



BASELINE SURVEY

CORE SUPPORT FOR NETWORK BUILDING OF MALE FEMINISTS IN SUPPORT OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN NIGERIA.

Final Report
(August 2025)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This baseline survey marks a pivotal moment in Nigeria's journey toward engaging men as co-leaders in the movement for gender justice and the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV). Implemented by the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development (Centre LSD) with Ford Foundation support, the “Core Support for Network Building of Male Feminists” initiative leverages an innovative, feminist-informed approach striving to build a visible, inclusive network of male feminists and allies who are not “saviours,” but disruptors of patriarchy, partners to women-led movements, and change agents embedded in traditional, religious, and community institutions.

Why It Matters

With one in three Nigerian women experiencing GBV, the imperative for new models of positive masculinity and shared leadership has never been clearer. Deeply entrenched patriarchal and religious norms, coupled with limited male engagement in existing frameworks, have created persistent cultural and accountability gaps. This three-year project aims to spark societal and institutional transformation by empowering men to proactively oppose GBV, uphold women's rights, and advance gender norm shift as a national public good.

Baseline Objectives and Methods

The baseline survey was designed to: assess male engagement in gender advocacy across all six geo-political zones; map the capacity of male-focused organisations; identify key traditional/religious/cultural (TRC) figures' attitudes; confirm the presence and structure of male feminist networks (MFNs); document male ally actions and collaborations; gauge public awareness; and ground strategic recommendations in evidence. A robust mixed-methods approach combined online/mobile surveys, key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), media/social media analytics, and systematic desk review, reaching urban and rural voices nationwide.

Quota-based snowball sampling surfaced both visible leaders and hidden influencers, ensuring that each zone's realities and intersectionalities across age, class, faith, gender, and region were reflected.

Baseline Survey Key Findings

Regional Patterns and Heterogeneity

Male engagement in gender equality in Nigeria is both vibrant and uneven, shaped by geographic, actor, resource, and cultural dynamics. Southern urban hubs (Lagos, Port Harcourt, Ibadan, Enugu) lead with established, sometimes even registered, MFNs often with strong ties to women's rights organisations (WROs) and impactful public advocacy campaigns.

In contrast, much of the North alongside rural areas nationwide exhibits nascent, informal, or ad hoc engagement, with men more often mobilised via donor projects or coalition initiatives than as members of distinct, branded male feminist entities.

- South West and South South are examples: home to multiple formal MFNs (e.g., Young Men's Network Against SGBV, Voice Initiative), these zones boast structured leadership, registered chapters, intensive media advocacy, and robust public/private collaborations.
- South East displays strong but mostly informal alliances, often embedded in mixed-gender coalitions or event-driven partnerships.
- North Central, North West, and North East lag behind: here, male engagement is largely individualistic or project-tied, with TRC actors wielding immense sway over the pace of culture change.

Continuum of Male Engagement and Network Structure

Male advocates exist on a broad spectrum from highly visible “champions” and “allies” within WROs, to formal MFNs with explicit pro-feminist identities. However, a persistent theme is linguistic and conceptual distancing from the term “feminist” reflecting cultural caution and the perceived risk of backlash. Even where MFNs exist, the preference is for “ally” or “champion,” with men more inclined to support “safe” domains (education, mentorship) rather than direct challenges to patriarchal power.

Capacity Gaps and Resource Dependency

While some male-focused organisations display impressive skill in advocacy, coalition building, and gender analysis especially in southern regions most report acute funding gaps, fragile institutional structures, and lack of grant-writing or digital capacities. Engagement is strongest where donor investments, technical partnerships, and government buy-in align. Where funding ends, male engagement often dissipates unless local capacity and coalition infrastructure are in place.

Role of TRC Leaders and Community Gatekeepers

Traditional and religious leaders remain the gatekeepers of both possibility and resistance. Southern and urban TRC actors are increasingly visible as progressive champions co-authoring gender justice by-laws, supporting survivor advocacy, and partnering in public campaigns. In the North and rural settings, many TRC actors anchor conservative opposition, though targeted advocacy and intergenerational shifts are gradually softening attitudes. Sustainable change hinges on early and continuous engagement with these critical influencers.

Public Awareness and Media Trends

Public discourse on gender equality is more open and mainstream in the South (especially South West/South South), where vibrant civil society and media landscapes foster youth-led, visible advocacy. North West and North East, however, report significantly lower awareness—hindered by entrenched patriarchy, lower literacy, and suspicion of “Western” influence. Media—both traditional and social—is a double-edged sword: a force for normalization in urban centers, but less trusted or accessible in underserved zones.

Collaboration and Strategic Alliances

Sustained progress is most evident where male and female activists work side-by-side through joint advocacy, training, legal reform, and survivor referral schemes. Partnerships legitimise male involvement, amplify impact, and counteract “tokenism.” In all successful instances, authentic relationship-building and mutual accountability displace event-based or donor-driven engagement, making change rooted and resilient.

Strategic Implications and Recommendations

To ensure the momentum generated by early program gains is not lost, the following are critical:

- Scale up formal MFN network-building in underrepresented/high-resistance regions; invest in peer learning exchanges leveraging South West/South South as “hubs.”
- Address resource gaps and technical capacity particularly for grassroots/rural groups through targeted microgrants, training, and digital infrastructure investment.
- Prioritize TRC leadership partnerships, with context-driven advocacy centering cultural and religious legitimacy.
- Deepen coalition-building with WROs, youth bodies, media, and local government to normalize gender justice and collaborative action.
- Promote public role-modelling and storytelling “positive deviant” men as accelerators of social change.
- Mainstream intersectionality, age, religion, disability, urban/rural divides into all programming.

Closing Reflection

This baseline illuminates a Nigeria in dynamic transition: marked by profound challenges but also by innovation, leadership, and collective will to transform gender norms. Meaningful male engagement is no longer the exception but to become the rule, it requires sustained investment, strategic collaboration, continuous learning, and a fearless celebration of all those who stand for justice, equity, and dignity. The evidence calls for nothing less than an all-hands, all-genders approach rooted in the lived realities of Nigeria’s diverse communities and united by the vision of a truly inclusive movement for change.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANPPCAN	African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect	NW	North West
CBOs	Community-Based Organizations		
CLSD	African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development	SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations	STIWA	Social Transformation Including Women of Africa
DOVENET	Daughters of Virtue & Empowerment Initiative	SIRP	Society for the Improvement of Rural People
EU	European Union	SE	South East
EVA	Education as a Vaccine	SS	South South
FGD	Focus Group Discussion	SW	South West
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation	TV	Television
GBV	Gender-based Violence	TRC	Traditional, Religious, Cultural
GESI	Gender Equality, and Social Inclusion	UN	United Nations
IOM	International organization for Migration	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
KII	Key Informant Interview	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation	VAPP	Violence Against Persons Prohibition
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning	WARDC	Women Advocacy Research and documentation Center
MFNs	Male Feminist Networks	WFWI	Women for Women International
MOU	Memoranda of Understanding	WIN	Women in Nigeria
NC	North Central	WROs	Women's Rights Organisations
NDHS	National Demographic and Health Surveys	YMNAGBV	Young Men's Network Against GBV
NE	North East		
NGP	National Gender Policy		
NGO	Non-governmental Organizations		

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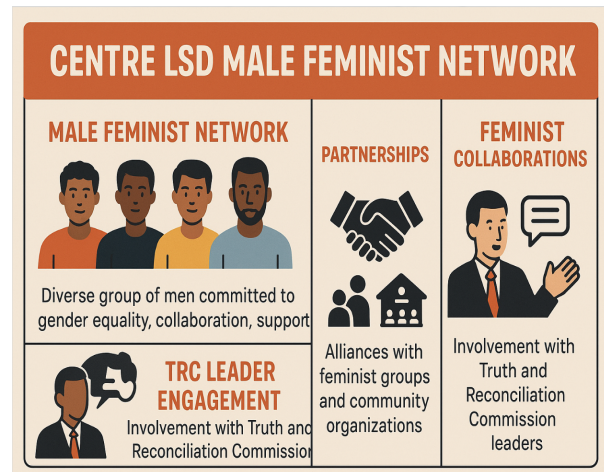
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Program Overview

For decades, the discourse on gender-based violence (GBV) and gender equality in Nigeria has rightly been championed by women. However, fostering lasting and meaningful societal transformation requires engaging men as proactive, responsible allies and co-leaders.

The “Core Support for Network Building of Male Feminists in Support of Gender-Based Violence Prevention in Nigeria” project, implemented by the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development (Centre LSD) in partnership with the Ford Foundation, is designed to create a visible and inclusive national network of male feminists.

These men act not as saviors, but as allies, disruptors of patriarchy, co-architects of equality, and partners within women-led movements.



Why It Matters	Project Goals
In Nigeria, one in three women has experienced GBV. Deep-rooted patriarchal norms often reinforced by religion, culture, and male-dominated institutions keep survivors silent and society complicit. While frameworks exist to address GBV, a lack of male engagement leaves gaps in accountability and culture change. By engaging male leaders in various sectors, this project aims to challenge misogyny, offer new models of masculinity, and promote wider institutional and societal change.	This three-year initiative aims to spark profound cultural and institutional shifts by ensuring that men across Nigeria actively oppose GBV and promote women's rights, thereby supporting gender norm transformation, strengthening public institutions, and fostering a more equitable society.

1.2. What's Already in Motion

Although still in its early stages of implementation, the project is grounded in strategic clarity and is already building momentum through collaborative structures and pre-positioned partnerships.

Table 1. What's Already in Motion	
Engaging Traditional and Religious Leaders: The project involves traditional, religious, and community (TRC) leaders through learning dialogues, scriptural reinterpretation from a gender-justice perspective, and structured advocacy platforms.	A Collaborative, Feminist-Informed Approach: Centre LSD works through co-creation with WROs, civil society, media experts, and male-led advocacy groups, fostering shared ownership, bridging movements, and centering equality as a collective value.
Network Infrastructure and Strategic Partnerships: The Centre LSD is establishing the infrastructure for a national network of male feminists, many of whom are from the existing "Network of Men Leaders to End Violence Against Women." With six regional partners onboarded, shared movement infrastructure (tools, platforms, guides) is being developed and co-owned; and knowledge exchanges with African feminist and male-engagement movements have begun.	

The goal is to foster collective ownership, break the silos between men's and women's movements, and build a future in which everyone thrives not despite their gender, but because equality is a shared, protected value. Refer to **Appendix A** for a summary of project outcomes.

1.3. Purpose of the Baseline Survey

The baseline survey provides measurement for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) indicators, supporting the implementation team in tracking progress and refining strategies. As outlined in the ToR, the objectives are to:

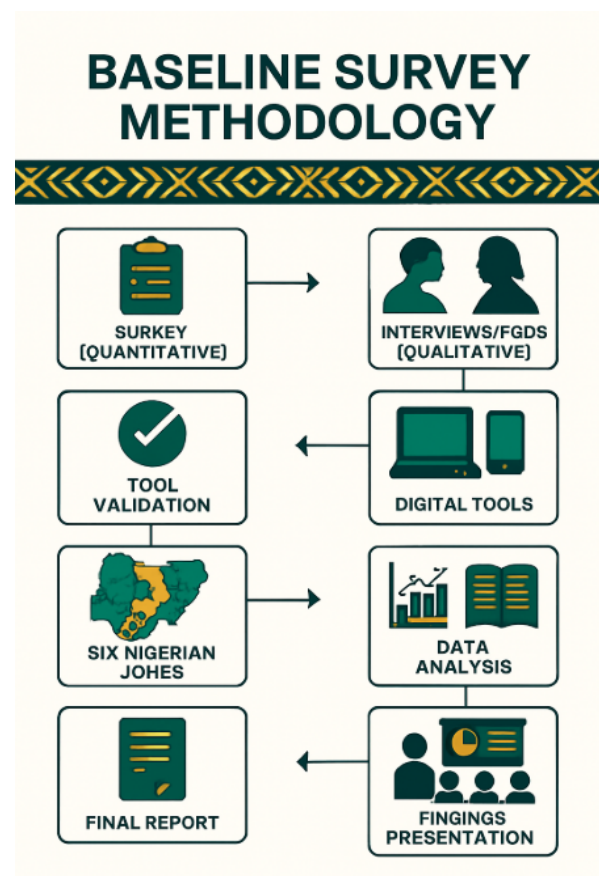
- Assess current male engagement levels in gender equality advocacy across the six geopolitical zones
- Map the capacity/readiness of male-focused organizations and leaders.
- Identify key TRC figures and their views on male allyship.
- Confirm the presence and structure of MFN in Nigeria.
- Document actions by male feminists, key partnerships, and collaborations.
- Assess institutional shifts among TRC leaders.
- Gauge public awareness and discourse on gender equality.
- Provide strategic recommendations for planning and advocacy.

2. BASELINE SURVEY METHODOLOGY

2.1. Overview of Baseline Survey Methodology

Our approach was grounded in the project's Theory of Change (ToC) and Results Framework, ensuring that all data collected directly supports project learning and accountability. This thought process is outlined below:

- **Design and Validation of Comprehensive Baseline Survey Methodology:** The team co-created a robust, mixed-methods baseline methodology that combines quantitative surveys (for broad representation and measurable indicators) with qualitative methods (Key Informant Interviews - KIs, Focus Group Discussion - FGDs, participatory mapping) to capture lived experiences and nuanced perspectives.
- **Development of Data Collection Tools Aligned to the Results Framework:** Drawing on the baseline team's expertise in Results-Based Management (RBM) and Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI), the assessment team designed survey instruments and qualitative guides mapped to each outcome indicator. Tools were designed and refined to ensure clarity, inclusivity, and reliability, leveraging digital platforms (e.g., KoboToolbox, ODK) for efficient and secure data capture. Refer to the [Annexes](#) (separate document) for sample data collection tools, the Baseline Assessment Matrix (BAM), and [Appendix C](#) for a description of data collection tools.
- **Virtual Data Collection Across All Six Geopolitical Zones:** In terms of practicality, each team member was assigned two zones for direct respondent engagement, ensuring strong geographical, gender, and social coverage and maximizing the value of every interview, survey, and group.
- **Rigorous Data Analysis:** Quantitative data were analysed using statistical software (e.g., Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Power BI), with baseline values calculated for all outcome indicators. Qualitative data were also coded thematically (using NVivo), enabling us to identify patterns, drivers, and barriers to male engagement and institutional change. Refer to [Annex](#) document for Baseline Assessment Matrix (BAM).



- **Preparation of a Detailed Baseline Report:** The final report presents baseline values for all indicators, highlights key findings and gaps, and includes actionable recommendations. We will ensure the report is accessible, visually engaging, and tailored to inform project planning and advocacy. Refer to [Appendix D](#) for Baseline Indicator Values.
- **Presentation and Validation of Findings:** The team also presented the findings at the official program launch event in Abuja, Nigeria, to the Centre LSD project management team and stakeholders in an interactive session.

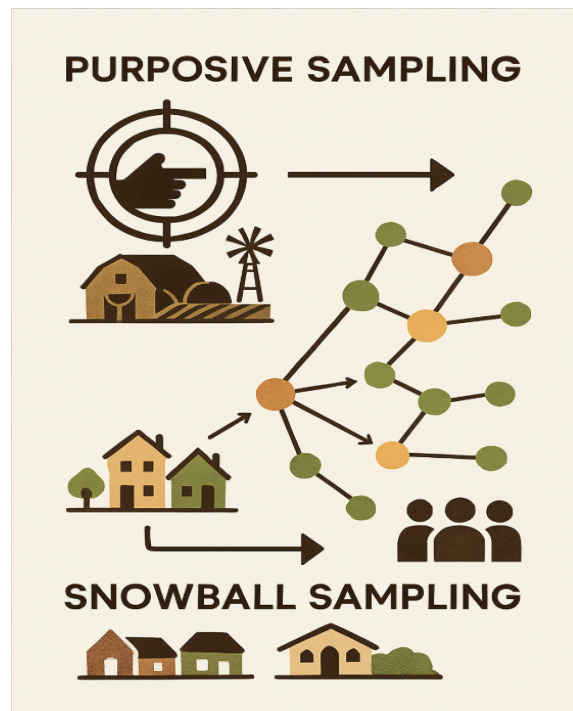
2.2. Sampling Approach and Framework

To obtain a realistic and credible picture of current conditions, the baseline survey combined desk reviews and online primary data collection. This was essential as the project targets a large and diverse area across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones and various stakeholder groups.

Sampling Technique - Adopting A Two-Tier Sampling Approach

Following engagement with initial stakeholders (via purposive sampling), the baseline assessment team applied a snowball sampling strategy. Each participant was invited to refer to others particularly those less visible or harder to reach, such as rural MFN leaders or grassroots gender advocates thereby broadening representation and inclusivity. Snowballing helped expand the sample, uncovering fresh perspectives from voices who may not be widely recognized on public platforms but have significant influence in their spheres.

This two-tiered approach followed by snowball sampling combines the precision of targeted engagement with the organic reach of network-based recruitment. It is well-suited to complex social settings where key actors are sometimes hidden from plain view.



Sampling Rationale and Approach

The proposed sampling plan strikes a balance between credibility, reach, and practicality. The survey will target all six geopolitical zones of Nigeria (North West, North East, North Central, South West, South East, South South), combining an initial purposive sample of visible, relevant actors with snowball referral to surface hidden voices. In developing the sampling framework, we considered the following:

- **Geographic and Stakeholder Coverage:** The baseline survey covers all six geopolitical zones of Nigeria: North West, North East, North Central, South West, South East, and South South. Respondents will be drawn in roughly equal numbers from each zone, ensuring balanced national coverage.
- **Primary Respondents:** MFN leaders, male gender equality activists/allies, Male-focused organisations, Traditional, Religious & Community (TRC) actors, Women's Rights Organisation (WRO) representatives, Media personnel with a history of gender/social inclusion reportage.
- **Social Media Followership:** Review of CLSD's most recent public data (as of July 2025).

Quota-Based Network-Driven Sampling Frame

The adoption of the Quota-Based Network-Driven Sampling Frame was designed to ensure representation among each respondent group MFN leaders, male gender equality allies, MFOs, WROs, TRC actors, and relevant media personnel—in every zone, thereby ensuring that every region's

realities are visible. Quotas for gender and zone mean that both male and female (and gender-diverse) perspectives are captured, rather than dominated by one group or area. This is especially meaningful for a subject like male allyship, where under-represented or less visible actors may hold crucial insights. This sampling approach provided the project team with the numbers and narratives needed to track male engagement in gender equality, understand shifting social norms, engage both traditional and new voices, and design adaptive programming that truly resonates zone by zone, group by group including updating the baseline survey indicator table.

Refer to **Appendix X** for the Baseline Survey Indicator Table. At the end of the baseline data collection process, a total sample of **359** was achieved across the different geopolitical regions in Nigeria. The tables below provide an overview of the final baseline sample size, first by geopolitical region and data collection methods, and secondly by respondent type and data collection methods.

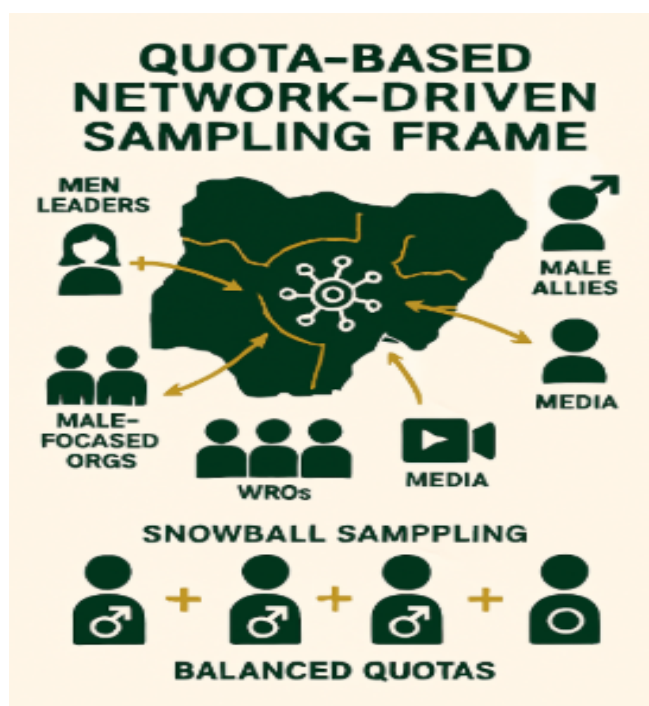


Table 2. Consolidated Baseline Survey Sample (Geopolitical Zones/Data Collection Methods)

Geopolitical Regions	Online/Mobile Survey	KII Engagements	FGD Participants	Total
North West	32	12	6	50
North East	37	11	9	57
North Central	79	10	5	94
South South	53	12	11	76
South East	22	11	14	47
South West	13	12	10	35
TOTAL	236	68	55	359

Table 3. Consolidated Baseline Survey Sample (Respondents/Data Collection Methods)

Respondents	Online Survey	KII	FGD	Total
MFN/allies	86	14	8	108
Male-focused orgs	18	14	17	49
WROs	47	12	18	77
TRC	24	11	0	35
Media	17	17	12	46
Others	44	0	0	44
TOTAL	236	68	55	359



2.3. Overview of Data Collection Process

Blending Methods: Surveys, Interviews, FGDs, Social Media Analytics, and Desk Review

The baseline assessment team tailored the baseline data collection tools to reflect both the diversity and reality of our respondents: Refer to **Annexes** for samples of baseline data collection tools (submitted as a separate document). The assessment team provided analysis scripts for each dataset collated i.e. online surveys, desk review, social media analytics, KII and FGD sessions.

