



**REPORT OF THE SIDE BY SIDE MOVEMENT FOR GENDER JUSTICE IN
NIGERIA**



PROJECT MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2019-FEBRUARY 2020

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CHECKLIST OF ACTIVITIES: PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

S/N	Target <i>(*Unplanned but implemented)</i>	Achievement	%achieved	Remarks
1			100%	
2			100%	
3			100%	
4			100%	

INTRODUCTION

Gender discrimination is deep-rooted and pervasive in cultural norms and practices, and in women's representation in both formal and informal decision-making structures. Gender inequality on the other hand is also common and manifests in violence against women and girls (VAWG), barriers to accessing quality education for girls, early marriage/forced marriage and poor/lack of access to reproductive health services.

Cultural and religious socializations have resulted in women and girls feeling isolated and powerless and therefore conforming to cultural pressures. Amongst these are prevalent social and cultural norms (perpetuated both formally and informally through social institutions and structures), traditions, codes of conduct and laws which influence attitudes and behaviours towards girls and women, and boys and men.

The centrality of religion in Nigeria enables religious institutions and leaders to exercise considerable influence. People rely on scriptural guidance as their source of inspiration which invariably governs their everyday lives and the relationship with one another. Both Islam and Christianity, for example, emphasise the importance of social justice, and society's responsibility towards the poorest and most vulnerable groups. Successfully mobilising this faith movement will in turn demonstrate the distinct contribution to addressing gender inequality in Nigeria.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Side by Side faith movement for gender justice in Nigeria achieved its goal in the just concluded phase (September 2019-February 2020) of the project. During the period under review, it successfully concluded an in-depth analysis of Religion and gender Justice: Perspective from Islam and Christianity in Nigeria. It strengthened the capacity of faith and traditional leaders in the North West and South West regions of Nigeria on the roles of faith and traditional leaders in ending gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices. Further, it organized and national symposium where we looked at women in governance, the roles and faith and traditional leaders. It then advanced the course of advocacy in the project through media engagements and targeted advocacies and campaigns.

The impact of the project cannot be overemphasised. The project gave a comprehensive view of the theological perspectives to gender justice. It further improved the skills of faith and traditional leaders on the theological basis for gender justice from the Christian and Islamic perspectives. Faith and traditional leaders are now taking deliberate actions in ending all forms of gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices in their domains. The national symposium exposed the level of gender injustice/inequalities being perpetrated in the governance process in Nigeria. It also determined the role of faith and traditional leaders in mainstreaming gender justice in governance. During the symposium traditional leaders also made commitments in carrying women along in the decision-making process in their various kingdoms.

The realization that there is currently no national faith-based movement which brings faith leaders, Faith Based Organization's (FBO's) and people of faith together specifically with the aim of ending gender inequality in the country made the Side by Side concept more imperative. Whilst some faith movements for gender justice already exist, these tend to focus on a narrow thematic issue e.g. sexual and gender-based violence or adolescent girls' issue. The concept of the side by side which ensures working with faith and Traditional leaders further gave support to the activities of the Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN), Woman Wing of Christian Association of Nigeria (WOWICAN), youth groups, community based organizations and the media to mainstream issues of gender justice in their work. The success of this project was hinged on the increased awareness and commitment for gender justice in Nigeria by faith and traditional leaders from across the country.

ACTIVITY REPORTS

Impact & Achievements

1. Capacity Building:

in achieving this, the secretariat worked closely with Christian Association of Nigeria and Ja'amatu Nasri Islam in identifying targeted religions leaders from the regions. Traditional leaders were also invited to be part of the training. The training which was aimed at capacitating faith and traditional leaders on the theological perspectives to gender justice had 84 persons trained. Out of the 84 persons, 14 were traditional leader while the remaining 70 persons were religions leaders (Christians and Muslims). The understanding of theological basis for gender justice by faith and traditional leaders has improved. Their messaging now has some components gender justice with scriptural backings. Faith and traditional have become more willing and committed to take the lead in dealing with the key issues bordering gender discrimination and inequality in Nigeria. Also, faith and traditional leaders now know the roles they play in promoting faith, value of love and gender justice in Nigeria.

2. Awareness and Campaign:

awareness and campaign were carried out via social media and conventional media. Centre LSD's social media platforms which has 54,159 followers on facebook and 2866 followers on twitter was used to create awareness. Some of our media partners also made commitment to create awareness on their various platforms and organization in support for the course to end gender injustice in Nigeria. There is now an increased awareness of both faith and traditional leaders on the issue of gender justice in Nigeria. The awareness created has led to having more male faith leaders and people of faith becoming champions for gender equality and more faith leaders advocating for appropriate laws, policies and services to prevent and respond to Gender Inequality and Gender-based Violence in Nigeria.

3. National symposium:

The national symposium which was organized basically to determine the level of gender injustice/inequalities being perpetrated in the governance process in Nigeria and to determine the role of faith and traditional leaders in mainstreaming gender justice in governance was graced by dignitaries from across the country and the CEO of Christian Aid. The symposium met its objectives now government at all levels are more committed in mainstreaming gender justice in the governance process in Nigeria. Also, faith and traditional leaders are now more committed to addressing any form of gender injustice at all level of governance.

Objective/Outcome 1: To carry out an in-depth analysis of the theological perspective to gender justice in Nigeria and to validate the research report

The research was carried out and was aimed at reviewing the theological basis for gender justice with scriptural backings (Islamic and Christian Perspectives). The research was focused on Girl child education, Female genital mutilation, Child marriage, