earning a daily wage of less than 500 naira .

HRH Eze Engr. Sir Frederick Ogechi Nwachukwu Ogboro 1 of Ngor Okpala Autonomous community, Received and appreciated AfA's gesture and thoughtfulness exhibited by AfA and the United Nations Trust Fund.

Beneficiaries were provided with non-perishable food items and relief materials, they thanked the team and donor, a few shared their story of how the covid-19 impacted their lives and their sources of income, stating that, the support will go a long way in cushioning the effect of the pandemic.

Relatively, the team has been able to reach out to vulnerable women and their families in five LGAs namely, Ezinihitte, Mbaitoli, Owerri West, Ikeduru and Owerri North. We will shortly be visiting Isu, Njaba, Aboh Mbaise, Ahiazu and other LGs in Imo State. . Pictures below, captures moment.....



Alliances for Africa Holds Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Training

In a conscious bid to improve the general wellbeing of staff members and build resilience for optimal productivity, AfA held a two-day residential capacity building training on Mental Health and Wellbeing on July 20th - 21st, 2021.

The training took place at Crystal Lake Resort and Tours in Oguta, Oguta LGA, Imo state, and was supported by the United Nations Trust Fund.

Dr. Pamela Udoka, a licensed and certified clinical psychologist and the CEO of the counseling firm, Family Wellness Therapy Center Lekki Lagos state facilitated the training. Dr Pamela reminded us all that, for one to be in optimal health, they must be fully connected to physical, social, and emotional wellbeing and behavior.

Dr. Pamela took participants through care giving and how the general wellbeing of staff members can be affected as frontline service providers who respond to survivors of violence, partners and beneficiaries who in turn follow the rigors of such cases to a conclusive end. Thus, it can be detrimental to their emotional and social health.

She noted that care givers have their own special needs and challenges which most often are neglected and can have negative impact if not well addressed and managed, this she referred to as caregiving stress or burden.

To maintain optimal health at all times, Dr. Pamela stressed that one must first accept they need help, seek help from appropriate quarters, accept help, focus on what they can provide to get expert help and lastly set realistic goals.

But most importantly, goals must be SMART- Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound.



Advocacy Visit To INEC Commissioner, Imo State

AfA, visited the Imo state Independent National Electoral Commission on 23rd July, 2021, on a scheduled advocacy meeting with the Resident Electoral Commissioner, Prof. Ezeonu and staff of the commission.

The essence of the advocacy visit in partnership with the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Center and funded by MacArthur Foundation was to discuss ways AfA can partner to strengthen support for anti-corruption and ensure a socially inclusive election through the implementation of policies and programs in the forthcoming election 2023 elections.

Prof Francis Ezeonu expressed delight at the visit noting that civil society organizations (CSOs) and the media have been their greatest strength through which they gather feedback. More importantly, he disclosed that INEC is about to commence a new strategic plan.

According to him, INEC has an all-inclusive and gender friendly policy. In the state, two departments out of seven are headed by women, while 45 percent of their area electoral officers (AEOs) are women.

He disclosed that the draft Electoral bill addressed most of AfA's queries but regretted that the lawmakers at the National Assembly altered them to favour their parties like high cost of nomination forms, lamenting that despite their efforts to ensure credible elections, political parties and the judiciary mess up their efforts.

Prof. Ezeonu called for an end to judicial litigation in electoral contests to allow INEC field the right candidates as against what obtained in Okigwe senatorial election where the commission pronounced a party winner without a clear-cut candidate as winner. Prof Ezeonu restated their commitment to emerge the best election management body (EMB) in Africa and the world.

He however disclosed that the commission advocated that, women and PLWDs be given waiver to procure expression of interest forms/nomination form to enhance inclusion. The REC declared readiness to partner organizations and government to commence sensitization of voters to register early, especially during the forthcoming August women meeting.