- **Online and Mobile Surveys** were the backbone, enabling us to efficiently reach many voices in cities and rural zones alike. These short, easy-to-complete surveys were shared through WhatsApp, email, SMS, and direct web links. Questions were concise and clear, covering men's participation in gender advocacy, their level of awareness, and their collaboration with women's organizations.
- **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** allowed us to listen deeply to those who play pivotal roles—male champions, organizational leaders, TRC figures, and WRO partners. Conducted over phone or WhatsApp audio (as preferred), these conversations helped the baseline team understand what drives or holds back male engagement, how institutions are changing, and what more can be done.
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** sparked group conversations among male feminists, WRO allies, and community youth, offering a safe space for open dialogue about barriers, collaboration, and everyday change. These group sessions were held virtually (on WhatsApp or Zoom) for safety and convenience.
- **The desk review/Extraction** was completed in parallel, methodically gathering and summarizing evidence from project documents, reports, and media coverage ensuring our findings had both numerical data and stories to support them.
- **The Social Media Analytics tool** was used to track public discourse, coverage, and trends related to gender equality, MFN, and GBV prevention from January 2025 to August 2025. The social media analytics tool consisted of a simple spreadsheet, with daily/weekly entries based on media monitoring and project/partner submissions. The simple spreadsheet columns were updated to record mention dates, platform, reach, sentiment, and related themes.



2.4. Encountered Challenges

This section details the challenges encountered during the online KIIs and FGDs conducted for this baseline study, outlines the mitigation measures implemented by the assessment team, and explains how these approaches helped us manage the challenges and ensure the study's success.

- **Incomplete or Improper Mapping of Respondents:** The lack of proper stakeholder mapping by the zonal coordinators led to several respondents declining to participate. As a mitigation measure, the assessment team re-mapped respondents and expanded the pool, collaborated with coordinators for refined respondent selection, and also used the snowballing approach.
- **Scheduling Difficulties:** The online FGDs faced challenges because participants were in different locations, making it hard to agree on a convenient date and time for the group discussion. Many KIIs had to be rescheduled multiple times due to the busy schedules of respondents. To address this, we offered multiple time slots for the FGDs and provided flexibility to accommodate different time zones. We sent reminders well in advance to confirm



participants' availability and ensure maximum attendance. The assessment team also created WhatsApp groups for them to agree on a suitable time. (where applicable). The assessment team adopted a more structured approach to scheduling by using a shared scheduling tool to make the process more efficient. Finally, the assessment team also added buffer time in our plans to account for the extra follow-up needed, helping to reduce delays in securing participants.

- **Poor Network and Environmental Distractions:** Frequent network disruptions and poor call quality hindered the flow of conversation and impacted the depth of participants' responses. Additionally, some participants were in noisy environments, which created distractions. Several participants dropped off the call or joined later. The assessment team asked participants to select quiet locations for the interviews and advised them to use stable internet connections whenever possible. In cases of network disruptions, then the assessment team rescheduled the interviews at times convenient for the participants. The assessment team also provided alternative communication platforms in case phone calls proved ineffective.

3. BASELINE SURVEY FINDINGS

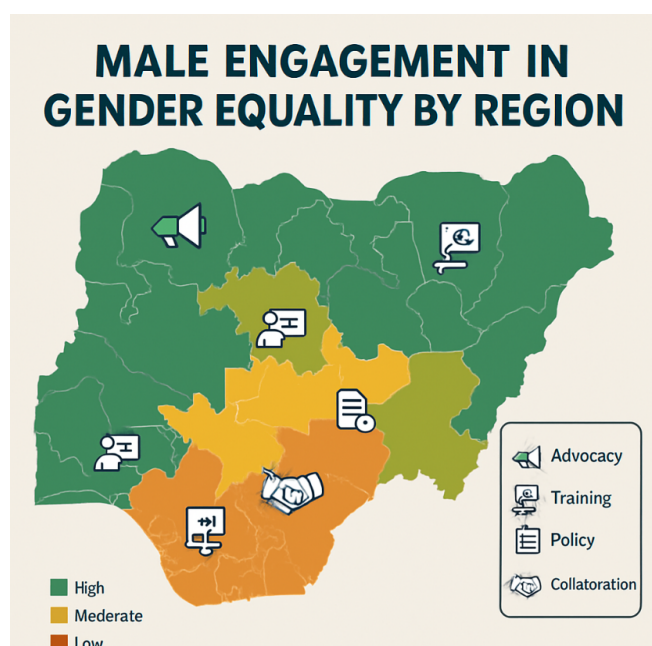
3.1. Assess Current Levels of Male Engagement in Gender Equality Advocacy Across the Six Geopolitical Zones of Nigeria.

Regional Variability in Male Engagement

Overall the baseline survey data shows that male engagement in gender equality advocacy in Nigeria reveals considerable regional variability, shaped by geography, actor groups, funding, and sociocultural dynamics. Across the six geopolitical zones, advocacy is often driven by civil society structures with male-focused organizations, male feminist networks, and WROs serving as principal catalysts for engagement. However, traditional, religious, and media actors remain largely underleveraged, particularly in the northern regions. In the North Central, the level of male engagement is moderate, underpinned by active national male ally networks such as MenEngage Nigeria and SIRP.

These organizations are highly involved in major government-led gender equality drives, including the National Gender Policy and the iCommit campaign. Activities are concentrated on advocacy, capacity building, and reaching rural populations through engagement with faith and community leaders. Despite these achievements, resistance persists in rural and conservative areas, highlighting the need for cultural and religious sensitivity.

The Northeast experiences low levels of male engagement. Efforts here are constrained by deep-seated social conservatism, insecurity, and inconsistent adoption of relevant policies. While male engagement programs such as those led by HeForShe and through faith-based partnerships exist, it remains challenging to reach rural communities, especially those affected by conflict. Influence over gender norms remains largely in the hands of religious



and traditional authorities, and reforms face significant resistance; only rarely do these authorities become advocates for change.

Similar dynamics are observed in the Northwest, where male engagement is also low. The region is marked by the powerful role of emirs and persistent practices that pose challenges to gender reform. Although there are notable initiatives such as programs integrating male gatekeepers into gender-equality efforts through family and community leadership, gains are generally isolated and not yet systemic. Moving to the Southeast, engagement is moderate and characterized by the prominent role of civil society organizations and youth-led activism. Positive changes are occurring, particularly in urban areas, where individual male role models are more visible and influential. Nevertheless, some resistance to gender equality remains, especially in rural communities and among older generations.

In the South-South, male engagement reaches high levels. The region demonstrates robust partnerships between government, NGOs like WARDC, and faith-based organizations. There is a strong record of advocacy, collaborative events, and notable legal reform efforts. Initiatives in this zone often mobilize traditional rulers, religious leaders, and community politicians for public campaigns addressing gender-based violence and discrimination. Also, the Southwest stands out as a leading example, with the highest levels of institutionalized male allyship in gender equality. A vibrant landscape of urban networks, committed civil society organizations, influential policy advocates, and strong media visibility drive intense male participation in both national and local gender advocacy programs. This region exemplifies how media, public outreach, and the consistent building of male ally networks can make the gender equality movement relatable, visible, and impactful.

Table 4. Levels of Male Engagement in Gender Advocacy by Zone

Zones	Engagement Frequency (Level)	Actor Highlights	Key Barriers (Notes)
Northeast	Minimal/Occasional	Media, TRC, MFN limited	Patriarchal norms, stigma
Northwest	Minimal/Occasional	TRC, Male orgs guarded	Tradition, donor-depend
North central	Patchy/Moderate	Faith orgs, youth leaders, NGOs	Resource gaps, no MFN
Southeast	Frequent/Project-driven	Mixed networks, CSOs, progressive TRC	Project-depend, rural lag
South south	Frequent/Sustained	Mixed orgs, innovative campaigns	Funding, tradition
Southwest	Growing/Varied	Active orgs, legal/media roles	Normative lag: rural/elders

Key Patterns and Thematic Insights

- **Urban Advantage:** Urban centers (especially in the Southwest and South-South) facilitate higher male engagement due to exposure, civic activism, and education.
- **Role of Religious and Traditional Leaders:** In the North, impact hinges on support or resistance from these leaders. Positive examples, particularly in Kaduna and Borno, underscore the value of community-specific engagement.
- **Importance of Networked Advocacy:** National coalitions such as MenEngage Nigeria and the Male Feminist Network energize activity in regions with otherwise moderate activity.
- **Barriers:** Insecurity, conservatism, lack of policy domestication, and misinformation impede progress in the Northeast and Northwest.

- **Shifting Masculinities:** Where advocacy is strong, men are not just passive allies but active champions, evidenced by mentoring, public declarations, and peer-led campaigns.

Overall, the picture across Nigeria is one of progress punctuated by regional variations, with southern zones generally further advanced than their northern counterparts. Where success exists, it is largely due to multifaceted partnerships, grassroots engagement, and sustained advocacy embedded within local norms and leadership. Refer to **Appendix E** for snapshots of regional levels of male engagements in gender equality advocacy.

Funding Localised Platforms for Coalition Building

Male engagement in gender equality advocacy in Nigeria is progressing but unevenly and strongly influenced by region, actor type, and relational partnerships. Success hinges on structured, funded platforms (often donor supported), effective coalition-building (notably with women's rights organizations), and community-rooted strategies that mobilize both men and traditional/religious structures. Resistance remains rooted in patriarchal tradition, misperceptions, and resource constraints. Addressing these gaps through capacity-building, institutional reform, and targeted engagement of both male-focused orgs and TRC actors will be critical to scaling and sustaining progress.

Table 5. Gender Dynamics and Patterns Across Actor Types (Level of Engagement)

Gender Dynamics	Patterns Across Actor Types
• Male engagement is most visible in “safe” advocacy domains (education, campaigns, mentorship) but is less consistent on “hard” topics like policy reform or confronting patriarchal power directly. • Women-led organizations remain the primary drivers and architects of gender justice efforts, with men taking on ally or supportive roles rather than central “feminist” identities, especially in the North. • Concerns continue about “eye-service” or tokenism; many men participate in ways that do not challenge male privilege or authority. • Younger generations and urban actors are more open and receptive; resistance remains in traditional and older cohorts.	• Male-Focused Organizations: Highest levels of consistent engagement, especially where programming is donor-supported or WRO-partnered. Capacity and sustainability are still limited by structural gaps and funding volatility. • Male Feminist Networks: Emerging mostly in the South-South, South-East, and South-West; often project-based, informal, or dependent on partnership with WROs. • TRC Leaders: Remain crucial gatekeepers engagement is most successful where advocacy is framed as compatible with local norms, tradition, and religious principles. • Community and Youth Leaders: Frequently cited as effective change agents, especially in urban and North Central zones. • Media Professionals: Generally offer event-based support rather than continuous advocacy, but their influence is rising via increased campaign coverage and role-model storytelling.

Project Implementation Implications

Understanding these nuanced engagement patterns is critical for tailoring interventions. In high-engagement zones like the South-South, there is an opportunity to deepen and scale existing efforts, using successful models as learning hubs for other regions. In North Central, sustaining advocacy requires a flexible approach that acknowledges and addresses the spectrum of engagement.

Conversely, in the Northwest and Southwest, programming must prioritize both awareness-raising and strategic entry points for men, rooted in local customs and realities. Engaging with influential community, religious, and cultural gatekeepers in these regions will be essential for seeding more inclusive, sustained male involvement in gender equality advocacy.

3.2. Map the Capacity and Readiness of Male-Focused Organizations and Leaders

Types of Male-Focused Organizations (MFOs) Across Nigeria

Through the review and triangulation of baseline data, a comparative overview of male-focused organizations/actors in gender equality advocacy across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones was developed. Highlighting their types, structure, key patterns, and regional nuances, all strictly based on collated baseline KIIs, FGDs, and survey findings. This is presented in the sections below.

Table 6. Type of MFOs in North Central Region, Nigeria

MFO Type/Structure		Key Patterns
Core male-focused NGOs:	Kazaki Foundation, ANPPCAN registered, donor-dependent, structured staff roles, urban-based.	Capacity is strongest among urban, donor-assisted NGOs; grassroots or rural groups are often symbolic, with limited resources.
Faith-based male-led entities:	Catholic priests, clergy, and traditional leaders acting individually as advocates.	Main action channels: community advocacy, capacity-building, and church/school-based inclusion.
Ad hoc/Informal groups:	Few formal MFNs; male ally engagement mainly as individuals or inside mixed-gender NGO efforts.	Barriers: Lack of formal networks, sporadic funding, collaboration with WROs often project-driven not institutional, and role clarity issues.

Table 7. Type of MFOs in North East Region, Nigeria

MFO Type/Structure		Key Patterns
Male ally individuals:	Personal advocacy, sporadic/project-based engagement, and low visibility of formal MFNs.	Most visible through event/individual support, seldom as robust organizations or networks.
Faith-based/traditional actors:	Clergy or chiefs occasionally act as gender champions, but typically as part of multi-issue orgs.	Engagement often relies on WROs/WRO-initiated partnerships.
Small, donor-supported NGOs:	Project implementation on GBV/child rights; lean staffing, unsustained between funding cycles.	Barriers: Cultural resistance, sustainability due to insecurity/funding gaps, few collaborative male-female initiatives, identity skepticism about "male feminism."

Table 8. Type of MFOs in North West Region, Nigeria

MFO Type/Structure		Key Patterns
MFNs/Allied orgs:	Several reference large, visible groups (e.g., Bridge Connect, Center for IT Development, Young Men's Network Against SGBV) often registered and running state chapters.	Formal/registered orgs exist, but collaboration is frequently guarded focused on "acceptable" advocacy (e.g., literacy), shying away from transformative or controversial topics.

MFO Type/Structure		Key Patterns
Legal/activist orgs:	Work on policy and legal advocacy, often male-headed but usually in partnership with WROs.	Blend of allyship and resource-based partnerships; institutionalization is patchy.
Community male champions:	Visible in education/outreach, but not all structured as orgs.	Barriers: Competition with patriarchal structures, guarded partnership with WROs, uneven capacity/training, traditional gatekeeping.

Table 9. Type of MFOs in South East Region, Nigeria

MFO Type/Structure		Key Patterns
Informal alliances:	Most male engagement arises as alliances inside mixed-gender CSOs, family/youth orgs, or through ad hoc coalitions for campaigns.	Strong presence in mixed-organizational structures (rarely registered as standalone male-feminist collectives).
Few formal MFNs:	Where present, typically pocketed/local and championed by legacy activists or donor-seeded projects.	Mobilization through community entry, policy advocacy, and joint sensitization.
Faith/community-based actors:	Some local traditional/religious leaders function as individual champions.	Barriers: Resource/funding constraints, stigmatization, grassroots resistance, lack of capacity-building.

Table 10. Type of MFOs in South South Region, Nigeria

MFO Type/Structure		Key Patterns
Embedded male units:	Most male-focused orgs operate as sub-groups within GBV response platforms or peace councils or are affiliated with women/youth orgs.	Strong skills in advocacy, negotiation, and gatekeeper engagement; known for inclusivity and grassroots mobilization.
Male-only groups:	Existing but infrequent (approx. 15–20% of KIIs), e.g., “male advocates’ network” and “he-for-she” groups.	Collaboration and knowledge-sharing are highly valued, but sustainability is threatened by financial/material constraints.
Mixed-gender coalitions:	Heavily favored; collaborations with CSOs, WROs, faith, and traditional leaders dominate.	Barriers: Logistical challenges, funding, persistent patriarchy, and the need for ongoing engagement of traditional gatekeepers.

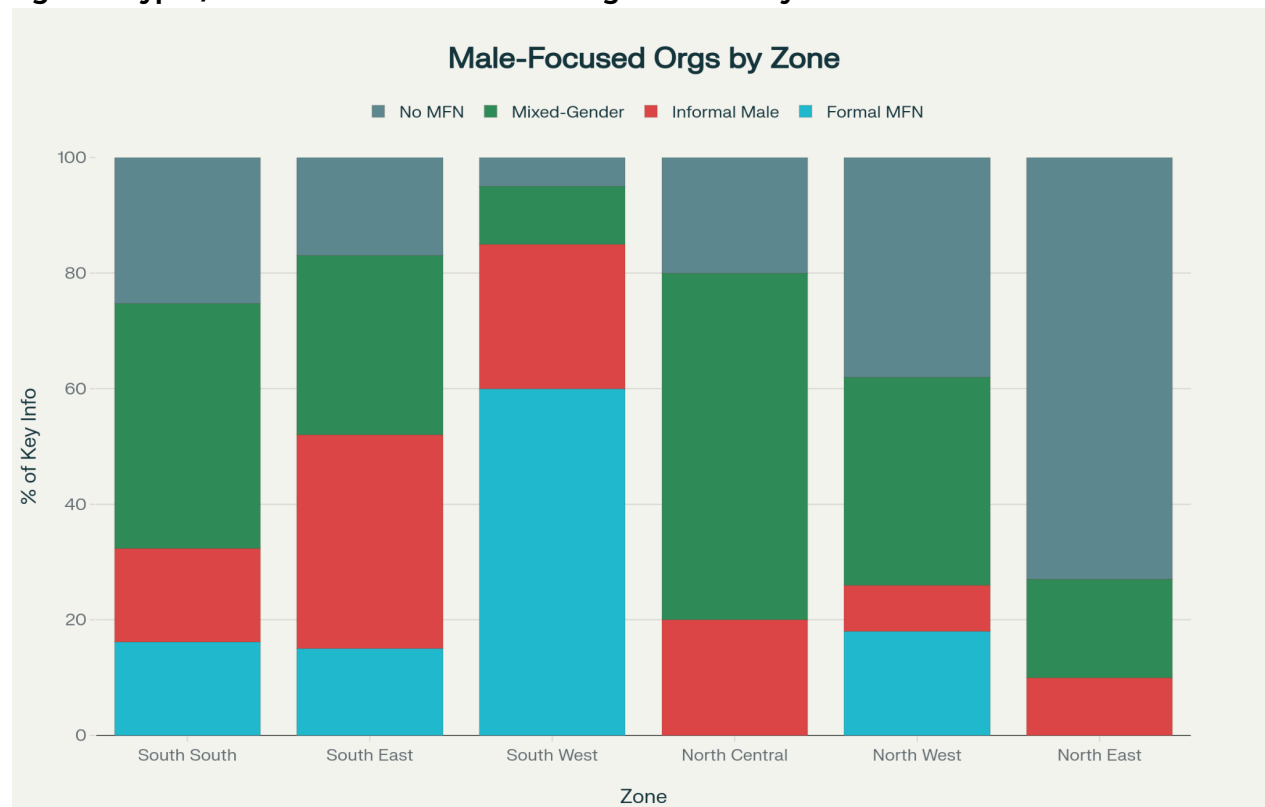
Table 11. Type of MFOs in South West Region, Nigeria

MFO Type/Structure		Key Patterns
Formally registered networks:	“Young Men’s Network Against SGBV,” “Voice Initiative,” and “Boy Tribe Initiative” often have chapters across multiple states, CAC registration, and visible public presence.	Highest visibility and formality of MFNs compared to other zones, including structured leadership and clear programming.

MFO Type/Structure	Key Patterns	
Youth/volunteer-driven organizations:	Most are peer educator groups or school/youth settings and often function as urban, advocacy-focused collectives.	Collaboration with WROs and local government platforms is strong; engagement is via multi-sectoral roles (legal, paralegal, media, and peer education).
Allies within mixed/NGO structures:	Men's groups are also integrated into WROs/CSOs via coalition campaigns.	Barriers: Resource mobilization, tradition/culture-based resistance, sustainability of rural outreach, need for ongoing capacity/institutionalization.

Table 12. MFOs Summary Insights		
Formality & Structure: Most formal and registered male-focused orgs are concentrated in the Northwest and Southwest, with informal alliances and mixed-gender orgs most common elsewhere.	Scope of Work: All regions prioritize advocacy, outreach, sensitization, and training; only a few demonstrate consistent legal/policy engagement.	Barriers: Common themes include funding/resource gaps, cultural and religious obstacles, stigma around “feminist” identity for men, and lack of institutional support.
Sustainability & Scale: Where networks are more formal and resourced (SW, parts of NW), engagement is more sustainable and public-facing. In other zones, project dependency and lack of infrastructure reduce impact.		Collaboration: South West and South South have the highest collaboration (notably with WROs and in youth/coalition settings), while NE and NC often rely on project-driven, event-based partnerships.

Figure 1. Types/Structure of Male-Focused Organizations by Zone.



This 100% stacked bar chart visualizes how each zone differs in the structure and prevalence of male-focused organizations, providing a clear snapshot for baseline mapping and advocacy planning.

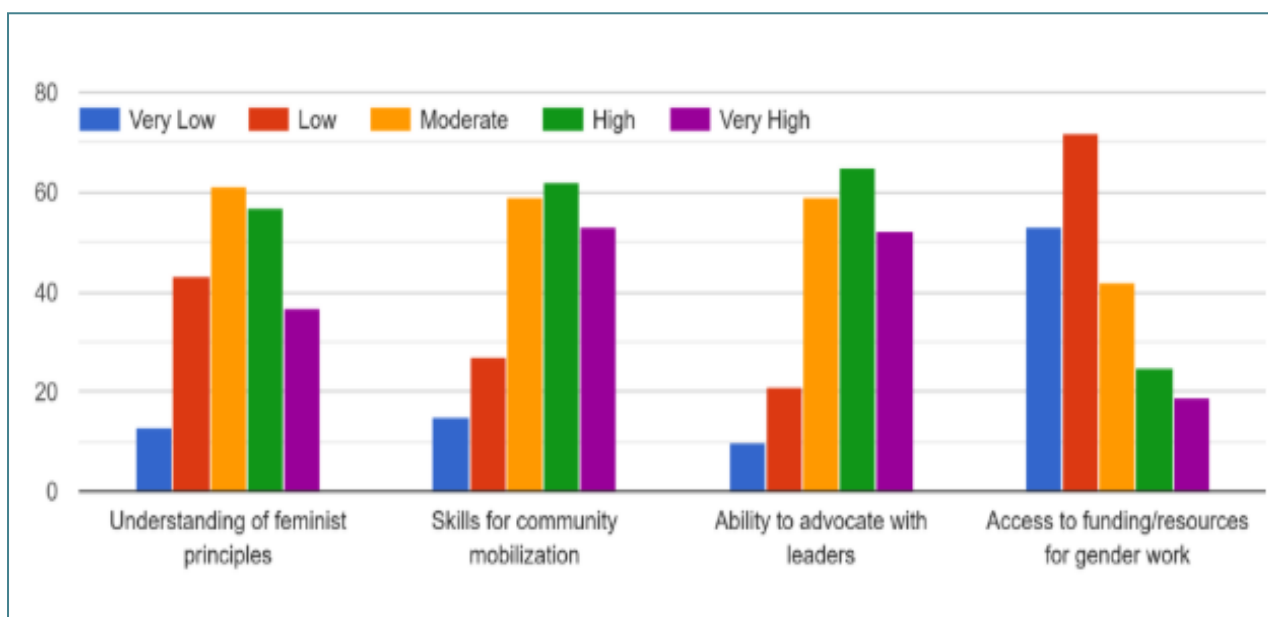
National Landscape: Readiness Patterns and Capacity

The baseline survey data shows that Nigeria hosts a robust network of male-focused organizations including HeForShe Nigeria (UN Women), MenEngage Nigeria, the Male Feminist Network, and regionally active CSOs such as WARDC, SIRP, and Boys Quarters Africa. These networks are actively complemented by initiatives targeting institutional transformation within government, faith-based, and community leadership spheres. Capacity is most pronounced in the Southwest and South-South, where organizations display mature structures, strong governance, documented impact, and active inter-organizational partnerships.

In contrast, the Northeast and Northwest exhibit more fragmentation primarily characterized by emerging or externally driven networks, greater need for trust-building, and ongoing efforts to customize gender norms programming to navigate conservative contexts. The baseline data across Nigeria indicate that male-focused organizations and prominent male leaders generally exhibit moderate to high capacity in several crucial domains. Through extensive collaboration with women's rights organizations, community structures, and respected TRC leaders, there is a transformative potential if male allies are well-supported while recognizing that progress often depends on nuanced, context-driven assessments.



Figure 2. Capacity Readiness Levels of MFOs (Core Skill Area)



Most notably:

- **Understanding of Feminist Principles:** There is growing awareness and informed support for gender equity among male leaders, reflecting years of targeted capacity-building, exposure to rights-based frameworks, and strategic partnerships with women's organizations.

- **Community Mobilization:** Many male actors demonstrate a strong ability to rally peers, facilitate neighborhood dialogues, and act as trusted bridges between advocacy campaigns and local communities. Their legitimacy rooted in social standing and personal networks often accelerates acceptance of gender-positive initiatives.
- **Advocacy Competence:** A significant proportion of male-led organizations now lead or actively participate in policy campaigns, public forums, and high-visibility events. This reflects ongoing investments in skills training, messaging, and leadership development, particularly in regions where external resources and cross-sector collaboration are available.

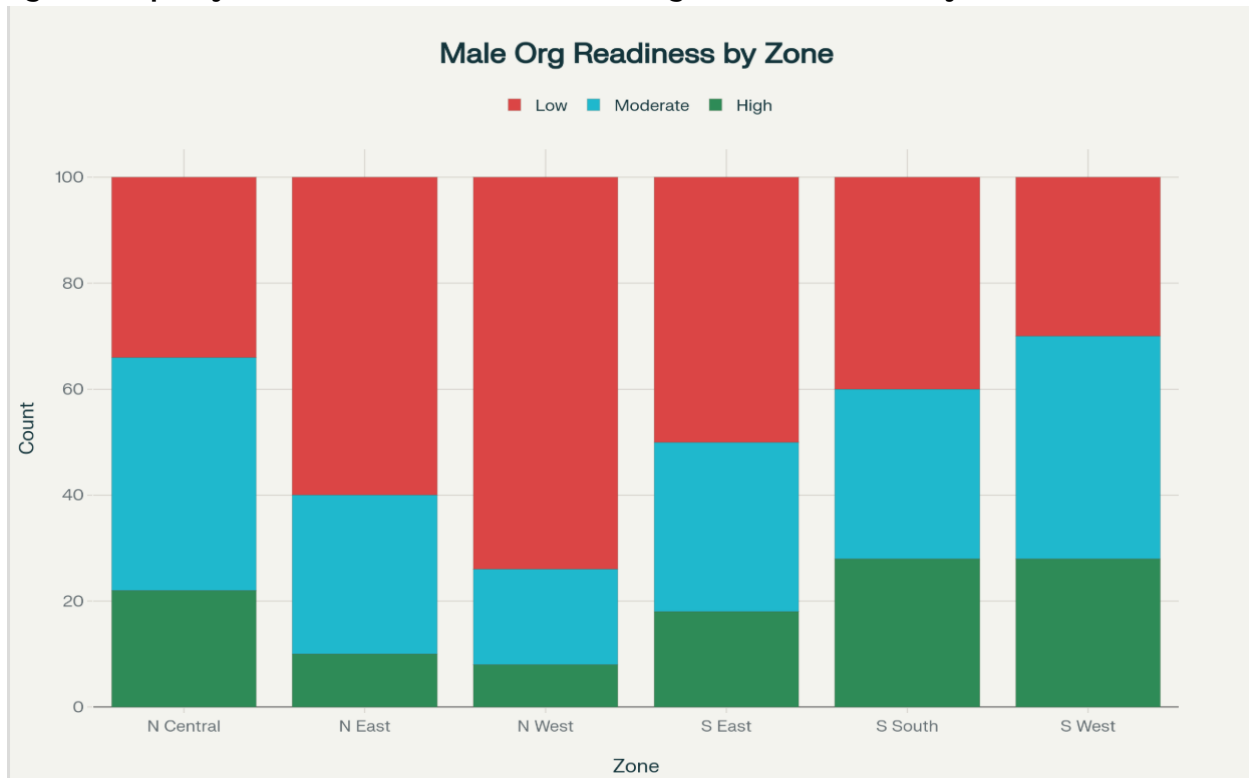
However, access to funding and essential resources remains the most pronounced weakness:

- **The majority of these actors rate their access to funding and operational resources as “Low” or “Very Low.”** This funding gap cuts across geopolitical zones but is especially acute for younger, grassroots organizations located in rural and peri-urban areas.
- **Even well-established male leaders often lack the institutional infrastructure** such as formal grant-writing capabilities, reliable digital connectivity, and organizational support systems that are necessary for sustainable programming and scale-up.
- **Male advocates in the North West and certain parts of the North Central and South West zones face heightened challenges,** as local philanthropy is limited and international funders often channel resources through high-visibility urban NGOs or women-led coalitions.

Regional Landscape: Readiness Patterns

At the regional level, the baseline data shows that in high-capacity zones, leaders described a “waves of mentor-to-mentor programming,” institutional linkages to schools and workplaces, and prolific use of media for message dissemination and testimony sharing. While in regions with lower organizational readiness, leaders expressed ongoing challenges with “winning hearts and minds of community elders,” navigating deeply patriarchal traditions, and dealing with interruptions from security crises.

Figure 3. Capacity and Readiness of Male-Focused Organizations/Leaders by Zone



This evidence highlights critical priorities: invest in ongoing capacity-building, mentorship, and funding for male-focused organizations, particularly in the North and rural zones; formalize coalitions

with WROs; and tailor approaches to local realities recognizing the interplay between region, resource base, and organizational resilience. Additional information is presented by region in the sections below .

Table 13. Regional Landscape in North Central (Capacity and Readiness)

Capacity/Readiness Level:	Moderate to High
Baseline Survey Highlights	Dive Dive
Organizations such as SIRP and MenEngage Nigeria have a strong operational base, with established partnerships across rural and urban divides. These organizations boast experience in advocacy, program delivery, and capacity-building for traditional and faith leaders. Efforts are well-integrated with government policy (e.g., National Gender Policy, iCommit Campaigns), demonstrating readiness to scale best-practice approaches.	Diverse but fragile capacity. The zone exhibits a mix of highly trained urban organizations and grassroots actors facing uncertainty and resource scarcity. There is willingness and emerging expertise especially within donor-supported and faith-linked CSOs though fragmented links to female-led and rural organizations limit scale. Many male-focused groups desire more exposure to national/international methods and structured mentorship.

Table 14. Regional Landscape in the Northeast (Capacity and Readiness)

Capacity/Readiness Level:	Low to Moderate
Baseline Survey Highlights	Dive Dive
While HeForShe and MenEngage Nigeria are present via externally supported programs, local sustainability remains a challenge due to insecurity, sociocultural barriers, and limited grassroots anchoring. Readiness is hampered by policy implementation gaps and the need to contextualize programming through trusted faith and traditional leaders.	Low to moderate readiness. Efforts are hindered by persistent insecurity, cultural conservatism, and fund scarcity. Organizations exist but tend to operate on a reactive, episodic basis, lacking robust strategies or core funding. Collaboration with WROs is often limited to donor-driven projects, and there is a strong call for external mentorship and technical support.

Table 15. Regional Landscape in North West (Capacity and Readiness)

Capacity/Readiness Level:	Low to Moderate
Baseline Survey Highlights	Dive Dive
There is sporadic regional activity, including male involvement in Centre for Girls' Education (CGE) initiatives and MenEngage Nigeria outreach. However, deep-rooted patriarchal norms, the dominance of emirs, and inconsistent localization efforts limit capacity. Progress is mainly noted where personalized engagement and role modeling by local leaders are achieved.	Lowest readiness, high potential for growth. Most organizations and leaders are under-resourced, often volunteer-driven or ad hoc, and heavily reliant on partnerships with progressive TRC leaders or women's groups to reach communities. Patriarchal attitudes and religious norms add barriers. Calls for mentorship, technical assistance, and reliable funding were most frequent in this zone.

Table 16. Regional Landscape in Southeast(Capacity and Readiness)

Capacity/Readiness Level:	Moderate
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Baseline Survey Highlights	Dive Dive
The organizational landscape is shaped by youth-driven CSOs and networks leveraging digital spaces for advocacy. While capacity exists within urban centers and among progressive families, rural uptake lags due to weaker institutional roots and traditional resistance. However, organizations here demonstrate agility, signaling readiness to innovate and respond as opportunities for engagement arise.	Medium readiness, improving but fragile. Organizations show capacity in advocacy and cross-gender training, but much work remains project-based. There is clear willingness for collaboration and capacity-building, but priority challenges include funding gaps, institutional inertia, and resource shortages, especially in rural areas.

Table 17. Regional Landscape in South South (Capacity and Readiness)

Capacity/Readiness Level:	High
Baseline Survey Highlights	Dive Dive
Distinctive for integrated coalitions involving NGOs (WARDC), government agencies, and faith-based bodies, this region demonstrates an ability to mobilize large-scale campaigns and sustain male engagement in leadership roles. Programs in this zone benefit from robust training structures, advocacy skills, and alignment with state policies; leaders are increasingly visible as gender champions in public and private sector spheres.	Highest readiness and capacity. Male-focused organizations in the South-South display strong competencies in advocacy, coalition-building, and policy engagement, with well-established models for community entry and cross-gender collaboration. The presence of externally funded CSOs has bolstered technical and organizational know-how, though financial sustainability remains a challenge. Collaborations with women's rights groups are routine and valued for their multiplier effect.

Table 18. Regional Landscape in the Southwest (Capacity and Readiness)

Capacity/Readiness Level:	Very High
Baseline Survey Highlights	Dive Dive
This zone represents the apex of male allyship capacity in Nigeria, with organizations such as HeForShe Nigeria and Boys Quarters Africa running multifaceted campaigns. There are strong training pipelines, excellent media interfaces, and deep partnerships with both government and grassroots actors. Male leaders here are not only visible but also act as mentors, advocates, and policy influencers evidencing high readiness for national replication and leadership within Africa.	Moderate to strong readiness, but uneven institutionalization. The Southwest zone features vibrant youth-driven and volunteer groups forming registered coalitions like the Young Men's Network against SGBV, often engaging in sensitization, media advocacy, and referral support. TRC actors show "average" readiness—willing to act as conveners or supporters, though deep-rooted religion and tradition slow organizational transformation.

The baseline survey data shows that in high-capacity zones, leaders described a wave of mentor-to-mentor programming, institutional linkages to schools and workplaces, and prolific use of media for message dissemination and testimony sharing. While in regions with lower organizational readiness, leaders expressed ongoing challenges with winning hearts and minds of community elders, navigating deeply patriarchal traditions, and dealing with interruptions from security crises.

Regional Gender Dynamics	Key Quotes
Across all zones, men's engagement is strongest at the urban, educated, or donor-funded level; rural and traditional actors lag due to resource constraints	"Collaboration starts with training and



and patriarchal resistance. Male leaders and organizations often serve as “allies,” but true power-sharing and deep collaboration with feminist actors is only routine in southern zones. On the other hand, collaboration with WROs is valued but usually project-driven, not yet institutionalized, particularly in the North. Traditional/Religious leaders increasingly participate as “gateways,” but true organizational transformation is slow, hindered by doctrine and culture.

Key Insights

- **Urban versus Rural Divide:** Southern urban hubs (Lagos, Port Harcourt) cultivate organizational maturity and leader capacity, fueling dense peer learning and mentoring. In contrast, outreach in rural and northern states necessitates strategic alliances with religious, traditional, and youth leaders to build trust and sustainability.
- **Faith and Tradition as Leverage Points:** Where organizations successfully engage respected local leaders (imams, chiefs, elders), they are more effective in overcoming resistance, especially in the North and parts of the Southeast. Contextualized programming is essential for deepening reach and legitimacy.
- **Intersectionality:** Some organizations have begun incorporating disability, ethnicity, and class dimensions into programming, mainly in the South, signaling growth in institutional sophistication.

expands through advocacy what's missing is funding and stable structure.” (Male Ally, SW)

“We need education; NGOs can come in; only so much is possible through my church.” (Traditional Leader, NC)

“Male engagement ends when the grant ends unless we organize for ourselves and invest in learning.” (Male-Focused Org, NE)

Regional Disparities and the State of Organizational Capacity

The baseline data show that capacities are context-dependent; the farther from urban, southern, or donor-linked centers, the weaker and less sustained organizational structures and leadership readiness become. With persistent gaps in the capacity of MFOs, manifesting in project dependency, technical skill shortages, and fragmented coalition building, undermine efforts, especially in marginalized areas. This evidence should guide investment, programming, and monitoring strategies, prioritizing both capacity and climate, and bridging north-south, urban-rural, and gendered divides for Nigeria's gender justice movement.

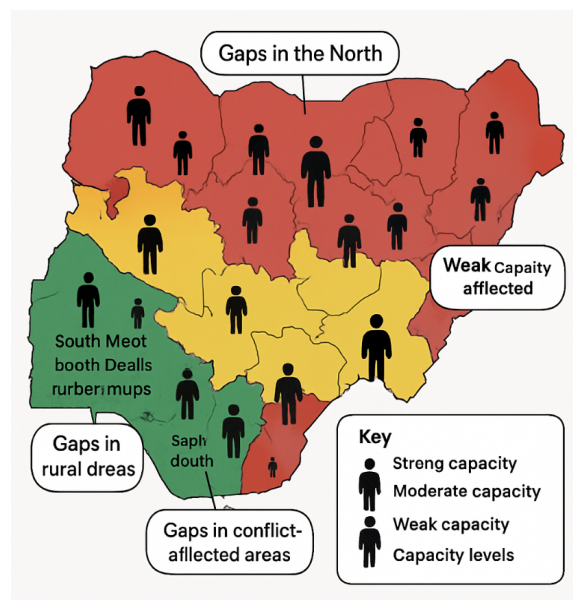
- **South West, South South, and Urban Hubs:**

These regions display the highest levels of capacity and readiness among male-focused organizations. Organizations here often exhibit robust structures, dynamic leadership, and clear technical know-how, benefiting from proximity to donor networks, civil society coalitions, and policy epicenters like Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt. They are more likely to feature strategic fundraising systems, gender-transformative curricula, monitoring and evaluation practices, and formal partnerships with women's rights organizations.

- **North Central and Southeast:** These zones show moderate and variable capacity profiles. While some urban centers and “lighthouse” organizations exhibit innovation and readiness, many institutions still function with limited structures, project-bound funding, and weak technical support, especially outside major cities.