One of the outcomes of the CISLAC funded meeting, was an established partnership between AfA and the commission, as the REC called on all CSOs to mobilize women to take advantage of the ongoing registration exercise, to get their PVCs.



NEWS & EVENTS

AfA Represented At NAPTIP Stakeholders Meeting

July 28th, 2021 AfA attended the stakeholder meeting with the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, NAPTIP, Imo state command ahead of the World day Against Trafficking of Persons.

The purpose of the meeting was to identify stakeholders working within the context of the NAPTIP mandate in Imo state with the aim to establish a working partnership.

The world day against human trafficking globally commemorated on July 30, was also spot lighted as an important day for the agency and her partners to show concern about the dignity of humans. It was agreed that, a sensitization will be carried at Girls Secondary School, Akwakuma.

The commander also solicited partnership and representation of organizations present at the meeting. He revealed that NAPTIP, has began working in Imo state, however, they are incapacitated in several ways, as there are yet no detention facilities, shelter, man power, and vehicles for interventions.

He however, urged participants to report issues that bothers on the NAPTIP, stating that they can make effective referrals and contact their zonal office where necessary for assistance.

Those in attendance were, a staff of AfA, two NAPTIP officials, an officer from the civil defense, human trafficking unit, two officers from the Nigerian Immigration Service, Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling Minor Unit, and a Child advocate, Pearl Godslight, who is a member of the ISCEVAWG.

The invitation came as a result of the visibility of AfA's work in the state.





World Drought and Desertification Day; Challenges and Impact on Women and Girls



June 17 is widely regarded and observed by countries as World Drought and Desertification Day. Its purpose is aimed at raising awareness of the presence of desertification and drought highlighting method of preventing desertification and recovery from drought.

This day was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/49/115 on January 30, 1995 after the day when the United Nations Convention to combat desertification.¹

This year's theme "Restoration, Land, Recovery. We build back with healthy land" is specifically about a green planet, sustainable development, health and welfare of the people more especially in a post covid time.

"Land restoration can contribute greatly to post-COVID19 economic recovery. Investing in land restoration creates jobs and generates economic benefits, and could provide livelihoods at a time when hundreds of millions of jobs are being lost," Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary of UNCCD (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification) said ahead of World Day to Combat Drought and Desertification.

"If countries can restore the nearly 800 million hectares of degraded land, they have pledged to restore by 2030, we can safeguard humanity and our planet from the looming danger,"

Mr Thiaw added. According to the world body, "one million species of plants and animals out of a total of eight million species are now at risk of extinction. Biodiversity loss is not just an environmental issue: it's a developmental, economic, security, social and moral issue." He stated.²

In Nigeria, the major causes of drought according to the Journal of political sciences & Public Affairs in its topic, "Historical Analysis of the Economic Effect of Drought on Tropical Forest Management in Northern Nigeria as written by Nwokocha Chibueze listed as natural causes and human activities as its major factor.

"Large numbers of inhabitants of the drought prone areas are small arable farmers, who depend mostly on the highly variable rainfall for crop cultivation and maintenance of their herds. The causes of drought can be the nature of the changing weather patterns which often seen via uncontrolled buildup of heat on the earth's surface, meteorological changes which result in a reduction of rainfall, and reduced cloud cover,

all of which results in greater evaporation rates. Another cause is the over active participation of human activities which affects the climatic condition of the land and forest. These human activities are bush burning, deforestation, overgrazing and poor cropping methods, reduction of water retention in the soil, and improper soil conservation techniques, which lead to soil degradation.” 3

Women’s role in land use is very key and pivotal. Quoting the Gender Action Plan, “Women are strategic agents of change and play a central role in the use and care of land resources, in particular in land-dependent communities.

“Women rely on land resources to provide the household needs for food, water and energy, which makes them more dependent on natural resources than men; yet most women neither own nor have control over these resources. Less than 20 per cent of land holders worldwide are women, and only 13 per cent of the land users who make the major decisions on agricultural land are women. On the other hand, women are a significant labour force and are guardians of valuable traditional and indigenous knowledge on land use. But these advantages do not benefit them. Globally, women make up 43 per cent of the agricultural labour force.