- **Northeast, Northwest, and**

Rural/Conflict-Affected Areas: These remain the least resourced on all capacity dimensions. Patriarchal norms, insecurity, and infrastructural barriers curtail both organizational readiness and individual male leader empowerment. Here, programs tend to be ad hoc, staff roles are less



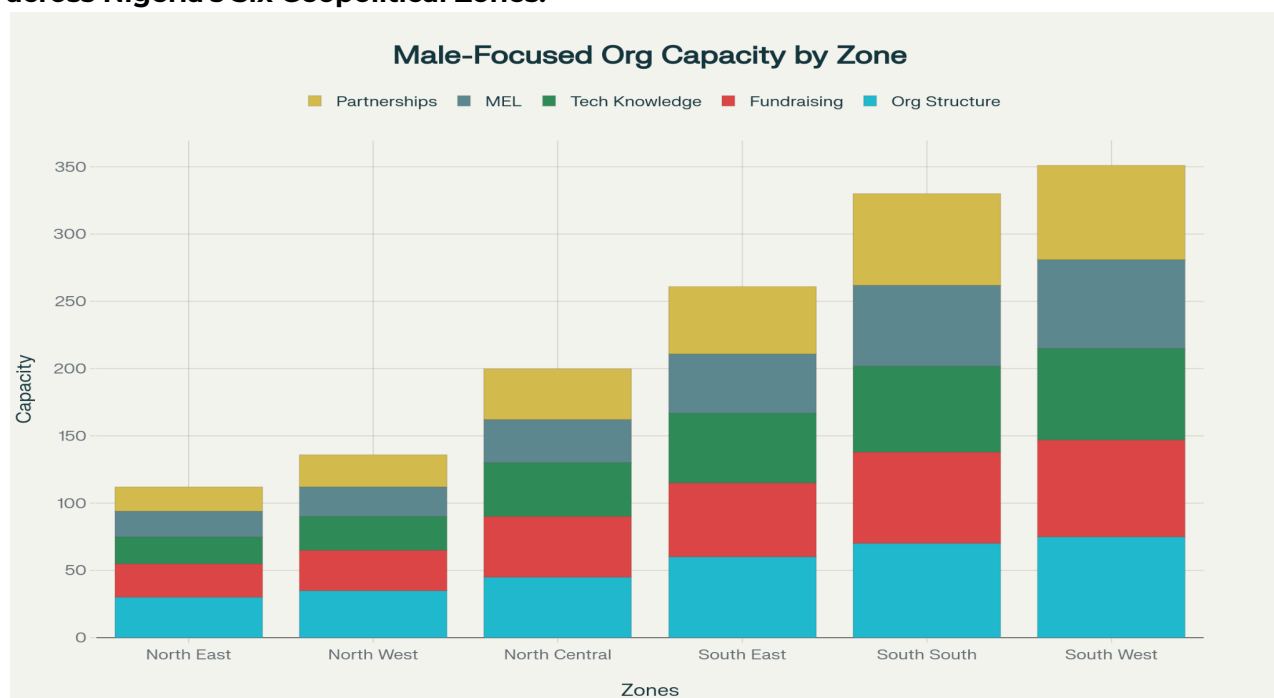
defined, and access to capacity-building is minimal. Leadership vision may exist, but is typically isolated and unsupported, resulting in limited, sporadic, or performative gender advocacy.

Organizational Structure and Fundraising

The baseline data shows that urban and southern organizations often have clear governance, defined staff roles, and operational frameworks. Conversely, rural and northern organizations are frequently volunteer-led, reliant on project-based grants with little sustainability between cycles, echoed by one KII respondent: "Frustration with project funding. This 'kills continuity' advocates move on, structures weaken, and the movement loses steam until the next grant." (FGD, South East). The baseline data also provided additional insights related to the gender knowledge, MEL, and partnerships of MFOs. For example, the data showed that technical gender knowledge, monitoring & evaluation (MEL), and partnership/networking capacity rise in resource-rich settings but drop in marginalized zones.

Engagement with women's rights organizations is strongest in the South and urban North Central. As noted by a FGD participant in the South South region: "Our preference for coalition-building with women's rights coalitions is both for technical expertise and legitimacy. It boosts our gender analysis and solidifies our advocacy." (FGD, South South). With capacity gaps are most acute in fundraising, MEL, and formal structures, particularly in North East and North West: "Here, the main challenge is lack of skills and institutional continuity technical gender work is weak, and interventions rarely outlive single projects." (FGD, North East).

Figure 4. Capacity and Readiness of Male-Focused Organizations (MFOs) and Leaders across Nigeria's Six Geopolitical Zones.



Examining the motivational climate and leadership vision of MFOs, even where structural readiness lags, willingness and positive climate often emerge in younger, progressive organizations. This is usually because younger staff want open, communication-driven work; older staff and women focus on visible results from top leadership. Exploring further into the theme of gender dynamics and intersectionality, the baseline data identified male leadership engagement is highest where organizational culture favors inclusion. However, female staff at lower levels often point to ongoing resistance or tokenism: "Managers say we're inclusive, but as a woman, I rarely see actual power-sharing. Token roles are the norm." (KII, South East). Finally, it becomes obvious that intersectionality is key depending on the age, religious context, urban/rural setting, and ethnicity

environments in which MFOs operate in order to shape both organizational effectiveness and the comfort of male leaders as gender allies.

Overall, the baseline data clearly shows that Nigeria's MFOs demonstrate a dynamic, if uneven, readiness to advance gender equality. Success factors include sustained investment in leadership development, contextual adaptation, and multisectoral partnerships, particularly in zones with historical strength in gender advocacy. Going forward, tailored strategies are essential to cultivate readiness in regions where male ally organizations are still emerging or facing obstacle-laden landscapes.

Implications and Paths Forward

Understanding this gap between capacity and resources is critical for policymakers, donors, and advocacy leaders. High-potential male organizations and leaders—armed with knowledge and local credibility—cannot reach their full potential without targeted resource mobilization and institutional support. A strategic response should include:

- Expanding flexible funding streams and microgrants to grassroots male advocates, particularly in underrepresented regions.
- Building out technical assistance programs focused on fundraising, partnership development, and digital literacy to shore up organizational readiness.
- Fostering alliances between male- and female-led organizations, leveraging shared resources, and widening access to funders who prioritize gender-transformative programming.
- Encouraging donors to recognize the importance of inclusive, locally led male engagement work as a complement—rather than a competitor—to women-centered advocacy.

3.3. Identify Key TRC Figures and Their Views on Male Allyship.

Key TRC Figures and Their Views on Male Allyship

Across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, Traditional, Religious, and Community (TRC) leaders remain central figures in shaping gender norms, public attitudes, and the prospects for male engagement in gender equality advocacy. Analysis of the baseline qualitative data, key informant interviews (KIIs), and FGDs reveals regional diversity in perceptions and actual influence of these actors. TRC actors are highly influential gatekeepers, serving as either obstacles or catalysts for gender justice initiatives. Their acceptance or opposition can dramatically shape program access, legitimacy, and outcomes.

Also, perceptions among TRC figures cluster across a spectrum: a significant segment remains rooted in conservative or status quo positions (especially in the Northeast and Northwest), while a growing proportion show "softening" or mixed attitudes, and a smaller portion act as visible, progressive allies. Notably, the South-South, South-East, and South-West zones reflect stronger "progressive" and "mixed" sentiments among TRCs, correlating with ongoing sensitization, advocacy, and successful community-level collaboration. These regions feature increasing participation of male champions, evolving local by laws, and a greater willingness among gatekeepers to challenge exclusionary norms. In both the Northeast and Northwest, most TRCs still anchor patriarchal norms, often citing tradition and religious doctrine as rationale for limited gender inclusion. Yet, even here, a minority of leaders especially those exposed to targeted advocacy and peer influence begin to articulate pro-equality views.

Gender Dynamics and Insights	Key Insights
• TRC support for male allyship is highly contingent on perceived alignment with community values. Progressive and "mixed" TRCs increasingly endorse men's participation as allies, community mobilizers, and program facilitators, but often caution against "feminism" perceived as	• TRC actors are essential enablers or blockers of male allyship:: Progress is greatest where they are engaged early, their authority respected, and their personal transformation acknowledged. • The majority of TRC leaders are



imported or anti-religious.

- **In areas where TRC buy-in is strong, male engagement is more sustainable and visible** (e.g., men championing inheritance reforms, co-facilitating workshops, or advocating for GBV prevention).
- **Entrenched gender roles and skepticism persist in zones dominated by conservative TRC influence:** here, even supportive men operate as “silent allies” or in lower-profile roles to avoid stigma.
- **Intergenerational change is beginning:** Youthful TRC figures, or those with exposure to civil society and faith-based training, are more likely to publicly support gender justice or male ally programming.

moving from strict conservatism to more nuanced or supportive positions, especially in the face of continuous engagement, exposure to evidence, and visible community benefits.

- **Institutional shifts among TRC leaders are fragile and context-specific;** they flourish with consistent advocacy, mentoring, and coalition-building involving both male and female champions, and falter where cultural and doctrinal resistance is left unaddressed.

Key Respondent Quotes

- “If you want to reach the community, you have to go through them [traditional rulers]... they are the gatekeepers. So if you don’t have access to so many things it will not be easy for you.” (North West, TRC Respondent).
- “As a clergyman, I can only do so much in my church. But if I educate them, they’re able to take this back to the community. NGOs have a lot to do.” (North Central, Religious Leader).
- “Culture is not in support of gender equality... but with each success, minds begin to shift.” (North Central, Male Focal Person).
- “When traditional leaders are sensitized and involved early, they show practical benefits... they become champions who sustain and legitimize change.” (South South, CSO Leader)

Regional Views on Male Allyship

Diving deeper into the baseline survey data, it is clear that the attitudes and engagement of traditional, religious, and cultural (TRC) figures play a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of male allyship in gender equality advocacy. This is explored further below:

Northern Nigeria (North Central, Northwest, Northeast)

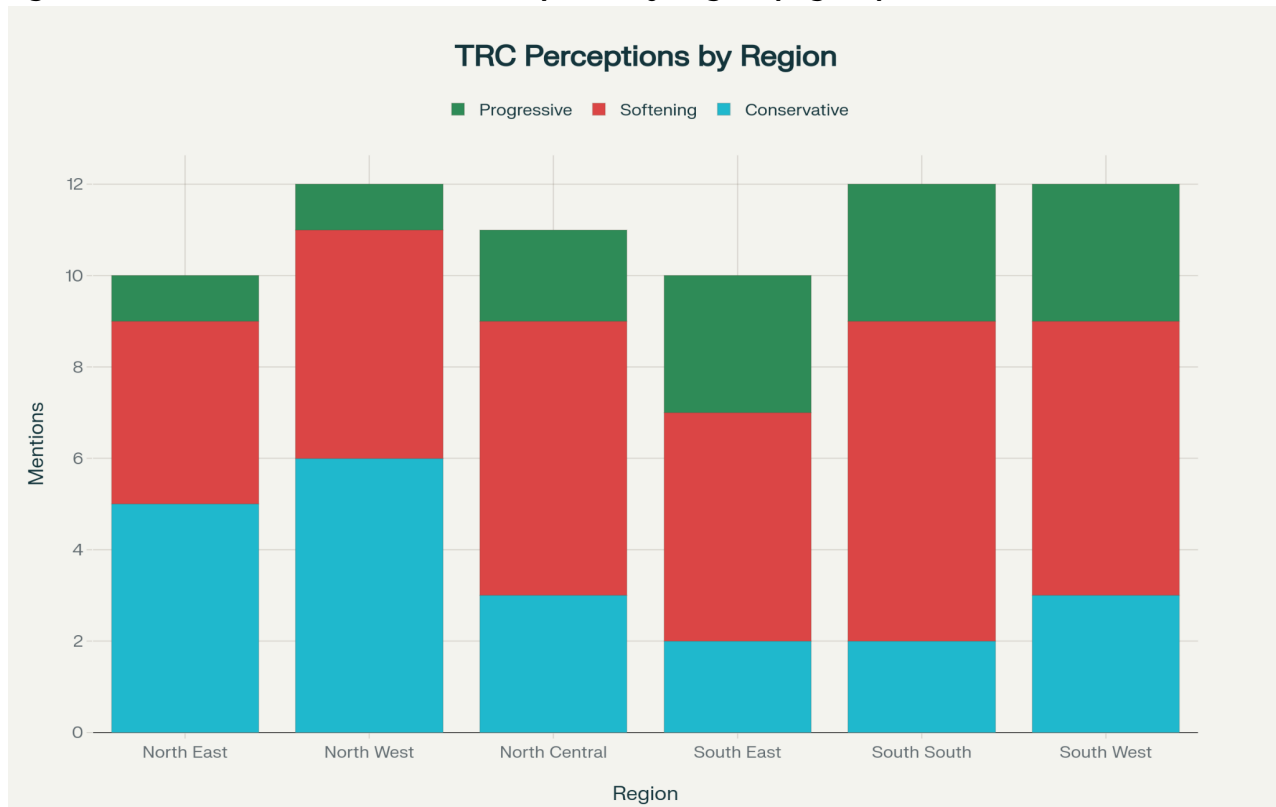
In the northern zones, TRC figures particularly Islamic clerics, emirs, and traditional rulers possess immense societal leverage. Some have been instrumental in advancing male engagement; for example, initiatives like those of the Centre for Girls’ Education (CGE) in Kaduna have successfully enlisted fathers, imams, and village elders as advocates for girls’ education and broader female empowerment. In Borno and the Northeast, interfaith mediation projects report that imams and pastors, once sensitized and trained, become vocal champions of nonviolence and gender justice, actively participating in public awareness campaigns.

However, entrenched patriarchal orientations and cultural safeguarding instincts frequently temper broader buy-in. In many rural settings, TRC leaders continue to serve as gatekeepers for tradition, shaping norms that can both hinder and slowly help to realign local perceptions around male allyship.

South West and South South Regions

In southern Nigeria, TRC leadership is often more dynamic and responsive to advocacy efforts, especially in urban and peri-urban zones. Progressive traditional chiefs, church pastors, and mosque leaders increasingly participate in public rallies, roundtables, and policy consultations on gender justice. Networks like WARDC, working in these regions, have achieved significant results by cultivating partnerships with royal councils and Christian associations, securing public commitments from kings, high priests, and prominent clergy. These leaders not only add moral legitimacy but also act as powerful amplifiers of positive masculinity narratives openly championing men’s involvement in combating GBV, supporting women’s legal rights, and reframing shared community responsibilities.

Figure 5. Distribution of TRC Actor Perceptions by Region (Nigeria)



South East Region

TRC figures in the South East, primarily traditional kings and Igbo community elders, wield notable authority in both public and private life. While initial resistance is common, case studies demonstrate gradual shifts: elders who witness tangible benefits of male-female partnership, especially through community safety and educational improvements, increasingly voice measured support. Church leaders are especially strong within urban areas, participating in men's forums and co-hosting advocacy workshops. Youth leadership and local progressive pastors often serve as conduits between older traditional leaders and modern gender equity movements.

Common Patterns	Illustrative Key Views and Practices
• Where TRC engagement succeeds, it often stems from targeted capacity building and outreach strategies that respect cultural values while offering new frameworks for leadership. • TRC leaders who become male allies frame gender equality as a shared community value, rejecting the dichotomy of “women’s issues” vs. “men’s authority” and instead promoting collective uplift. • Resistance persists in zones with deeply entrenched patriarchal and religious interpretations, but successful partnership models (especially interfaith collaborations and father-daughter advocacy groups) gradually chip away at these	• Many traditional rulers now publicly denounce GBV and support bylaws protecting women’s land and inheritance rights. • Imams and pastors, once equipped with advocacy tools, preach gender justice in Friday sermons and Sunday homilies, reframing positive masculinity and male responsibility. • A growing number of community elders, especially those exposed to evidence-driven workshops, describe male allyship as an act of “community safeguarding and wise leadership,” rather than a threat to established order. • Individual voices observed in project reports: “A village chief in Kaduna who started as a skeptic became a champion, organizing male-only forums to demystify feminism for fathers and youth,” and “A faith leader in Lagos led a GBV prevention march, encouraging young men to be defenders of fairness at

barriers.	home and in society.”
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TRC leaders in Nigeria are both vital allies and cultural gatekeepers. While their initial positions on male engagement vary across regions and contexts, intentional investment in dialogue, training, and partnership is yielding pockets of significant change. Sustainable progress depends on institutionalizing these partnerships, recognizing local wisdom, and equipping respected leaders across faith and tradition to become enduring champions for gender equality. The **table 19** below shows TRC leadership readiness and public support for male allyship, enabling targeted engagement and deeper partnership building in future advocacy programming.

Table 19. Heatmap Table: TRC Leadership Support for Male Allyship by Region

Zone	Engagement of TRC Leaders	Common TRC Titles	Sample Attitudes/Practices	Readiness Level
North Central	Moderate	Emirs, Imams, Chiefs	Emerging champions require dialogue and a mix of advocacy and resistance	Moderate
Northeast	Moderate/Low	Imams, Pastors, Chiefs	Interfaith success stories, but security and tradition are barriers.	Low-Moderate
Northwest	Moderate	Emirs, Imams, Maiunguwa	Father-daughter advocacy works, progress but slow pace	Moderate
Southeast	Moderate	Igwe, Elders, Pastors	Urban clergy and youth engage; elders shift with visible benefits	Moderate
South South	High	Chiefs, Pastors, Youth	Public advocacy, church-royal men's forums, and visible public support	High
Southwest	High	Oba, Pastors, Imams	Active in mass campaigns, open commitments, and ally networks.	Very High

Implications and Paths Forward

The evolving perceptions and influence of traditional, religious, and community leaders represent both a window of opportunity and an ongoing challenge. Advancing Nigeria's GBV prevention and gender equality efforts requires sustained investment in identifying, nurturing, and collaborating with these pivotal actors always in ways that reflect local realities, bridge gender divides, and build trusted coalitions for lasting social transformation.

3.4. Confirm the Presence and Structure of Male Feminist Networks (MFN) in Nigeria



Mapping the Presence and Structure of Male Feminist Networks (MFN) in Nigeria Across the Six Geopolitical Zones

The interplay of feminist principles, GBV prevention imperatives, and longstanding gender and sociocultural norms shapes not only the patterns of male engagement but also the actual visibility and organizational structure of male-led gender advocacy nationwide.

Heterogeneity of Presence and Structure

The presence and organizational form of Male Feminist Networks (MFNs) across Nigeria is fundamentally heterogeneous, shaped by regional, sociocultural, and infrastructural differences. This diversity is evident both between zones and within zones, with sharp contrasts sometimes found between metropolitan centers and outlying rural districts even in the same state. A deep dive into the Southern Urban Hubs vs. Northern and Rural Regions shows that metropolitan areas such as Lagos, Ibadan, and Port Harcourt, along with urban centers in the Southeast, are the epicenters of relatively well-established, occasionally even registered, MFNs. These organizations often have explicit mandates for male engagement in feminist advocacy, structured leadership, and documented collaborations with women's rights movements, organizations, and donor partners. They are more likely to operate recognizable programs, social media campaigns and even engage in policy advocacy.

In contrast, vast swathes of the North, as well as rural communities nationwide, feature MFNs in a largely nascent or ad hoc state. Here, male involvement is typically catalyzed by isolated champions, periodic donor projects, or coalition initiatives (such as HeForShe), rather than through sustained networked action. Frequently, these efforts are absorbed into broader NGO or community-based work, rather than standing out as distinct, branded male feminist entities.

Fluidity and Organizational Lifespan

The volatility of the MFN structure in many regions is closely linked to the lifespan of donor funding or project cycles. Many “male networks” emerge around short-term interventions and dissipate post-funding or after external actors withdraw. This raises critical questions of sustainability typical for movements that have not yet rooted themselves in wider, community-owned organizing. “We are just going to create some groups, because there were no existing groups before... there are no established groups for that for now at least.” —**Male Ally, North Central**

Continuum of Engagement

The baseline data also shows that male engagement in gender equality exists on a broad, contextual spectrum. At one extreme are highly visible, formal organizations most commonly found in the Southwest and parts of the South-South/Southeast—with clear leadership, registration with regulatory authorities, and ongoing, multi-year collaborations with women's rights organizations. These entities often brand themselves around men's engagement, healthy masculinity, or explicit feminism, though even so, “feminist” branding remains rare. The most common form is embedded male engagement: men who serve as active “allies” or “champions” within women-led or mixed coalitions. These individuals participate in joint advocacy, public campaigns, and awareness-raising events, but their contributions frequently lack the visibility afforded by membership in a formal male-centric network.

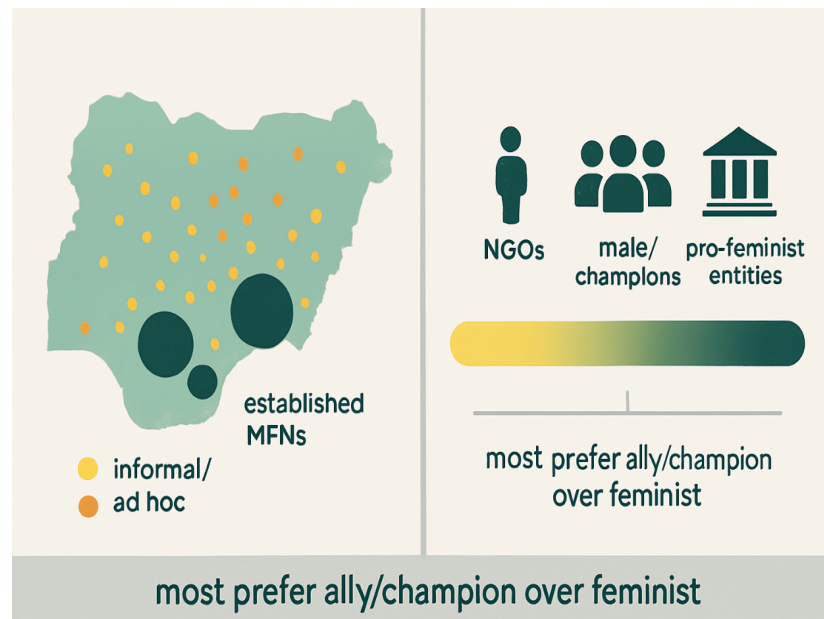
At the informal end, especially in culturally conservative or conflict-affected zones (notably large portions of the North and peri-urban communities), “male engagement” is synonymous with individual men lending occasional support to campaigns or taking on the role of “token” participant in advocacy settings often more for visibility than for deeply transformative leadership or policy change.