“In many poor countries, more than 95 per cent of all economically active women work in agriculture. In sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, women hold 10 per cent of the credit available to smallholder agriculture. Similarly, female farmers receive only 5 per cent of agricultural extension services, and only 15 per cent of agricultural extension officers are women”. 4

In Nigeria, women have established more defined roles in agriculture and are involved in agricultural production, processing and utilization. A woman’s role in the agricultural sector is significantly affected by socio-economic factors such as income, education and access to infrastructure. In order for agriculture to advance in Nigeria, gender specific policies and services tailored to women in the value chains should be developed.

According to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development, “women account for 75 per cent of the farming population in Nigeria, working as farm managers, and suppliers of labour. Though women constitute a large portion of the farming population, women’s possibilities in agriculture are

hindered by formal and traditional rules. Generally, the extent of gender involvement in agricultural production varies across ethnic groups in Nigeria. Nigerian women farmers work alongside with their male counterparts with some clear distinctions in activities between them.

In most cases, the men execute the tedious tasks such as land clearing and felling of trees, gathering and burning of bush, and making ridges, while the women engage in planting. In addition, women also participate in weeding, harvesting, on-farm processing, and selling of farm produce. Generally, women are rarely connected with agricultural export crops such as cocoa, rubber, cotton, but rather involved with the production of food crops such as maize, cowpea, melon, pepper, cassava, and vegetables. In some cases, women participate in small scale animal production including small ruminants, poultry and aquaculture.” 5



While drought and desertification may not be widely reported in the South East Nigeria, women are largely excluded in the decision and planning activities in land use. They are also not allowed access to land right and land inheritance.

Generally speaking, drought has a vast effect on mass starvation, famine and cessation of economic activity especially in areas where rain fell agriculture is the main stay of the rural economy. Forced human migration and environmental refugees, deadly conflicts over the use of dwindling natural resources, food insecurity and starvation, destruction of critical habitats and loss of biological diversity, socioeconomic instability, poverty and climatic variability through reduced carbon sequestration potential are common knowledge of the causes of drought. By extension, insecurity issues as is seen by the migration of herders into the hinterland and its attendant issues of violent and deadly clashes.

The effects of drought on the condition of women as enumerated in a paper by Wilfred Tichagwa listed the potential impacts of drought on material conditions of life as they affect rural women. The rationale for focusing on rural women is two-fold. First rural women are backbone of the rural economy and as such, any changes in condition of women of which will affect their performance in economic activities will inevitably affect the performance of the rural economy as a whole.

"The second point is that, at household level women are too large extent responsible for food provision and overall survival strategy of the family. The effects of drought are therefore important to the extent that it undermines the woman's efforts to fend for their families. Crop failures caused by drought result to food deficit in terms of household's needs. Also, there will be little or no crop surplus for sale, therefore income from this source is reduced or even wiped out completely.

"Some of the social impact is the increased migration of men, women and unaccompanied minors. Increased risk taking with many women and girls forced to engage in sex for food or money, marry early or be exposed to increased violence from spouses, unwanted pregnancies' and STI's.

"Many young women lose hope and have a reduced ability to move beyond crisis mode and identify alternative income sources to meet household needs.

Increased school drop-out as girls must allocate more time to search for transport water for household consumption. Reduced access to water for consumption and personal hygiene." 6 There is need to strengthen women's participation in land rights and access to resources as well as integration of women into decisions and planning activities in land use especially at the rural level, to eradicate extreme poverty.

Key facts:

- As of 2018, 170 countries were affected by desertification, land degradation and/or drought.
- Countries have pledged to restore 1 billion hectares of degrading land by 2030 at an estimated maximum cost of US\$1.67 trillion dollars
- Half of these pledges are commitments by 115 countries under the Convention
- COVID-19 stimulus packages have dedicated about 2.5 percent, on average, to green activities
- Costa Rica, which is hosting the global observance event this year, once faced the threat of desertification, but turned the situation around and became the first tropical country to halt and reverse its deforestation and forest degradation.

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INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

Women have always been the primary victims of war. Women lose their husbands, their fathers, their sons in combat. Women often have to flee from the only homes they have ever known. Women are often the refugees from conflict and sometimes, more frequently in today's warfare, victims. – Hillary Rodham Clinton

In 2015 the United Nations adopted 19 June as the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict. The adoption of the day was aimed at raising awareness of the need to put an end to conflict-related sexual violence, to honor the victims and survivors of sexual violence around the world and to pay tribute to all who have courageously devoted their lives to and lost their lives in standing up for the eradication of these crimes.

It has become a prevalent practice especially in conflict and war-torn areas by militants and or security officials to weaponize sexual violence as a tactic of war, torture and terrorism to victimize already traumatized women, girls and those living with disability and sexually harass and molest them.

In Nigeria, reports are rife about how Boko Haram forcefully kidnapped school girls and turn them into sex slaves for their sexual gratification, instances are the Chibok and Dapchi school girls. This has created a serious gap for humanitarian response.

A paper written by Joe Read for Humanitarian Practice Network stated that, "The prevalence of sexual violence within the Boko Haram crisis has been widely reported in humanitarian assessments, human rights reports and media coverage from the early days of the insurgency. Boko Haram's abuses against women and girls, including abduction, forced conversion to Islam, physical and psychological abuse, forced labor, forced participation in insurgency operations and forced marriage, rape, and other sexual abuse have inspired fear among local communities in north-east Nigeria and contributed to the group's notoriety, both within the region and globally.

However, while Boko Haram's violence against women and girls has been at the center of public attention to the crisis, delivering protection and support for women and girls has been an ongoing challenge in the humanitarian response."¹

He further gave an insight on activities of Internally Displaced Persons, IDPs, staying as refugees in camp adding that they are also not exempted from the wiles of security operatives handed in their care to protect them, who in turn lure them with commodities as a ploy to abuse them sexually.

"In January 2016, three UN Special Rapporteurs visited Maiduguri in Borno State on behalf of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). There they found evidence of widespread sexual abuse and other major protection concerns affecting internally displaced women and girls. They concluded that 'a protection gap is evident, especially in service delivery and access to justice' for women and girls victims of Boko Haram'.+ This was not the first report of a protection deficit in the humanitarian response, nor the first report of sexual exploitation and abuse of displaced women and girls, but it was the first time that UN officials had pinpointed the coalescence of Boko Haram violence and sexual exploitation and abuse in displacement to create extreme vulnerability among displaced women and girls. The prevalence of sexual abuse and exploitation of women and girls by civilian militias, members of the military and the national and state governments' emergency management cadres has also been highlighted, including in a report by the UN Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights of IDPs following a visit to Maiduguri in August 2016.+ In October 2016, a Human Rights Watch report of sexual exploitation and abuse among IDP women and girls by camp officials led to the establishment of a committee to investigate allegations of trafficking and sexual abuse of IDPs. These reports and others have increased the profile of the unmet needs of vulnerable women and girls in north-east Nigeria,

but the challenges experienced by the humanitarian response in providing prevention activities and support and services for survivors have continued".²

Corroborating the statement above, Jennifer Ugwa's report for Reliefweb reported that "Women make up more than 50 percent of the IDP population in Nigeria. And as they are forced to survive on less than ₦780 (US \$1.90), their livelihoods are largely reliant on goodwill donations from charitable and government organizations. Consequently, due to overlapping vulnerabilities related to economic security and protection, many find themselves at risk of sexual and gender-based violence in the camps.