Preference for “Ally” or “Champion” over “Feminist”:

A pervasive theme, even within established MFNs, is the linguistic and conceptual distancing from the term “feminist.” Despite shared values of equity and non-violence, “male ally,” “champion,” or neutral identifiers such as “gender advocate” dominate public discourse. This reflects a blend of cultural caution, perceived risks of backlash, and a pragmatic approach to community mobilization.

“There is always a sense of male allyship you perceive, but the men who are championing the rights of women... are championing... rights of women that do not threaten their position or their patriarchal stance... appear like eye service or not deep.” —**KII, Women’s Rights Organization.**

As a result, genuine MFNs, as both concept and structure, are strongest where prevailing cultural attitudes and support structures make feminist organizing tenable and weakest where risks of backlash, stigmatization, or donor dependency remain high. The pathway from informal, event-driven “male engagement” to durable, self-sustaining male feminist networks remains a priority frontier, one that will require deliberate investment in capacity building, peer support, and ongoing community dialogue if gender-just movement building is to be anchored across Nigeria. Refer to **Appendix F** for a description of the organizations that work to expand male allyship across the different geopolitical zones in Nigeria.



Regional Dynamics and Exemplars

The regional dynamics and exemplars across the Southwest Zone exhibit the clearest structural presence of MFNs. Multiple KIIs and FGDs cited “Young Men’s Network Against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence” and “Voice Initiative” as formally registered organizations, often with state chapters, leadership hierarchies, and direct collaboration with women’s rights organizations and government agencies. Activities span advocacy, survivor support, sensitization, and legal referrals. These organizations are highly visible and frequently acknowledged by women’s groups, confirming authenticity and operational vitality.

“Our network is established. We already started with the Corporate Affairs Commission... We have ten state chapters across ten states, South West inclusive.” — **MFN Leader, South West.**

Across the South South, the baseline data shows that the MFN landscape is best characterized as a blend of informal alliances and a few emergent, semi-structured organizations. Male engagement is robust, often occurring through mixed-gender coalitions and joint programming, rather than exclusive networks. “Male Advocates” and similarly named collectives exist, but the preponderance of male action is through collaborations with WROs and CBOs. On the other hand, across the Southeast zone, there are examples of labeled MFNs (“Men Support Women Network”), largely anchored by experienced gender advocates, but most activity is informal or event-driven. Respondents repeatedly cite the need for increased sensitization and support to formalize nascent groups.

“We have more alliances and ad hoc collaborations than formal men’s networks...where they exist, they’re mostly a function of ongoing partnerships with more established women’s rights advocates.” — **South East KII.**

Across these northern zones, the concept and structure of MFNs remain at a formative stage, a finding echoed almost universally across reviewed secondary data documents. Most male engagement here is organic, embedded within broader community advocacy or faith-based

initiatives, not branded as MFNs and often facing pronounced cultural and religious resistance to explicit feminist identity. Respondents highlighted the prevalence of individual “male champions” and a few programmatically driven collectives catalyzed by external donor projects or specific GBV campaigns. Collaboration with WROs is event-driven, not deeply institutionalized.

“No, in all honesty, the male feminist network is a new thing. So I’ve not seen... male feminist organizations and female feminist organizations working in collaboration...” — **Male-focused Org, North Central.**

“We are just going to create some groups, because there are no existing groups apart from these opinion leaders... there are no established groups for that for now at least.” — **Male Ally, North Central.**

Notable exception: On some occasions, projects like “HeForShe” or donor coalitions (UNFPA, MenEngage) ignite temporary clusters/networks, but these often dissolve post-project due to resource constraints and persistent social stigma.

Gender Dynamics and Collaboration	Respondent Quotes
Terminology and Identity: Many respondents and male advocates display preference for terms such as “male ally” or “champion,” often quoting community resistance to the “feminist” tag for men. The risk of backlash, as well as suspicion of motives (e.g., donor-driven rather than conviction-based), shapes both structure and sustainability.	“There is always a sense of male allyship you perceive, but the men who are championing the rights of women... are championing rights of women that do not threaten their position or their patriarchal stance... appear like eye service or not deep.” — KII, WRO
Role and Power Dynamics: Collaboration with women’s rights organizations is robust in the South and urban centers, but these tend to be women-led, with men often occupying support roles rather than major leadership. At the grassroots, informal engagement outweighs institutional presence.	“I am not very conversant with the Male Feminist Network. I know they exist... but as a collective, I’m not really very familiar with the work they’ve done or the impact it has generated so far.” — Media Professional, Northwest

The presence and structure of MFNs in Nigeria are highly dynamic and deeply influenced by regional cultures, organizational maturity, and institutional barriers. Strategic programming should emphasize formalization where feasible, support nascent and informal groups, and harness the strengths of mixed-gender alliances to transform male engagement from sporadic allyship into sustained gender justice leadership.

Strategic Implications

- Scale up support for networking and formalization of MFNs in underrepresented or high-resistance regions.
- Invest in capacity-building and peer exchanges, leveraging lessons from South West/South South as “model sites.”
- Address cultural and religious barriers around MFN identity through community-driven sensitization and positive storytelling.
- Foster sustainable, shared-leadership platforms, ensuring that male allyship moves from tokenistic to genuinely transformative partnership with women’s rights movements.

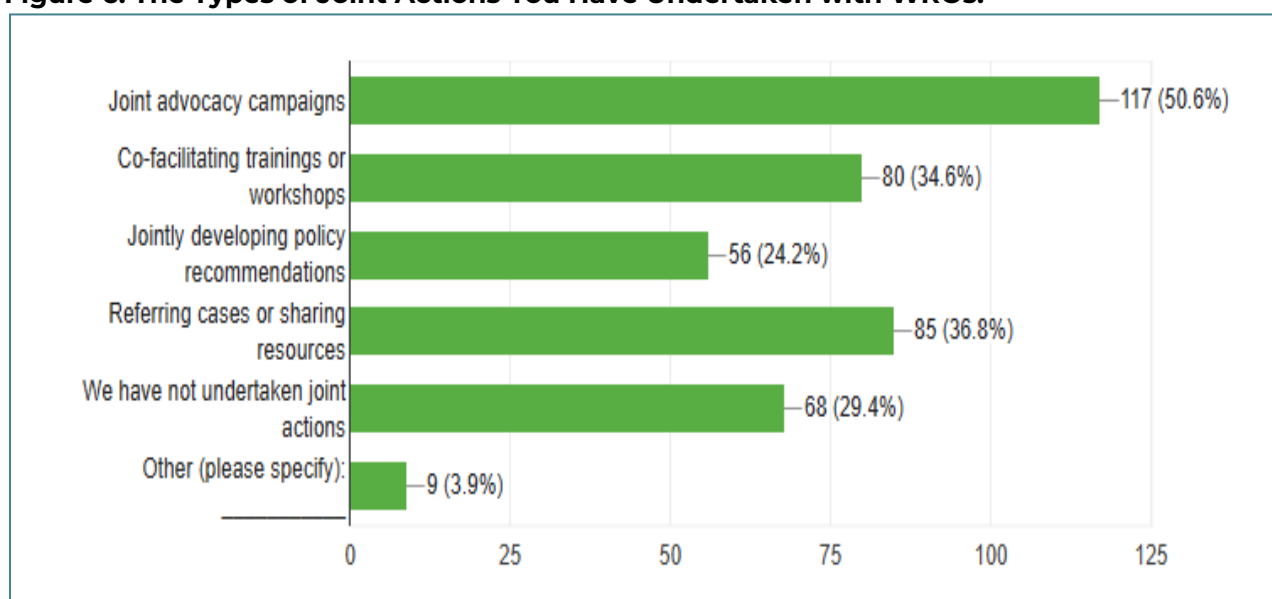
3.5. Documentation of Actions by Male Feminists, Key Partnerships, and Collaborators

Identification of Key Collaboration Between Male and Female Feminists

The baseline survey findings reveal that collaboration between male and female feminists is most evident in several interconnected domains across Nigeria:

- **Joint Advocacy Campaigns:** Across the South South, South East, and North Central, male and female feminists regularly unite their voices in public advocacy campaigns. These campaigns are often multi-platform combining rallies, media appearances, and digital lobbying—and amplify messaging in ways that resonate with more diverse community audiences. By integrating both perspectives and leadership styles, such campaigns are especially effective at challenging harmful stereotypes and demonstrating unified community commitment to gender equity.
- **Co-facilitating Trainings or Workshops:** Many gender-focused training workshops intentionally feature both male and female co-facilitators. This approach not only models collaborative leadership but also creates inclusive learning environments where participants see men and women working together as equals. These training spanning schools, faith centers, community halls, and organizational boardrooms provide spaces for honest dialogue, reshaping attitudes in real-time and building trust across gender lines.
- **Jointly Developing Policy Recommendations:** Policy advocacy is a powerful domain for partnership. Male and female experts routinely collaborate on drafting recommendations for new legislation, government guidelines, or organizational policies. This process allows male feminists to champion gender-sensitive reforms in spaces where their influence may complement or unlock doors for women-led advocacy. Conversely, female feminists often bring technical expertise, lived experience, and coalition networks that drive the policy process forward.
- **Referring Cases & Sharing Resources:** Practical day-to-day collaboration is also apparent in case management and service referrals, especially in communities with active gender desk offices or responsive NGOs. Here, cross-gender networks provide survivors both women and men, with access to legal aid, counseling, and emergency shelter. By leveraging pooled resources and referring cases to the best-placed partner, the response is both more effective and more holistic.

Figure 6: The Types of Joint Actions You Have Undertaken with WROs.

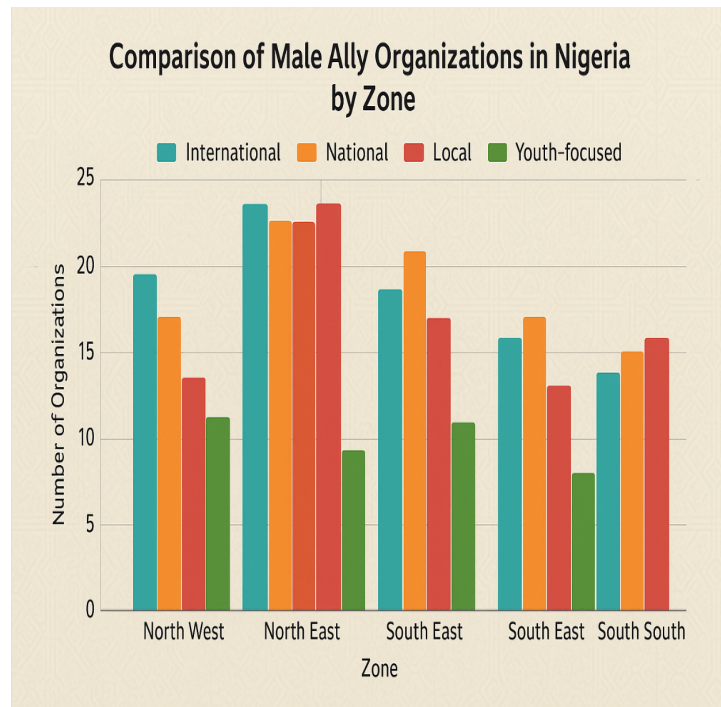


Regional Variations in the Actions of Male Feminists in Nigeria

Male feminists across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones have become increasingly active and strategic in driving gender equality advocacy leveraging diverse partnerships and collaborative platforms to

amplify their reach and impact. The baseline survey documented the actions of male feminists across the six regions in Nigeria highlighted below:

- South West and South South:** These zones showcase the highest volume of male feminist actions, including major campaigns, legal reform advocacy, grassroots mobilization, digital activism, and sustained community outreach. Partnerships between groups like Boys Quarters Africa, WARDC, HeForShe, and youth-focused organizations with government agencies and women's rights groups are particularly robust. Noteworthy collaborative events include mass public marches against GBV, the iCommit Campaign, and school-based mentorship drives. Southwest also hosts several HQ operations, making it a nerve center of multi-sector coordination.
- North Central and Southeast:** These regions are marked by moderate to high levels of male feminist activity. Organizations such as SIRP and MenEngage Nigeria work closely with local CSOs, education networks, and faith leaders, integrating male engagement into gender policy advocacy, capacity building, and peer mentorship. A key feature is partnerships with traditional rulers, religious stakeholders, and grassroots movements, facilitating context-sensitive programming and rural-urban synergy.
- Northwest and Northeast:** Efforts are emergent but growing, despite challenges related to sociocultural norms, security, and lower baseline public awareness. Collaboration tends to be more localized and often relies on sensitization of community gatekeepers, imams, chiefs, and school authorities. Examples include discrete "father-daughter" advocacy, local bylaw reforms, and faith-based workshops, aided by strategic project linkages with larger networks.



Driving Gender Equality and Advocacy

Further exploration of the actions by male feminists: the baseline data shows that across Nigeria's regions, male feminists and male allies drive gender equality advocacy using a diverse and adaptive repertoire:

- Advocacy & Awareness Campaigns are the most documented action**—male feminists initiate and participate in public forums, social media campaigns, community rallies, radio/TV events, and legislative advocacy. As one respondent described: "We organize sensitization programs, lobby ministries, and push for reform at both state and community levels." (South South, KII).
- Capacity building & training are integral**, focusing both on self-development and equipping others. Male feminists run workshops for men, youth, and gatekeepers (including religious and traditional leaders) to foster positive masculinity and gender-equitable attitudes.
- Community engagement is critical for shifting mindsets** and establishing credibility with local populations. "Men who act as role models in the community challenging stereotypes and supporting survivors help 'normalize' gender justice." (FGD, South West)
- Collaboration with women's rights organizations is well-evidenced.** Male allies most effectively leverage impact through visible partnerships on joint campaigns, advocacy for policy change, capacity-building, and resource referral platforms.

- **Mentorship & Role Modeling:** Publicly modeling gender-equitable behaviors such as supporting female leadership, mentoring young men, or confronting sexist language emerges as a recurrent action. “I challenge men not just to attend events, but to be visible in their support both at home and publicly.” (North Central, KII).
- **Policy/Legal Action:** Some male feminists lead or support legal advocacy, sponsor bills on gender-based violence, help survivors access justice, or support the passage/enforcement of the VAPP Law at the community and state levels.
- **Joint events & workshops extend to co-organizing community dialogues,** youth programs, and cross-gender training frequently cited as the starting point for deeper partnerships with women’s groups and community structures.
- **Media Engagement & Social Media Activism:** Harnessing both digital and traditional channels is key men share pro-equality narratives on radio and WhatsApp and launch hashtag campaigns (e.g., #MenForEquality). While resource mobilization is less frequent but rising, a few established networks engage in fundraising or share physical/logistical resources with collaborating organizations. Clearly, direct survivor support is noted in a minority of responses, such as assisting GBV survivors with referrals, counseling, and logistics.

Key Gender Dynamics:	Respondent Insights:
• Male feminists increasingly frame their advocacy not as opposition to tradition, but as an extension of community caretaking and responsible masculinity. • Partnerships with women’s groups and interfaith bodies both legitimise and expand the movement’s local reach. • Collaborations often take the form of mentoring programs, advocacy days of action, anti-GBV training, and public pledges.	A Lagos male ally: “I joined because my community needed men to step up, not just women. We now work with local churches and women’s groups to mentor the next generation.” A Kaduna-based leader: “Working side by side with fathers in the north made our campaigns more effective—change is stronger when men and women push together.”

Figure 8. Key Actions by Male Feminists & Partnerships in Gender Equality Advocacy (Nigeria – Baseline Synthesis)



The above chart highlights that advocacy, training, direct engagement, and collaboration with women's organizations are the most prevalent and impactful strategies for male feminists and allies. These foundational actions underpin sustainable gains in gender norm change, GBV prevention, and partnership-cultured community transformation across Nigeria.

Strategic Alliances: Who Are They Partnering With, and How?

Successful alliances among MFOs in Nigeria are characterized by multi-level, cross-sector partnerships with WROs, youth groups, government, media, and especially TRC leaders. This is because these strategic alliances try to balance advocacy, mentorship, and direct support missions; their success is sustained by strong coalition frameworks, context sensitivity, and a willingness to operate in both mixed-gender and men-only spaces as needed.

Table 20. Evidence-Based Examples of Strategic Alliances

Regions	Male Feminist Network	Key Strategic Alliances	Main Activities
Southwest	Young Men's Network Against SGBV	WROs, TRC, media, youth	Advocacy, training, legal support, policy, media
South South	Male Advocates, Male Feminist Network (state)	WROs, TRC, youth, government	Community entry, capacity building, mediation, advocacy
Southeast	Informal MFN Alliances, Men Support Women	WROs, NGOs, legal, media, TRC	Advocacy, policy, co-organizing events, survivor support
North Central	Bridge Connect Africa, project-based MFNs	WROs, NGOs, legal, media, TRC	Digital education, legal referral, mixed-programming
Northwest	Center for Info Tech & Development, Bridge Connect	Women-led NGOs, government, media	Digital education, legal referral, mixed-programming
Northeast	N/A	N/A	N/A

While there are notable success factors behind MFN collaborations, challenges remain especially resource constraints and persistent cultural/religious resistance but the most effective networks address these through persistent coalition-building, locally rooted advocacy, and joint capacity development.

Table 21. Success Factors and Noted Challenges for MFN Collaboration Success

Factors Behind Success	Noted Challenges for MFN Success
• Cross-sector Collaboration: Most effective MFNs prioritize building and sustaining coalitions with WROs, TRC leaders, youth, and government agencies. • Formalization & Structure: Successful MFNs tend to be registered entities with defined leadership, membership criteria, and funding pathways. • Diversity of Activities: Multichannel advocacy combining direct action (campaigns), capacity-building, policy lobbying, survivor support, and public sensitization is a consistent pattern. • Authentic Male Engagement: The most successful alliances take care to position men as allies rather than saviors,	Funding constraints remain universal and threaten continuity, especially for grassroots and emerging MFNs.
	Cultural and religious resistance can restrict sustained collaboration unless addressed with context-sensitive, locally anchored strategies and TRC buy-in.
	Risk of Tokenism: Some alliances

centering women's leadership and ensuring joint platforms are inclusive, respectful, and oriented toward shared goals. • Sustainability Initiatives: Networks that prioritize resource mobilization, continuous training, and transparent evaluation are better able to maintain momentum and scale their work.	can become superficial or donor-driven unless deliberate effort is made to normalize allyship, mutual training, and power-sharing in joint work.
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Gender Dynamics & Collaborative Landscape	Respondent Quotes
• While “male feminism” is recognized, many male actors prefer to self-identify as “allies” due to cultural, religious, or strategic reasons particularly in the Northwest and Northeast zones. • Partnerships with women’s groups are vital for sustainment and legitimacy. Collaboration is strongest where men operate as supportive partners, not “saviors” or dominant voices. • State and regional differences persist—South South and South East showcase the densest collaboration between men’s and women’s movements, often enabled by international donor investment and high civil society activity. • Tokens of engagement without transformational action (“eye service”) persist, especially in settings where advocacy does not threaten established patriarchal interests. Respondents stress the need to move beyond “ally as event attendee” to “ally as active champion.”	“Trying to convince men to believe in gender equality needs adequate knowledge and best skills... capacity building is crucial.” (Male Ally, North Central).
	“Collaboration thrives where men and women co-facilitate, both learn and teach, and together break silos in their community strategies.” (Southeast, FGD).
	“Many men support aspects of equality that do not threaten their privilege.” (WRO Exec, North Central).
	“When you show men that gender justice is about collective wellbeing, not ‘against culture,’ you win more allies.” (TRC Leader, South South).

Implications and Strategic Pathways

Progress towards gender equality in Nigeria is most dynamic where men and women work together—as activists, trainers, policy advisors, and community first responders. These collaborations, most robust in the southern and central geopolitical zones, offer models of joint leadership and mutual support.