"Many of us [women and girls] came to the camp without children, but if you look around, plenty got pregnant and are now mothers without partners," said Magdalene*, 19, a resident of Abagena IDP camp in Markurdi. Abagena is home to more than 8,000 IDPs, according to an official of the State Emergency Management Agency.

"Having been at the camp for the last four years, living among friends and peers who have been victims, Magdalene said the culture of silence instituted by the camp authorities has given rise to a generation of children born from rape.

"Attempts to retrieve data on reports of rape, harassment, or other forms of sexual abuse in Abagena were denied by camp staff. Rather, Magdalene said, incidents are settled in hushed tones. Victims are often threatened to stay silent or risk eviction - especially if the abuser is a camp official said Magdalene, given what she's heard of the experiences of women who've left the camp for that reason."³

The covid 19 pandemic did not make it any easier, the United Nations Population Fund revealed in a report that women and girls were hit hard by the menace especially in violence prone areas.

A March report covering 2020 found that women and girls were hit hardest by the triple crisis of conflict, displacement as a result of that conflict and COVID-19 and at heightened risk for sexual violence, exploitation and trafficking. The pandemic has impeded prevention, protection and treatment services efforts.

Conflict-related sexual violence exacts an unspeakable toll on a survivor, who is most likely to be a civilian and not a combatant. Even if hostilities cease, the scars are lasting. Sexual violence in conflict also threatens public health, security and peacebuilding. The costs of war are great; the cost of war against women and girls is incalculable. ⁴

Jennifer further revealed that, during the COVID-19 lockdown, "more than 3,600 rape cases were recorded across Nigeria and that could still be a gross undercount, given the lack of data on violence against women. Even before the pandemic hit, rape victims were less willing to report cases due to lack of faith in the country's snail-paced legal system. But during the lockdown, though mobile courts were operating, cases of abuse especially sexual and domestic abuse were deprioritized".⁵

Therefore, there is need for the Nigeria government and government at all levels to bring sexual crimes and sexual violence in conflict out of 'the shadows', punish perpetrators.

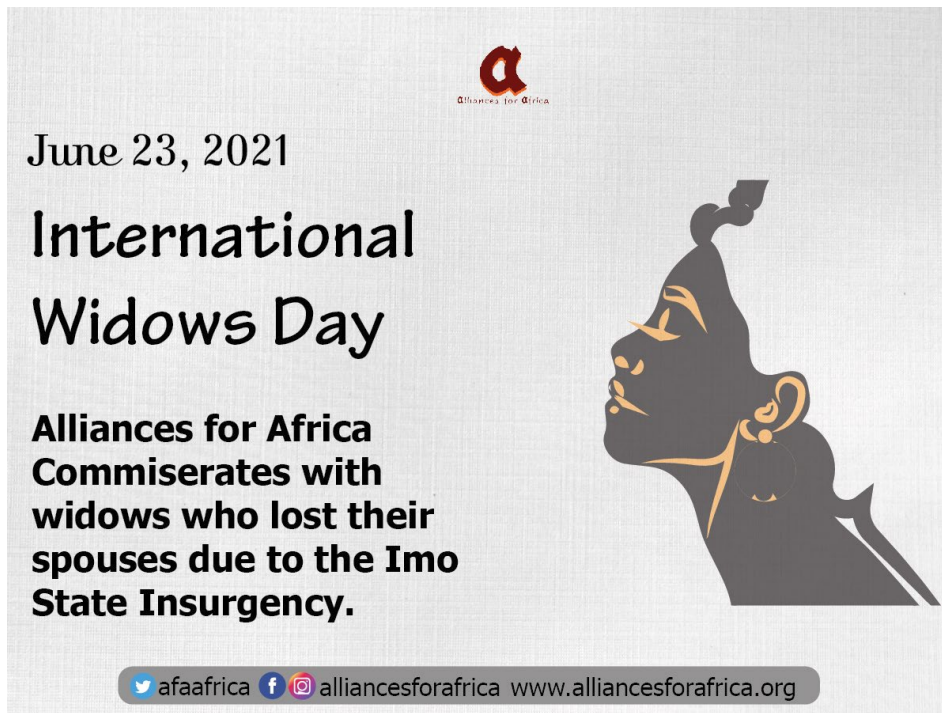
Domesticating the VAPP law in all states of the federation will go a long way to help fast track punishment for perpetrators and protect everyone from all forms of violence as well as for the police to establish a gender desk in every station to handle sexual violence not with kids gloves but as a criminal offense.

A gender emergency: challenges to responding to the needs of women and girls in north-east Nigeria especially for those in gender-segregated camps.

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INTERNATIONAL WIDOW'S DAY 2021



The observance of International Widows Day, is an annual event marked every June 23 by the United Nations, however other countries have days they adopted to mark theirs.

The celebration became necessary to bring to light several human rights violations and other abuses faced by widows are with after the death of their spouses as well as forge ways to ameliorate their sufferings.

International Widows Day was established by The Loomba Foundation to raise awareness on the issue of widowhood. A study by the foundation, on the rising number of widows, was presented to the then UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon on 22 June 2010 then by December 21, 2010, the United Nations formally adopted June 23 as a day of observance of International Widows Day.¹

In Nigeria, one of the major factors that causes violence against widows are fueled by socio-cultural norms. Notably among is widowhood practices and obnoxious norms which is very prevalent in the country especially in South East Nigeria. In an article written by Kelechi Iruoma for an online platform, The New Humanitarian, aptly captured some of the issues faced by widows.

He wrote, "In many Nigerian cultures, when a man dies, his wife is accused of having a hand in his death until she proves her innocence through a series of rituals. A widow can be forced to sleep in the same room as her husband's body during the mourning period, which can last days, or to drink the water used to clean the body. "Many widows in Nigeria are accused of witchcraft, which can lead to being ostracized, abused or even death. Due to lack of reporting, there is no way to know how many women in Nigeria have been killed over witchcraft fears, but experts agree the number is rising."²

Nigeria is a patriarchal society thus women are regarded as less humans while widows have remained at the fulcrum of this debasing treatment. Widows are subjected to agonizing, painful and dehumanizing treatments during their mourning rites and thereafter. This impact negatively on their social, psychological and physical wellbeing.

A recently concluded research revealed some of the harsh treatment widows are subjected to, in hands of traditional female institutions such as Umuada and relatives of the deceased. . They are still not allowed a say in the burial of their husbands and other obnoxious laws, including social exclusion and the other economic hardship associated with it.

Recently, following the insecurity situation being experienced in the State a lot of women became widows prematurely. The death of civilians and by security operatives as well as reported cases of missing persons, in which men had the highest number. This has created more widows in the system, saddling them with new responsibility of charting the course of their families alone.

The theme of the 2021 Widows Day, “*Invisible Women, Invisible Problems*”, became important as widows have continued to be left unseen, unsupported, and unmeasured by the society. The theme therefore, encourages us to identify with these women and make their problems visible to the society as well as include widows in policy making meetings.

With the number of heightened insecurities, rising conflicts owing to terrorism and banditry, displacements, and the covid-19 pandemic, as well as missing spouses has left many more women widowed.

These experiences must be brought to the front burner with efforts made for their voices to be heard.

As part of recommendations, the foundation urge the government and policy makers;

- To make laws/policies in favor of widows in the community.
- Ensure full rights for widows and justice where applicable.
- Push for research and statistics into violence, discrimination, poverty, and develop policies and program to address the problem.
- On the need for access to health care, work, education, live free from violence and abuse for widows in the state.

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Maputo Protocol @ 18: The Journey Continues

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Right on the Rights of Women in Africa also known as the Maputo Protocol is an International human rights document for the protection of women and girls in Africa.