However, in the Northwest and Northeast, targeted efforts are still needed to overcome persistent cultural, religious, and practical barriers. Investing in cross-gender partnership remains central to dismantling silos and advancing an inclusive, transformative gender justice agenda across all regions of Nigeria. In all contexts, the persistent, strategic actions of male feminists—whether seen in public forums, quiet mentoring, or the digital sphere—are vital engines driving broader social transformation. Their efforts continue to challenge entrenched norms and create safer, more equitable spaces for all Nigerians.

3.6. Assessing Institutional Shifts Among TRC Leaders

Institutional Shifts Among TRC Leaders

Across Nigeria, TRC leaders have emerged as crucial gatekeepers and accelerators of gender equality advocacy, often shaping community norms, policies, and responses to gender-based violence. Their roles and openness to gender progress, however, vary considerably by region:

- **South West and South South:** The largest and most visible institutional shifts among TRC leaders are found here. Senior traditional rulers, high-profile pastors, and community heads have publicly endorsed gender justice partnering with male ally organizations, co-authoring bylaws that promote gender equity, and leading multi-faith campaigns against GBV. For example,

several Yoruba kings and church networks have openly supported co-designed interventions, while the South-South is known for regional government and TRC leader partnerships with women's rights organizations in local reform efforts.

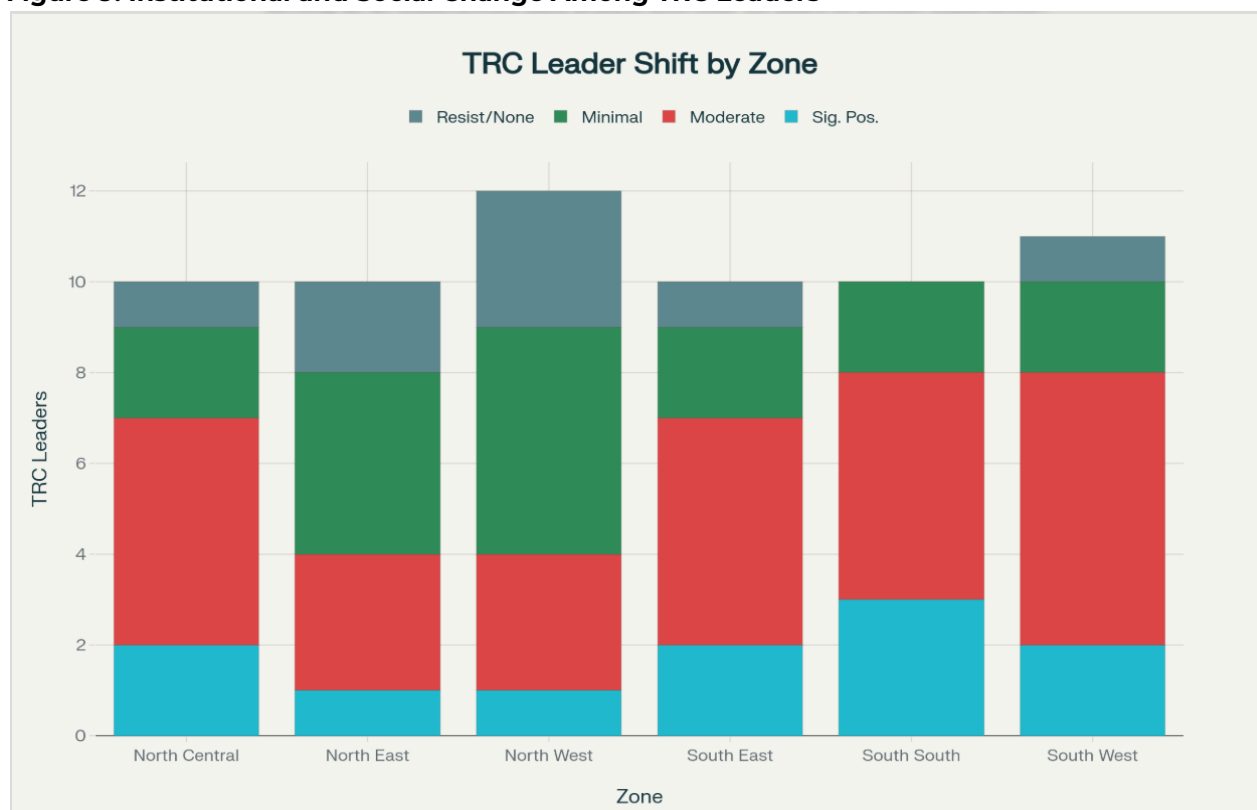
- **North Central and Southeast:** Moderate but important changes have occurred. Chiefs and faith leaders collaborate with civil society to host gender dialogues and mentor men/boys on positive masculinity and women's empowerment. Several Igbo community heads, in partnership with youth and male feminist networks, have led inheritance and property rights campaigns for women.
- **North West and North East:** Institutional change is more emergent, but progress is visible especially in urban and peri-urban centers. Select imams and emirs in places like Kaduna and Maiduguri now advocate for girls' education, legal reforms, and protection policies, though rural resistance remains prevalent.

Programmatic Implications

The steady movement of TRC leaders toward more progressive, anti-GBV, and pro-male-ally positions represents both a hard-won victory and an ongoing frontier. By recognizing regional variation and continuously nurturing partnerships with these key actors, gender-based programs in Nigeria can maximize the potential for lasting, institutional-level transformation, one that is woven into the fabric of community life and leadership across the nation.

Overall, the baseline survey data shows that TRC leaders' buy-in is proven most effective where advocates leverage religious/cultural language to frame gender equity as a community and faith imperative rather than a Western agenda.

Figure 9. Institutional and Social Change Among TRC Leaders



Gender Dynamics

- **Champion Leaders vs. Institutions:** Not all institutional change is collective; often it is championed by individual TRC

Quotes

"Working side by side with fathers in the north made our campaigns

actors (especially younger, more educated, or externally exposed leaders), rather than entrenched structures as a whole. • Equity Framing: Across zones, religious and traditional leaders more readily frame progress as "equity" rather than strict "equality." This can open incremental progress but also reflect limits to full parity. • Mixed Gender Roles: While men dominate leadership among TRC actors, female community/youth leaders and women's group executives are increasingly present especially in the south and urban centers—serving as important role models and allies.	more effective. Change is stronger when men and women push together." (Kaduna-based male leader) "Our progress with the king was a game-changer; his endorsement brought other male leaders on board, making gender dialogue a normal topic at village meetings." (South West traditional council member).
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In sum, while the overall trajectory is positive, context-specific, adaptive strategies and coalition-building are essential for unlocking the full potential of TRC leaders as allies in Nigeria's gender justice movement.

Implementation Implications

- Change is neither uniform nor inevitable; it flourishes where external exposure, sustained advocacy, and peer modeling occur.
- Stronger positive shifts cluster in locations where civil society is robust and gatekeepers are deliberately engaged and supported—not bypassed.
- Persistent resistance (especially in the North and rural contexts) requires ongoing, relationship-based engagement, local language adaptation, and recognition of incremental wins as stepping stones.
- Cultivating and celebrating "positive deviants," cross-gender TRC coalitions, and narrative change through media and storytelling remain critical levers for deepening institutional change.

3.7. Gauging Public Awareness and Disclosure on Gender Equality.

Gender Equality Awareness

The baseline data shows that public awareness of gender equality issues differs dramatically across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, revealing a persistent, uneven landscape. Southern zones (South East, South South, and South West) consistently record higher levels of open discussion, recognition of gender equality concepts, and visible advocacy efforts, especially in urban and peri-urban communities. Conversely, the Northwest and Northeast are characterized by entrenched patriarchal norms, lower general literacy, and greater skepticism or resistance toward gender equity, especially in rural or traditional settings.

In the South-South and South-East, sustained media coverage, a strong CSO presence, and coalition-driven campaigns have established gender justice as a public issue, though deeper social change is often limited by rural pockets or religious conservatism. The Southwest demonstrates an influential media ecosystem, frequent advocacy coalitions, and youth-driven activism, enabling reasonably high public engagement but still facing tradition-based pushback, especially outside urban centers. On the other hand, the North Central shows a middle pattern: variable, with proactive urban engagement, moderate rural progress, and frequent reliance on faith/traditional gatekeepers. The Northeast and Northwest zones report the lowest baseline awareness. Many view gender equality as an "external" or "Western" import; discussion often remains taboo, requiring careful entry through trusted religious or community leaders.

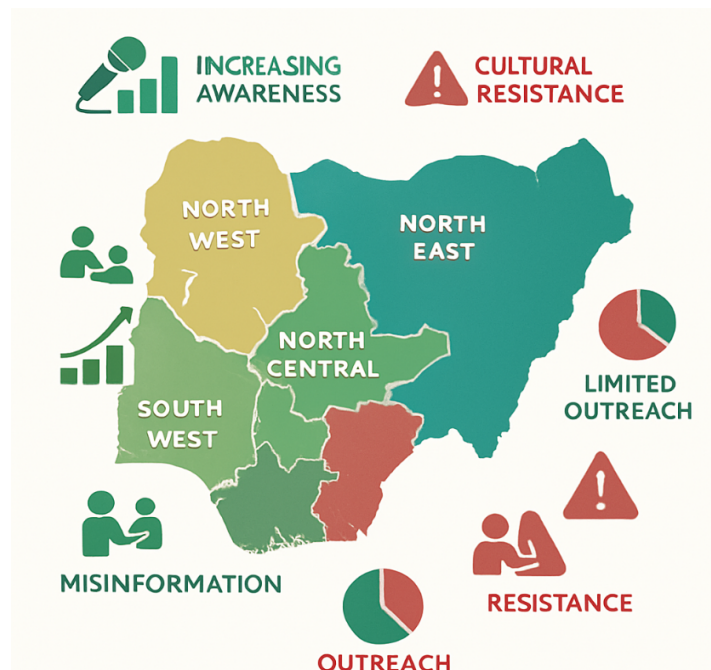
Media Coverage and Public Sensitization on Gender Equality

The baseline survey data reveals an encouraging trend: a high proportion of respondents report that media coverage on gender equality has become more positive and frequent across much of Nigeria.

In major media hubs such as Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt, the proliferation of news stories, opinion pieces, radio discussions, and social media campaigns has helped bring gender issues into the mainstream. For example, in the South and North Central regions, public discourse increasingly features diverse voices, survivors, male allies, and religious leaders articulating the importance of equity, inclusion, and accountability.

While multi-platform campaigns, both government-led and grassroots, are leveraging digital innovation to break the silence and challenge stigma surrounding gender-based violence. However, open-text responses expose a complex and uneven picture of progress, especially when viewed through a gendered and geopolitical lens. Many respondents, particularly from the North and parts of the Northwest and Northeast, emphasize that traditional cultural norms and patriarchal attitudes remain powerful barriers to genuine public sensitization. In these settings, media messages may reach ears but struggle to shift deep-seated beliefs and practices. Resistance is often anchored in fears about the erosion of established roles or the perceived threat of foreign influence.

Religious and community gatekeepers, when unsupportive, can amplify skepticism or outright pushback against even the most well-crafted campaigns. Lack of sustained, community-level outreach and tailored messaging further diminishes the impact of positive news coverage. In rural and peri-urban areas, where literacy levels or digital access may be lower, people are less likely to encounter or trust mainstream media stories about gender equity.

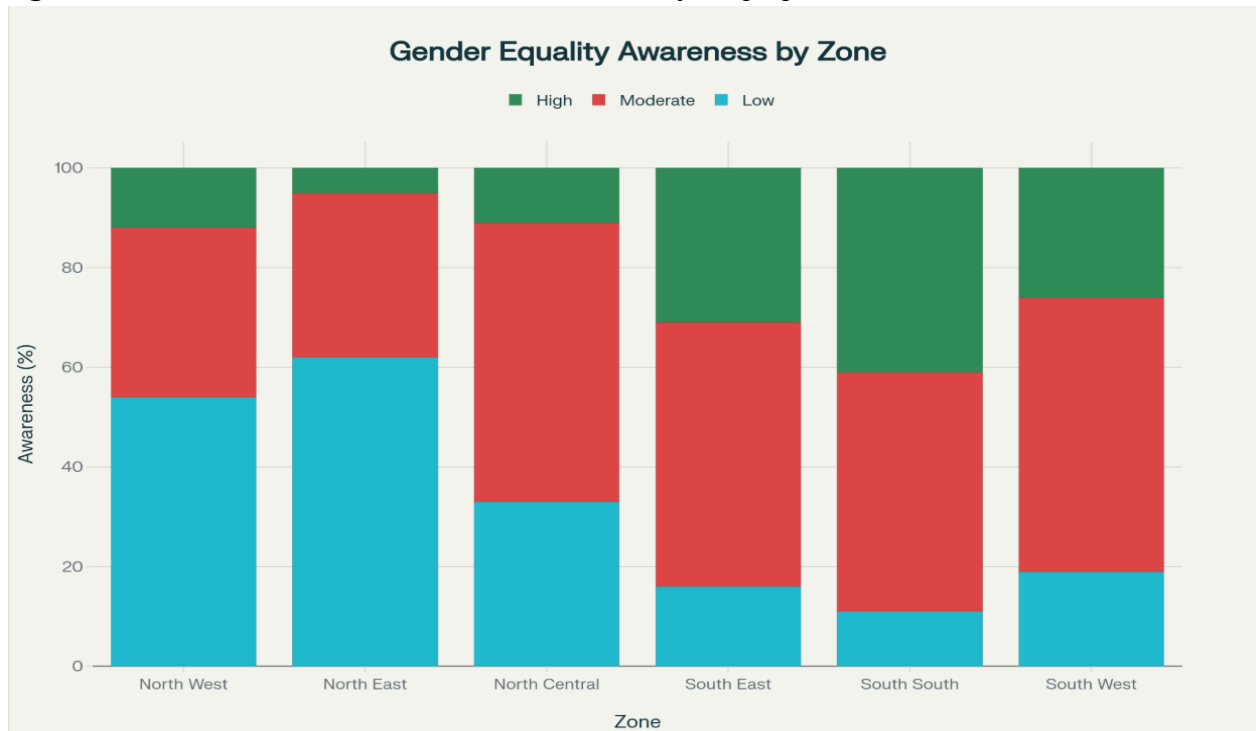


Regional Implications

- **Tailored Messaging Is Essential:** Programmatic interventions must adapt to regional realities, leveraging trusted messengers and institutions CSOs in the urban south and faith/traditional leaders in the north and rural contexts.
- **Leverage Youth and Media:** Expand youth- and school-based interventions, as younger participants are both more receptive and more willing to engage peers, especially using radio/social media where accessible.
- **Normalize Disclosure Through Positive Role Modeling:** Target “silent supporters” among men and influential local figures with campaigns that reward and recognize public declaration, reducing stigma one ally at a time.
- **Bridge the Gap Between Media and Community Dialogue:** While media campaigns boost knowledge, community dialogue especially through familiar voices—translates awareness into increased willingness to speak and act.

The 100% stacked bar chart below visualizes baseline findings: the proportion of respondents in each zone reporting low, moderate, or high public awareness of gender equality issues. The Northwest and Northeast have the largest segments reporting low awareness (54–62%), with only small minorities noting high awareness. The Southeast and South-South show a flipped profile, with high and moderate awareness accounting for most respondents (72%+), and only a small minority self-reporting low engagement. North Central and Southwest exhibit intermediate patterns, reflecting more context-driven, diverse outcomes.

Figure 10: Levels of Public Awareness on Gender Equality by Zone.



Density of Advocacy and Civil Society Efforts

Public awareness of gender equality issues shows distinct regional variation, deeply influenced by education, urbanization, and the density of advocacy and civil society efforts:

- **South West, South South, and South East:** These southern zones exhibit the highest public awareness and willingness to openly disclose or support gender equality. The persistent work of NGOs, activist groups, and campaigns (such as HeForShe and WARDC in Lagos and Port Harcourt) has fostered environments where citizens, especially the youth, are more likely to speak out and advocate for change. Urban centers in these zones benefit from greater access to education and media, which normalize gender-equal attitudes. **Quote:** “Since our pastor and youth leader started discussing these issues, I find it much easier to talk about women’s rights with my friends.” (Female student, Southwest).
- **North Central:** Awareness is growing, often due to partnership models that bring together religious leaders, women’s rights organizations, and local government. However, stigma and cultural taboos still dampen open disclosure. **Quote:** “We have heard more about these rights, but not everyone is comfortable saying what they truly think, especially men who worry about their reputation.” (Male secondary school teacher, North Central).
- **North West and North East:** These northern regions remain the most challenged. While advocacy by faith leaders and NGOs is slowly raising awareness, conservative norms, insecurity, and language barriers hinder public dialogue and limit safe disclosure. Fear of social backlash still restricts many from voicing support for gender reforms. **Quote:** “I want my daughter to finish school, but some men in my town think it’s shameful to talk about this in public.” (Village elder, Northeast).

Awareness Is Contextual and Shaped by Power Structures

Public awareness depends not only on campaign frequency but also on who communicates messages. Where traditional, religious, and community (TRC) leaders act as allies or advocates, awareness spreads more rapidly and safely. In their absence, even high-profile campaigns may have little effect in “moving the needle.” Narrative accounts consistently note, for instance, that “advocacy will not work unless the church/mosque supports it” (FGD respondent, North Central).



Disclosure Is Limited by Stigma and Social Risk

Across all zones, stigma, fear of backlash, and uncertainty about community support form major barriers to open disclosure on gender equality, especially for men. A woman in Kano stated, "In my place, many support the idea, but few say it openly, afraid of being shamed or called names." Where male allies do speak up, uptake is often stronger among youth or in CSO-linked settings.

While national awareness around gender equality is growing, disclosure remains deeply contextual, affected by regional power dynamics, cultural traditions, and prevailing gender norms. Programmatic strategies must recognize and adapt to these realities, combining high-visibility media and grassroots dialogue with careful, respectful engagement of local gatekeepers to ensure both knowledge acquisition and the normalization of open discussion.

Implications and Strategic Pathways

The increasing positivity and frequency of gender equality coverage in Nigeria's media landscape is a significant achievement, especially in the South and urban centers. Yet, for awareness to translate into social transformation, strategic, context-responsive efforts must address persistent patriarchal attitudes and cultural resistance, particularly in the North. Cross-sector collaboration, cultural fluency, and sustained community-based advocacy remain key to bridging Nigeria's regional divides and achieving genuine, country-wide gender justice.

3.8. Provide Strategic Recommendations for Planning and Advocacy.

Invest in Capacity Building and Continuous Training

Regular training is critical for both male and female advocates, traditional/religious leaders, and media professionals. Many male-focused organizations report gaps in advocacy skills, fundraising, policy knowledge, and safe engagement in difficult community settings. Participants from the Southwest and Northcentral underscore the need to "consistently update our knowledge of gender issues; dynamic training leads to confidence, and confidence leads to bolder advocacy." Intentional curriculum design is recommended for both grassroots and urban advocates, as well as technical assistance for proposal writing, resource mobilization, and monitoring and evaluation.

Foster Male Engagement: Men and Boys as Allies

Effective advocacy must consistently and intentionally bring men and boys into the movement not as saviours, but as supportive partners and role models for positive masculinity. This involves equipping men to challenge stereotypes, address peer resistance, and mentor boys in schools and youth programs. A KII respondent from the South-South observes, "Change is only real when men support it. Boys see the example, and other men take it seriously; it amplifies the work women have been doing."

Policy Advocacy and Implementation

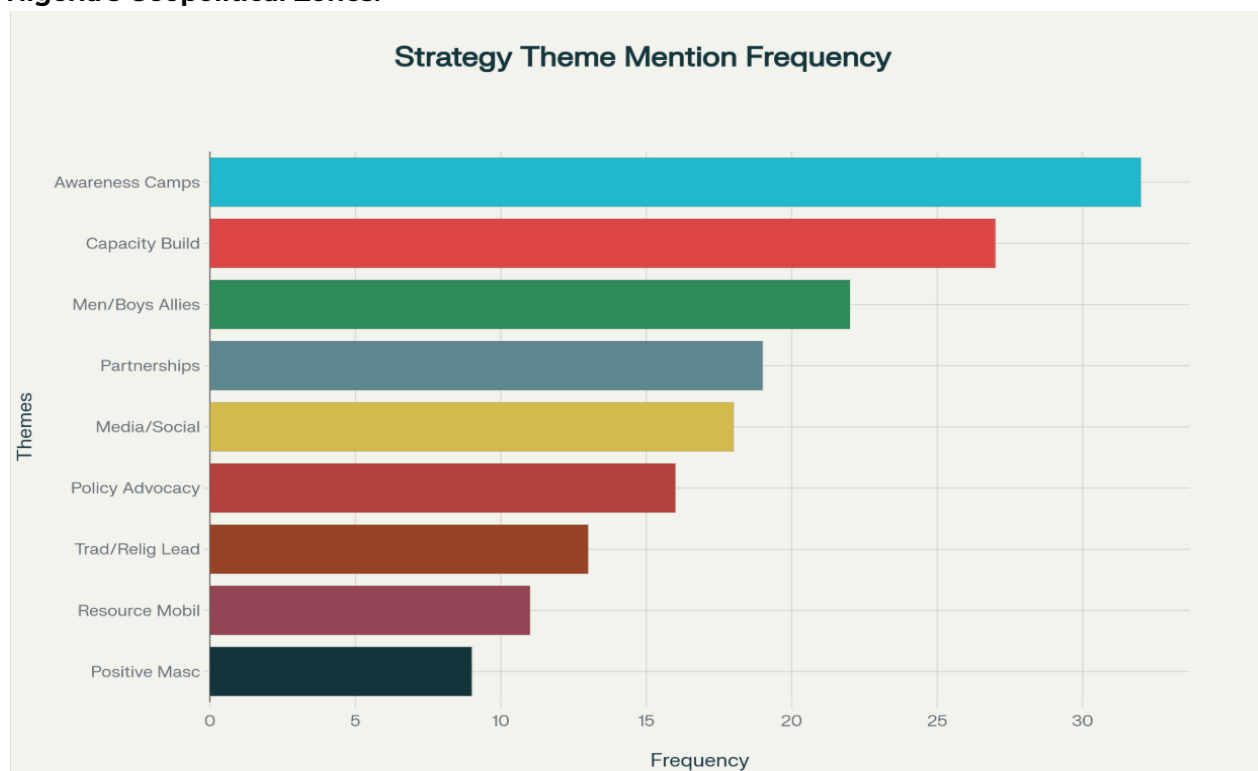
Regions with progressive laws or policies still struggle with weak enforcement. Advocacy should target both passage of new policies and, crucially, grassroots awareness and implementation. This includes direct partnerships with legal professionals, legislators, and police, as well as training on navigating the legal challenges encountered in advocacy work.

Prioritise Awareness/Sensitization Campaigns

Awareness campaigns are universally recognized as the backbone of behavior and attitude change, especially in regions with entrenched patriarchal norms. Intensive, well-crafted sensitization efforts using local languages, media (radio, print, and digital), and direct community engagement are repeatedly cited as the most powerful strategies for initiating dialogue and shifting gender norms. As one Southwest KII respondent notes, "We need to go house to house, market to market. Advocacy is not a one-off it has to penetrate every group using their own language and examples." This necessity

is mirrored across all regions, with the South-South and Southeast also highlighting the value of participatory approaches (theater, storytelling, role models) for changing mindsets where resistance is highest.

Figure 11. Strategic Recommendations for Planning and Advocacy on Male Engagement Across Nigeria's Geopolitical Zones.



Deepen Collaboration and Partnerships

Coalition-building across gender, sector, and community emerges as a pillar strategy. Sustainable impact requires moving beyond ad hoc partnerships to formal alliances, anchored with clear roles, regular meetings, shared leadership, and joint campaigns. Direct testimony from North Central states: "Whenever we combine efforts of women's rights groups, men's advocates, community chiefs, it multiplies the reach and brings real credibility to what we say."

Promote Positive Masculinity and Role Modeling

Successful programs center on public role-modeling men who demonstrate gender-just behavior in their family, work, and community life. Highlighting and rewarding these "positive deviants" through media and community awards accelerates change and widens buy-in.

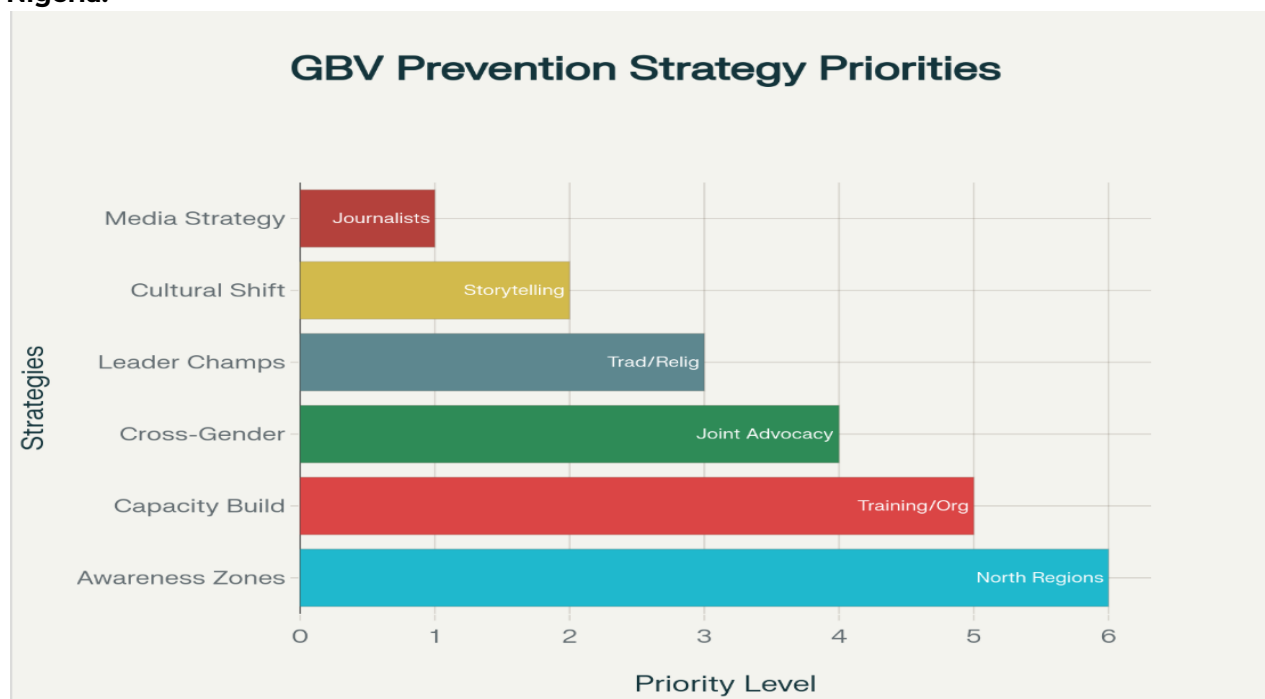
Ensure Resource Mobilization and Sustainability

Donor footing, project-based funding, and the voluntary nature of much male engagement limit program continuity. Respondents recommend diversified funding streams, microgrants for grassroots work, and structured incentives for volunteers, especially in rural and underrepresented regions.

Address Cultural and Socioeconomic Barriers

Resource constraints, fears of backlash, perceptions of feminism as anti-male, and economic hardship all surface as barriers. Underpinning every intervention is the need for respect for local norms, strategic framing of messages around shared values (family, justice, community well-being), and pragmatic support for volunteers (stipends, recognition).

Figure 12. Strategic Recommendations for Advancing Gender Equity & GBV Prevention in Nigeria.



Gender Dynamics and Regional Patterns	Key Quotes
Southern zones (Southsouth, Southeast, and part of Southwest) display higher frequency and diversity of male engagement, often rooted in stronger civil society coalitions and recent donor investment.	"Sometimes we wait and feel we should address people who are mature, but it's better to start at a tender age... teach both boys and girls that all roles belong to both genders." (KII, North Central)
Northern zones (Northwest, Northeast, and Northcentral) are hindered by greater cultural resistance, limited capacity, and rural barriers; progress is slower and often relies on faith/traditional leaders.	"Awareness is not reaching people in remote areas—urban centers are easier. We cannot advocate for Black areas to help a lot because they are lagging." (KII, Northcentral)
Gender dynamics everywhere caution against superficial male allyship ("eye service"), and female activists urge men to support, not dominate, the narrative. Feminist organizations emphasize the importance of genuine partnership and humility.	"If you want to change minds, you must get the pastors, the imams, and the chiefs. Without their buy-in, outreach goes nowhere." (KII South West)
"The men who are championing the rights of women are those who don't feel threatened by it. There is always a sense—eye service—but not deep."	"It's education; NGOs like yours have a lot to do... I can only do as much in my church, but if I educate them in church, they'll carry it to the community." (KII, Northcentral Religious Leader)
	"No, I do not believe there is such a thing as a male feminist. Maybe an ally. Yes. A feminist? No." (Southwest, WRO)

Maximise the Role of Media and Social Media

Media is both a challenge and an opportunity: regular engagement of trained journalists, the creation of gender desks in newsrooms, and collaborative campaigns with influencers can mainstream gender-just narratives. Social media activism (including WhatsApp groups and local

language digital content) is expanding its reach, especially among youth. Continuous partnership with media houses is essential for sustaining visibility.

Engage Traditional and Religious Leaders as Strategic Allies

TRC leaders retain high legitimacy and control over attitudes in many settings, especially in the North and Southwest. Embedding gender advocacy in sermons, customs, and dispute resolution framed within local values turns potential opposition into supportive gatekeeping. Southwestern KII: "If you want to change minds, you must get the pastors, the imams, and the chiefs. Without their buy-in, outreach goes nowhere."

4. CONCLUSION & REGIONAL STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusion

The baseline survey for the Core Support for Network Building of Male Feminists in Support of Gender-Based Violence Prevention in Nigeria reveals a national landscape characterized by both inspiring advances and persistent gaps in male engagement for gender equality. The findings point to a Nigeria that is in motion: stratified by regional, sociocultural, and institutional contexts, yet propelled by the growing recognition that actual transformation calls for men as co-architects rather than mere allies of gender justice. Across the six geopolitical zones, patterns of male involvement reveal deep heterogeneity.

While urban centers and the South West, South South, and urban South East provide fertile ground for the emergence of structured, sometimes formally registered male feminist networks, much of the North, alongside rural and semi-urban pockets nationwide, remains characterized by nascent, informal, or ad hoc modes of engagement. Here, male allyship is often catalyzed by donor-driven projects or coalition initiatives and is typically absorbed within broader community-based work rather than distinct, branded identities.

Notwithstanding these disparities, the narrative is one of cautious, steady progress. Male engagement exists on a broad continuum, ranging from scattered individuals embedded within women-led organisations and community structures to burgeoning collectives and formalised networks with an explicit pro-feminist ethos. Yet even among the most committed, the preference for "male allies" or "champions" over "feminist" labels persists, reflecting ongoing cultural resistance and the need for pragmatic, context-attuned advocacy. The report emphasizes that sustainable progress is rooted not only in mobilizing men as event-based supporters, but also in fostering enduring partnerships with women's rights organizations (WROs), building shared platforms of leadership, and deliberately engaging traditional, religious, and community leaders as amplifiers of change.

The baseline reveals the critical importance of flexible, localised, and coalition-driven approaches. Where interventions recognize and build upon local realities, anchoring programming in trusted community institutions, leveraging TRC leaders, and contextualising gender justice as a pathway to communal well-being, the pace of transformation accelerates meaningfully. Conversely, barriers rooted in patriarchal traditions, resource constraints, and donor dependency highlight the need for continuous investment in leadership capacity, organizational structures, and advocacy skills at all levels.

In summary, this baseline provides a robust foundation for targeted action: scaling up and formalizing MFNs where they are emerging; investing in cross-regional peer learning, anchored in the successes of the Southwest and South-South; and embedding context-driven sensitization where resistance is most deeply rooted. By moving beyond token male engagement to shared leadership and authentic partnerships, Nigeria is poised to redefine the movement for gender equality, ensuring that the journey towards a just and inclusive society is one travelled by all.

4.2. Regional Recommendations

For future planning and advocacy, interventions must be holistic, regionally nuanced, and rooted in context-sensitive coalitions. Without a convergence of strategic awareness, resource investment, capacity building, and authentic multi-gender leadership, progress on male engagement in gender equality in Nigeria will remain uneven and fragile. These region-specific strategic recommendations are presented in the tables below, i.e.

Table 22. North Central Strategic Recommendations

Youth Engagement & Media: Expand peer education and youth-friendly digital campaigns to promote a positive portrayal of masculinity.	Religious/Traditional Leader Partnerships: Invest in mentorship/training schemes to turn traditional and religious leaders into proactive gender advocates. Their endorsement accelerates change.	Community Mobilization: Prioritize grassroots dialogue and mobilize respected local figures to drive buy-in, particularly through schools and faith-based organizations.
Policy Advocacy: Continue with policy domestication and broaden men's roles in advocacy coalitions.		

Table 23. North East & North West Strategic Recommendations

Education and Sensitization: Focus on male-led anti-violence programs in schools, mosques, and markets. Leverage radio in local languages for sensitive messaging.		
Monitoring & Evaluation: Use participatory appraisal and feedback from male and female community members to adapt strategies in hard-to-reach/rural contexts.	Policy Advocacy: Support efforts for legal reform, but recognize practical challenges in law enforcement, social acceptance, and disclosure.	Youth Engagement: Establish youth mentor networks as a long-term investment in shifting gender norms.
Community Mobilization and TRC Partnerships: Deepen partnerships with imams, chiefs, and teachers, who are pivotal in conservative/transitional contexts.		

Table 24. South East, South South, and South West Strategic Recommendations

Community Mobilization: Anchor gender advocacy in community festivals, school competitions, and urban forums to increase visibility and normalize male participation.		
Policy Advocacy and Network Building: Foster strong, multi-stakeholder platforms that integrate schools, universities, and professional bodies.	Partner with Progressive Community Leaders: Build on alliances with traditional leaders, market leaders, and civil society organizations.	Monitoring & Evaluation: Invest in tracking program outcomes using mixed-methods and community-defined success indicators.
Youth Engagement & Media Campaigns: Scale up existing digital and club-based interventions that engage young men. Leverage vibrant media landscapes to share stories of male allyship and support survivor advocacy.		

These region-specific recommendations indicate that the program should intensify partnership efforts with TRC leaders in the North. At the same time, regional partners in the South should capitalize on youth/peer engagement, as well as evidence-based media. Finally, participatory feedback and community-driven monitoring must be built into all planning for adaptive scale-up and sustainability.

ANNEXES

A. PROJECT OUTCOMES (EXPECTED BY 2027)

While the project is still in its early stages, Centre LSD is working toward a series of medium-term outcomes that will redefine male allyship in Nigeria:

Table 25. Overview of Expected Project Outcomes

Expanded Male Allyship	A National Male Feminist Network
At least 1,000 male leaders and grassroots influencers will be trained in feminist theory, GBV prevention, and intersectional gender advocacy. These men will serve as allies, mentors, and champions within their own sectors and communities.	An inclusive, functional, and visible male feminist network will be established, working in solidarity with women's rights organizations to amplify impact, not overshadow it. The network will drive joint campaigns, policy advocacy, and community engagement across Nigeria.
Public Awareness and Discourse	TRC-Led Cultural Shifts
Through partnerships with digital media, radio, and community platforms, GBV prevention messaging will gain significant national visibility, challenging toxic masculinity and shifting public narratives toward inclusion and accountability.	A critical mass of traditional and religious leaders will adopt gender-sensitive practices, publicly reject patriarchal norms, and contribute to local and national dialogue on GBV policy reform.
Mentorship and Intergenerational Leadership	
Emerging male gender advocates will be mentored by experienced leaders, ensuring the sustainability of the movement across schools, faith institutions, and local governance structures.	

B. BASELINE SURVEY TEAM

Reflecting our shift to virtual data collection and streamlined budgeting, the baseline assessment team consisted of four key members: Team Leader (Augustus Emenogu), Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Evaluator (Bridget Okeke), Investigative Evaluator (Aniefiok Dominic), and Assessment Associate (Hannatu Umaru). Each team member brought specialised expertise supporting the successful delivery of all planned study outputs.

Profiles of the Baseline Survey Team



Augustus Emenogu (Team Leader)

Augustus has over 19 years of experience leading multi-sector, donor-funded evaluations across 45 countries. He leads Expectation State's Research, Evaluation, and Learning Portfolio, specializing in promoting learning and adaptive management. His expertise spans peacebuilding, humanitarian assistance, and gender-based violence (GBV), with a strong focus on designing robust MEL frameworks and generating actionable insights. He is highly proficient in both English and indigenous Nigerian languages, facilitating inclusive engagements across diverse communities. Augustus has led major endline and midterm evaluations for donors such as USAID, GIZ, EU, SIDA, Norad,

BMZ, FCDO, US State Department, and various UN agencies, covering peacebuilding, youth leadership, and inter-religious tolerance.

His work consistently features deep involvement with youth groups, community stewards, and policymakers, using interviews, focus groups, and large-scale surveys for genuine stakeholder voices. He led the overall survey design, methodology, data analysis, and report finalization, drawing on his extensive experience in gender and social inclusion research and high-level reporting.



Bridget Okeke (GESI Evaluator)

Bridget is a results-driven Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning (MERL) and Data Compliance Specialist with over 16 years of experience leading complex, multi-country initiatives. She brings deep expertise in Results-Based Management (RBM), learning agendas, and data governance, with a demonstrated ability to oversee data ethics and compliance.

She has multi-donor experience with programs funded by DFID, USAID, EU, Gates Foundation, GAVI, BMGF funded vaccines program, National Democratic Institute, UNDP (DGD), UNFPA, Ford Foundation, Solidarite Sida, amfAR The Foundation for AIDS Research, Population Council, African, Women Development Fund (AWDF), Institute of Human Virology Nigeria and Global fund for women, Australian Government Human Right Small Grant Scheme, Direct Aid for small Project Australian High Commissioner Abuja and Global Fund Project.

Her focus on Gender, Youth, and Inclusion-focused MEL makes her ideal for assessing male engagement in gender equality. She led the integration of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) principles throughout the baseline survey, ensuring gender-sensitive data collection tools and analysis.



Aniefiok Dominic Effiong (Investigative Evaluator)

Aniefiok is a development professional with over ten years of experience supporting donor-funded development and humanitarian programs in Nigeria and across West Africa. He brings deep expertise in Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA), knowledge management, and Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning (MERL). He is skilled in using mixed methods research and systems thinking to solve complex programmatic challenges. Aniefiok will be responsible for providing strategic oversight on data interpretation, risk assessment, and

ensuring the evaluation's findings are actionable and contribute to adaptive programming.

His support for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/West Africa studies, specifically on "Information Manipulation in Coastal West Africa" and "Transhumance and Farmer-Herder Conflicts," demonstrates strong analytical skills in understanding complex social dynamics. He has also led efforts to connect strategy, learning, and performance, including winning the 2022 USAID Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA) Case Competition to demonstrate how intentional learning can improve culture and outcomes. My work focuses on building practical, flexible, and functional structures where learning is not an add-on but part of daily decision-making.



Hannatu Umaru – Assessment Associate

Hannatu is a skilled Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research Associate with specialised expertise in qualitative data analysis for humanitarian and development projects. She has contributed to the synthesis of research for major USAID-funded projects, including an inclusive development analysis to support USAID/Nigeria's five-year strategic plan. Her proficiency with qualitative analysis software such as NVivo and Dedoose is a significant asset.

Her experience includes developing analysis codebooks, conducting thematic data analysis, and documenting research processes from stakeholder mapping to reporting. This focused expertise ensures that the rich, narrative data from KIIs and FGDs will be analysed with depth and rigour, capturing the nuances of stakeholders' perspectives on religious conflict and peacebuilding.

C. DESCRIPTION OF DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

To collect the range of information needed for the MFN project's baseline, the team will develop and deploy the following complementary tools. Prior to the commencement of non-desk review data collection, the baseline survey team will hold a working session with the CSLD team to finalize the various tools. Each tool matches one or more of the baseline objectives and MEL indicators and will be included in the annex section for reference:



Social Media Analytics Log

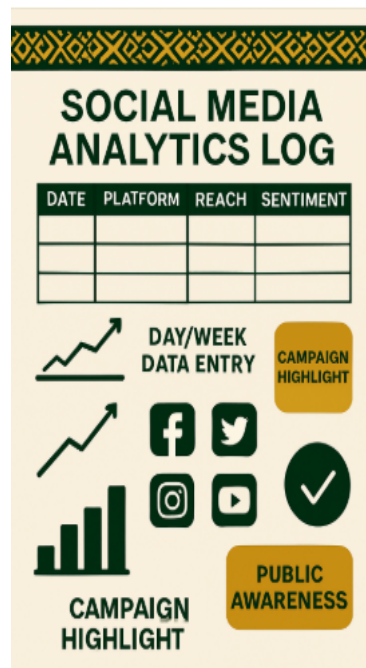
Purpose: Track public discourse, coverage, and trends about gender equality, MFN, and GBV prevention.