It is a comprehensive legal framework that not only holds African government to account in event of violation of women's right, but also gives women the right to take part in political processes, social and political equality with men, improved autonomy in their reproductive health decisions, and an end to female genital mutilation (African Union, 2003).

It was adopted by the African Union in Maputo, Mozambique in 2003 in the form of a protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (adopted in 1981, but only enacted in 1986).



The protocol has as its provisions, right to participation in political and decision-making process, protection of women in armed conflicts, protection of women living with disability, widow's right, elimination of harmful practices among other contents of the 25 articles making up the legal instrument.

As at July 2020, out of the 55 member countries in the African Union, 49 have signed the protocol and 42 have ratified and domesticated the protocol. The AU states that have neither signed nor ratified the Protocol yet are Botswana, Egypt, and Morocco. The states that have signed but not yet ratified are Burundi, the Central African Republic, Chad, Eritrea, Madagascar, Niger, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan.

However, 18 years after the adoption of the Maputo protocol, progress have been relatively slow, owing to the lack of domestication of this law in member states as well as some countries yet to sign and ratify it. Member States that have ratified the Protocol, rarely submit reports on the progress of the domestication and implementation of the Protocol thereby presenting difficulties in tracking the progress on commitment and other challenges. Nigeria is among African states yet to domesticate and implement provisions of the protocol.

A recent meeting convened in November 2020 by the African Union Commission Women, Gender and Development Directorate in collaboration with the Gender, Peace and security programme of AUC peace and security department and the Solidarity for African Women Rights, with African Union experts responsible for gender, equality and women's affair, civil societies and other women and youth organizations to deliberate and evaluate the status of the ratification, domestication and implementation of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.

It was discovered that despite countries enacting laws against sexual and gender-based violence as well as harmful cultural practices, some were yet to ratify and implement the Maputo protocol. This gapping realization was made worst by the advent of the covid-19 which worsened exposure of women to more detrimental situations.

Other challenges highlighted were issues of conservative governments, pluralistic legal systems; resistance from strong faith-based groups; absence of, or lack of clarity on ratification procedures; the prioritization of peace and reconciliation in countries in active or emerging from civil strife; concerns with reproductive rights provisions and the provisions on rights related to marriage among other challenges.

In the light of the above, progress to domesticating this protocol in Africa member states have continued to be very slow. However, in speeding up the process of ratification, domestication, implementation and reporting on the Maputo protocol to advance the gender agenda in line with best practices, Alliances for Africa recommends the following:

- Enforce the decision of the ECOWAS Court to ensure that women have their full compensation as directed by court for the gender-based violence.
 - Popularize the protocol in all states of the federation among lawyers with particular reference to female lawyers who are critical key to advancing justice for women and girls.
 - Strengthen civil society movement targeted at strategic advocacy for the domestication of the Maputo protocol.
 - Ensure that all States pass the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act into Law.
 - Protect displaced women and girls and ensure that they have access to basic rights, improved services within the IDP camps and sanction the perpetrators as well ensure maximum protection for women in conflict prone areas.
- AfA pledge to continue to work with the commission, and particularly the special rapporteur on the rights of women in Africa on implementing the Maputo Protocol in Africa.

ABOUT ALLIANCES FOR AFRICA (AFA) , is an African led feminist organisation which focuses on human rights, peace and sustainable development Owerri Imo State Nigeria. AfA aims at enhancing and strengthening on a sustainable basis, local, national, sub-regional and regional institutions in Africa that are active in the monitoring, advancing, promoting and protecting of human rights, peace and sustainable development initiatives.

GALLERY

Two Day Training on Crisis Communication & Management

Two days capacity building training for AfA staff on Crisis Communication and Management sponsored by Internews.

Given that no organization is immune to crisis which may emanate internally or externally, the outcome of the capacity building training was an increased understanding on crisis communication and its importance, the constitution of AfA's crisis communication team and a developed crisis communication plan for AfA.

This is one more Step to improving AfA's organizational Resilience to swiftly adapt to crisis.

(pictures roll)



ISCEVAWG QUARTERLY MEETING

Second quarterly review meeting of the Imo state Committee on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, ISCEVAWG.

Objective of the meeting was to reinstate the mandate of the ISCEVAWG to ensure unity of purpose, effective collaboration and service delivery.

The Imo state Committee on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls remain a Rapid Response multi-sectoral committee working to end all forms of violence against women and girls in Imo state.

(Picture roll)



School's Sensitization On “Catching them Young”

A secondary school sensitization done by AfA with support from the United Nations Trust Fund with the theme “Catching Them Young”.

The programme was aimed at building young people’s knowledge on bodily autonomy, communicating for prevention of sexual violations.

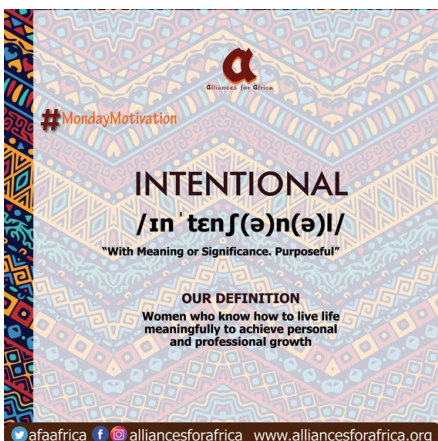
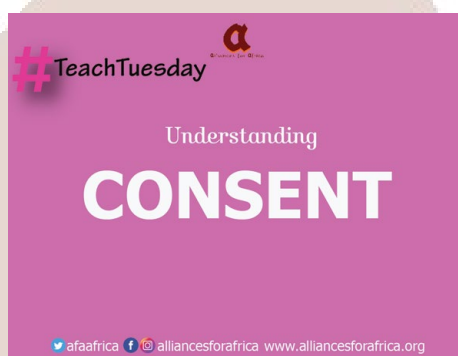
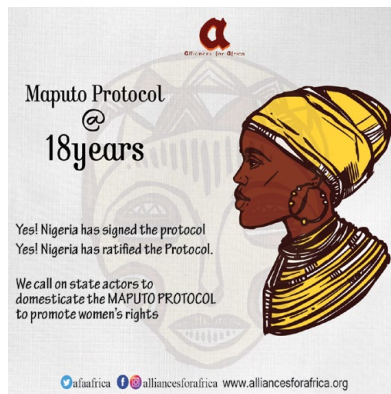
They were enlightened on yellow and red flags, advances, consent, setting boundaries and easily reporting for prevention.

Schools visited were Ara secondary school in Owerri west LGA, Akwakuma Girls secondary school in Owerri North LGA, City Secondary school in Owerri Municipal.

(Picture roll)



Social Media Tit-Bits



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Upcoming Events



**Increasing
Community Awareness
and
Support towards Ending Violence
Against Women and Girls
in 30 Communities
in Imo state**

Increasing Women and Girls Understanding on the Root causes of YAWG is Imperative

Harmful Traditional practices is a form of violence against women and girls

Baby Buying and Selling is a form of violence against women and girls. **END IT**

Election Violence is another form of violence against women and girls

Rape is a Criminal offense, it attracts life imprisonment as a PUNISHMENT

Child Molestation and defilement is a criminal offence. **STOP IT**

Community Mobilization is Strategic towards ending Violence Against Women and Girls

August 2021

- Day of the girl child
- Staff and Board Members Bootcamp
- Livelihood Covid Support for 405 Women in Imo State
- School Sensitization on SGBV
- Capacity Training For Proposal Writing and Effective Monitoring and Evaluation
- Essay Competition for Young Girls on Addressing Systemic Inequalities in Schools
- Series of Consultative Meeting on Gender related Matters
- Development of A Safe App on Engaging Women and Girls on SGBV Related cases
- Collaboration and Strategic partnership with State and Non-State Actors on Ending Violence against Women and Girls



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