Content: Columns to record mention date, platform, reach, sentiment, and theme.

Use: Simple spreadsheet, with daily/weekly entries based on media monitoring and project/partner submissions.

Indicators

Addressed: Public awareness, campaign coverage.



Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide

Purpose: To get a collective view from groups of male/female activists, youth, and WROs about challenges, opportunities, and lived experiences of movement-building and advocacy.

Content: Case scenarios and group rating /discussion prompts adapted to each region.

Mode: Virtual group calls (WhatsApp or Zoom); in-person only if safe and practical.

Indicators

Addressed: Engagement frequency, awareness, joint actions, and collaboration quality.





Online/Mobile Survey Questionnaire

Purpose: To reach a large number of respondents across all six geopolitical zones, efficiently capturing quantitative data (numbers, proportions, frequencies) regarding participation, awareness, attitudes, network presence, and collaboration.

Platform: Google Forms or KoboToolbox, circulated via WhatsApp, email, Short Message Service (SMS), and simple web links for low-data use.

Indicators Addressed: % increase in male activists/allies; Improved capacity; Network functionality; Public awareness; Number of collaborations.

Content: Short multiple-choice, scaled, and open-ended questions on:

- Male engagement in gender equality and GBV advocacy (frequency, type, depth).
- Capacity/readiness of male-focused groups and leaders.
- Awareness of MFN and evidence of MFN structure/network.
- Collaboration with WROs and key actions undertaken by male allies.
- Institutional changes noted among TRC.
- Media exposure and awareness trends.

ONLINE/MOBILE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE



Key Informant Interview (KII) Guide

Purpose: To dig deeper into motivations, perceptions, readiness, and structural shifts—especially among identified male leaders, MFN members, influential TRC, and WRO leaders.

Mode: Phone, WhatsApp audio, or Google Meet, depending on respondent preference and access.

Indicators Addressed: Capacity shifts, institutional shifts, collaboration stories, and qualitative awareness.

Content: Flexible scripts with prompts on:

- What drives or holds back male engagement?
- Institutional shifts, norms, and role modeling.
- Insights on collaboration and movement-building.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS (KII)



Desk Review/Extraction Template

Purpose: To systematically record and summarize secondary data from project documents, MFN records, partner reports, government/Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) lists, prior activity logs, and social or traditional media reports.

Indicators Addressed: Validates and triangulates against primary data for all indicators.

Content: Structured fields to capture:

- Existing networks, actions, and collaborations.
- Policy documents showing shifts among TRC.
- Media campaigns and attendance data.



Refer to **Annexes** (separate document) for samples of data collection tools.

D. BASELINE SURVEY INDICATOR TABLE

SN	From Result Framework/TOC	Indicators	Definition/ Disaggregation:	Baseline Value	Comments
Outcome Results					
1.	Increased male activists/champions/allies advocating for gender equality.	% increase of male activists/champions / allies for gender equality.	By Male activists/champions/allies, we mean males who support and promote gender equality in their different spheres.	36%	We collected baseline values for this: Which category best describes you or your primary role? (Select one) Male gender equality activist/ally = 81 Total Respondents = 225 % of male activists/champions/allies for gender equality = $(81 \div 225) \times 100 = 36\%$
2.	Increased actions of male feminists promoting Gender Equality in Nigeria.	% of actions on gender equality catalyzed or executed by male feminists trained by the Centre LSD	By Actions, we mean engagements catalyzed or executed by male feminists trained by the Centre LSD. Disaggregated by location/regions	0%	This indicator is about male feminists trained by the Center LSD. It will be tracked through activity logs, event reports, and program records, which capture the details of actions executed by male feminists. Indicator Baseline Value: (Number of actions catalyzed or executed by male feminists ÷ Total number of male feminists) × 100
3.	Increased involvement of traditional and religious leaders in promoting gender equality in Nigeria.	% increase in actions/involvement of TRC in promoting gender equality in Nigeria	By actions/involvement, we mean engagements organized, facilitated, or co-organized by TRCS trained by CLSD.	0%	Since this is facilitated or co-organized by TRC trained by CLSD, this indicator is best tracked through program records, such as event logs, attendance sheets, and reports on actions during actual program implementation.

SN	From Result Framework/TOC	Indicators	Definition/ Disaggregation:	Baseline Value	Comments
					Indicator Baseline Value: Number of actions organized, facilitated, or co-organized by TRCs ÷ Total number of TRC members
4.	Increased public awareness of gender equality issues in Nigeria.	% increase in public awareness on gender equality in Nigeria.	By Public awareness, we mean increasing reportage, engagements, discussions, etc, on gender equality in Nigeria.	73.61%	We collected baseline values for this: In your opinion, how has media coverage (social media, news, radio) of gender equality issues changed in Nigeria over the past year? Total Responses = 144 Count the Number of Responses Indicating Increased Awareness: - "It has become slightly more positive and frequent": 69 occurrences - "It has become much more positive and frequent": 37 occurrences Total Responses Indicating Increased Awareness (Positive Change) = 69 + 37 = 106. Percentage Increase in Awareness: $(106 \div 144) \times 100 = 73.61\%$
5.	Improved capacity for emerging male feminist activists in promoting gender equality.	% increased in knowledge, skills, and actions of the emerging trained male feminist.	By an emerging trained male feminist, we mean a male feminist trained/groomed/ mentored by Centre LSD.	0	This indicator will be tracked using pre- and post-tests to assess the change in knowledge, skills, and actions of the trained male feminists, ensuring objective and measurable data on their progress. Indicator Baseline Value: $\sum \text{Pre-Test Scores} \div \text{Total}$

SN	From Result Framework/TOC	Indicators	Definition/ Disaggregation:	Baseline Value	Comments
					number of participants
6.	Enhanced collaboration between male and female feminists pushing for gender equality.	Number of strategic collaborations between male and female feminists catalysed/facilitated by Centre LSD MFN for gender equality,	Strategic collaborations	0	Program implementation has not commenced; and cannot be updated at this baseline stage.
Output Results/Medium Term Results					
7.	Expanded Male Allyship	Number of men and boys trained and mobilized as male allyship by Centre LSD.	By expanded male allyship, we mean additional membership to the existing male feminist network.	0	The indicator is best tracked through administrative records, not surveys, because it requires precise and verifiable data on participation, which surveys cannot reliably capture. Indicator Baseline Value: Count the current total number of men and boys trained and mobilized into the MFN
8.	Strengthen Male Feminist Network in Nigeria	Number of male network mobilized and joined the MFN	By MFN, we mean Male Feminist Network	0	This indicator involves a concrete event (joining the MFN) that requires specific tracking (e.g., who joined, when, and how). It is best captured through program records and databases, not surveys. Indicator Baseline Value: Count the current total number of men mobilized and joined the MFN
9.	Institutional Shift among TRC Leaders	Number of actions catalysed or /facilitated by TRC leaders mobilized/trained	By TRC, we mean Traditional and Religious Council.	0	This indicator should be tracked through program records and activity logs, as surveys cannot

SN	From Result Framework/TOC	Indicators	Definition/ Disaggregation:	Baseline Value	Comments
		by Centre LSD.			provide the level of verification or detailed tracking required to capture the actions catalyzed or facilitated by TRC leaders accurately. Indicator Baseline Value: Count the current total number of actions catalysed or facilitated by TRC leaders
10.	Increased Public Awareness	Number of Centre LSD campaigns on gender equality.	By campaigns, we mean extensive media engagements that promote gender equality in Nigeria.	0	This indicator should be tracked through administrative records and internal campaign reports, as surveys cannot provide an accurate count or the necessary details of each gender equality campaign. Indicator Baseline Value: Count the current total number of Centre LSD campaigns on gender equality
11.	Mentorship and Leadership Development	Number of male feminists mentored by the Centre LSD.	By mentorship and leadership development, we mean male allies trained and mentored by CLSD.	0	This indicator is best tracked through mentorship records and internal program logs to ensure accurate and verifiable data on who was mentored by Centre LSD, rather than relying on survey responses. Indicator Baseline Value: Count the current total number of male feminists mentored by Centre LSD
12.	Enhanced	Number of Joint	By enhanced	123	Survey Question:

SN	From Result Framework/TOC	Indicators	Definition/ Disaggregation:	Baseline Value	Comments
	Collaboration with WROs	actions, advocacy campaigns, and co-authored knowledge products with feminist and women-led organizations.	collaboration with WROs, we mean joint actions/interventions/engagements by WRO and male feminist organizations.		What types of joint actions have you undertaken with WROs? (No indication of whether this should account for only program supported engagements) - Joint Actions (including co-facilitating workshops, referring cases, sharing resources): 63 - Advocacy Campaigns: 47 - Co-authored Knowledge Products (joint policy development): 13 Total Number of Collaborative Actions = 63 + 47 + 13 = 123

E. REGIONAL SNAPSHOTS OF REGIONAL LEVELS OF MALE ENGAGEMENTS IN GENDER EQUALITY ADVOCACY.

Table 26. North East & North West Snapshot of the Levels of Male Engagement in Gender Advocacy.

Snapshot Description		Key Respondent Voices:
Low, Sporadic Engagement: Male participation in gender equality advocacy is generally ad hoc, limited to field-specific events, media coverage during campaigns, or engagement when incentivized by partner/donor projects. Structural Gaps: Male-focused organizations exist, but they often lack a robust structure, relying heavily on unstable funding and external mentorship.	Role of TRC Actors: Traditional and religious leaders remain strongholds of traditional gender roles, with engagement limited to event appearances or when aligned with religious/communal values.	"If you want to reach the community, you must go through the traditional rulers—they're the gatekeepers." TRC Leader
	Barriers Identified: Cultural/traditional strictures, lack of capacity, and negative stigma persist as significant obstacles.	"Cultural and religious norms make it hard to get buy-in for real change." Male Ally "Most engagement comes during campaigns or donor-funded projects, with little follow-through." WRO

Table 27. North Central Snapshot of the Levels of Male Engagement in Gender Advocacy.

Snapshot Description	Key Respondent Voices:
Moderate, Patchy Engagement: There is visible, but inconsistent, male allyship, particularly in urban and faith-based organizations. Community/youth leaders bridge partnerships, but deep, systematic male engagement is largely missing in rural settings.	"We have men championing gender equality, but mostly in areas that don't threaten their power." - Male Focused Organisation
Building Momentum: Regional alliances, such as youth clubs or interfaith forums, are emerging, although efforts are hindered by resource gaps and donor dependency.	"WROs are creating space, but many men's involvement remains surface-level." - WRO
Capacity Needs: Male-focused groups are actively seeking mentorship and technical assistance in MEL and organizational development.	"The absence of a formal Male Feminist Network is felt—there's interest, but structure is lacking." - Male Ally

Table 28. South East & South South Snapshot of the Levels of Male Engagement in Gender Advocacy.

Snapshot Description	Key Quotes
Frequent, Project-Linked Engagement: Male engagement is most visible and sustained in these zones, buoyed by donor projects, active male and mixed-gender networks, and strong WRO coalitions.	"Male allies are most likely to be found in donor-linked projects." - Male Ally
Civil Society Leadership: Male engagement often emerges via school/youth outreach, advocacy events, and partnerships with WROs. Some traditional and community leaders are now active allies.	"We've seen chiefs advocate for women's rights—demonstrating the impact of persistent engagement." - TRC Leader.
Barriers: Despite progress, engagement remains event-dependent, with sustainability threatened by unstable funding and limited institutionalization, particularly in rural areas.	"Community and youth leaders are often bridging gender divides in practice, not just rhetoric." - Male Focused Organization.

Table 29. South West Snapshot of the Levels of Male Engagement in Gender Advocacy.

Snapshot Description	Key Quotes
Increasing, Diverse Engagement: The South West shows a growing base of highly engaged male allies, especially via formal organizations like the Young Men's Network against SGBV, media advocacy, and coalitions with WROs. However, deeply rooted traditional norms mean that passive and supportive engagement still coexist alongside active roles.	"We're seeing genuine engagement, but it's split between active urban actors and more passive traditional leaders." - WRO
Community-Based Entry Points: Peer-to-peer advocacy, legal and psychosocial response roles, and grassroots sensitization are emerging as best practices.	"Media, legal, and religious platforms are now part of the movement, but equity (not equality) still dominates the narrative." - Media Professional



F. DESCRIPTION OF ORGANISATIONS THAT WORK TO EXPAND MALE ALLYSHIP ACROSS THE DIFFERENT GEOPOLITICAL ZONES IN NIGERIA.

Concerted efforts to expand male allyship and foster gender equality across Nigeria's diverse geopolitical landscape have given rise to a robust ecosystem of organizations, each leveraging unique strengths, geographic reach, and strategic partnerships. These organizations are instrumental in catalyzing social change by actively engaging men and boys as partners, educators, and advocates for gender justice in communities across the nation. Here are descriptions of key organisations expanding or establishing male feminist networks in Nigeria, with a focus on their activities, impact, and strategies for male engagement:

HeForShe Nigeria (UN Women)

HeForShe Nigeria is the local arm of the UN Women's global campaign, mobilizing men and boys as allies in promoting gender equality. With presence in Lagos (South West), Abuja (North Central), and Maiduguri (North East), its activities are multifaceted:

- **Advocacy & Dialogue:** Hosts high-profile events, roundtables, and forums where male leaders, celebrities, and influencers publicly pledge to challenge gender stereotypes.
- **Media & Digital Campaigns:** Utilizes robust social media and traditional media to amplify stories of Nigerian men supporting gender justice, making the feminist cause relatable.
- **Community Outreach:** Partners with schools, faith centers, and grassroots forums to nurture everyday male allies and role models, with a particular focus on youth in urban and conflict-affected areas.
- **Male Feminist Network-Building:** Facilitates ongoing networking among male advocates, offering training and platforms for them to mentor peers and champion local initiatives.

MenEngage Nigeria / MenEngage Africa

Operating as the Nigerian arm of the global MenEngage Alliance, MenEngage Nigeria stands at the forefront of the movement to engage men and boys for gender transformation. With operations spanning all six geopolitical zones—North Central, North East, North West, South East, South South, and South West—the network works through an expansive web of member organizations, local partners, and community groups. Their activities encompass advocacy for stronger policies, community education on gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR), survivor support programs, and high-level engagement in policy development.

The network's collaborative approach means its impact is felt from major urban centers to the most rural communities, with particular emphasis on promoting positive masculinity and challenging harmful gender norms. MenEngage Nigeria partners with major international organizations such as UN Women and the Ford Foundation, enhancing its influence and resources for sustained change.

MenEngage Nigeria operates within the MenEngage Africa alliance—a pan-African movement for transforming masculinities and ending gender-based violence. Their activities include:

- **Capacity Building:** Trains community leaders, educators, and activists (including men and boys) to recognize and challenge harmful gender norms.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Works with regional and national policymakers to institutionalize gender-transformative practices—e.g., collaborating on curriculum development or workplace anti-discrimination policies.
- **Male Ally Networks:** fosters local “MenCare” groups, peer-support circles, and mentor programs that provide safe spaces for men to learn and unlearn together.
- **Context-Sensitive Programming:** Adapts activities to local culture, religion, and language—working with Imams in the North, youth groups in the South, or raising awareness among displaced populations in conflict areas.

Boys Quarters Africa Initiative

Based in Lagos but reaching across other zones, Boys Quarters Africa specializes in redefining masculinities among young Nigerians:



- **Mentorship & Education:** Runs school-based workshops, after-school clubs, and leadership programs for boys, using relatable male role models.
- **Media Outreach:** Engages young people through podcasts, digital storytelling, blogs, and interactive webinars focused on healthy masculinity and gender partnership.
- **Community Campaigns:** Organizes public talks and campaigns where men share journeys of embracing feminist values, thus normalizing male allyship.
- **Network Platforms:** Hosts online and offline communities for male feminists and allies, fostering mentorship and collaboration.

Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC)

Though broad in scope, WARDC has embedded male allyship into its work, especially in the South West and South South:

- **Advocacy Campaigns:** Engages prominent men—traditional rulers, religious leaders, local politicians—in public campaigns against gender discrimination and GBV.
- **Capacity Building for Allies:** Provides training for men to serve as peer educators or community advocates, integrating them into broader gender justice programs.
- **Faith & Community Partnerships:** Collaborates with mosques, churches, and local councils to co-design interventions suited to prevailing traditions and beliefs.
- **Sustained Male Networks:** Supports networks of male advocates who champion legal and social reforms in their communities.

Education as a Vaccine (EVA)

EVA's work, centered in the North Central but reaching the North West and North East, is critical in integrating boys and men into feminist and anti-GBV activism:

- **Sexuality Education:** Engages men and boys in open conversation about gender roles, consent, and violence prevention—demystifying feminism for new male audiences.
- **Community Sensitization:** Conducts dialogues involving the male community and religious leaders, helping reshape community values from within.
- **Anti-GBV Campaigns:** Deploys trained male volunteers as youth educators and campaigners in schools, IDP camps, and religious institutions.

The Mirabel Centre / Project Alert on Violence Against Women

Both organisations are prominent in GBV prevention and survivor support, with significant emphasis on male involvement:

- **Community Education:** Offers workshops and outreach that target men as potential allies rather than perpetrators, changing the narrative on responsibility.
- **Survivor Advocacy:** Trains men to be 'feminist allies' in survivor support networks, encouraging empathy, nonviolence, and public advocacy.
- **Joint Male-Female Campaigns:** Sometimes co-host public awareness or legal rights campaigns, showcasing male and female activists working in partnership.

Centre for Girls' Education (CGE)

Based in Kaduna (North West), CGE's programs directly integrate male gatekeepers into gender-equality movements:

- **Father-Daughter Initiatives:** Facilitates workshops and clubs that encourage fathers and male elders to become vocal supporters of girls' education and women's rights.
- **Mentorship:** Recruits and trains men as mentors for at-risk girls, shifting community expectations around female achievement.
- **Community Advocacy:** Involves male leaders in community forums, urging them to publicly support policy and behavioral change.

Young Men's Network Against GBV (YMNAGBV)

A new and growing movement, YMNAGBV targets young men as allies against gender-based violence:

- **Peer Education:** Conducts peer-led forums, school activations, and youth campaigns to normalize speaking out against violence and challenging toxic norms.
- **Ambassador Programs:** Trains and certifies young men as GBV ambassadors, connecting them to national and regional male ally networks.
- **Advocacy and Networking:** Collaborates with other organisations, including those listed above, to amplify the voices of young males within the women's rights movement.

Women for Women International (WfWI) Nigeria

Primarily active in Northern Nigeria, particularly in states like Bauchi, Women for Women International's Men's Engagement Programme has emerged as a vital force for grassroots change. By collaborating with local male religious, traditional, and household leaders, WfWI facilitates transformative dialogues and family-centered workshops to reshape beliefs about women's rights and potential.

These activities have led to tangible improvements in women's economic empowerment, educational uptake, and protection from early marriage and violence—demonstrating the importance of involving men in community-based gender reform. The organization's partnerships enable outreach in additional zones when opportunities arise.

Pathfinder International and the iCommit Campaign

Pathfinder International, in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs, runs the ambitious iCommit Campaign, which aims to mainstream gender equality across all states. This high-profile campaign leverages mass media, community challenge grants, and public pledges to raise awareness and build policy momentum on key issues, including gender-based violence, reproductive health, and economic inclusion.

Men and boys are encouraged to commit to gender-equitable behaviors publicly and are enrolled in programs that foster leadership and advocacy skills, reinforcing the national character of the movement.

Society for the Improvement of Rural People (SIRP)

SIRP primarily operates in the North Central zone, but exerts a broader influence through its role as the Secretariat for MenEngage Nigeria. Uniquely positioned to reach rural and hard-to-reach populations, SIRP's projects address a wide spectrum of issues, including poverty, women's economic empowerment, rural health, and gender-based violence. The organization leads community education campaigns, advocates for SRHR, and establishes direct partnerships with grassroots stakeholders, ensuring that male allyship is woven deeply into the rural social fabric.

These organisations collectively leverage mentorship, education, advocacy, networking, and culturally-relevant strategies to build and sustain male feminist networks that support gender equality and challenge patriarchy in Nigeria.

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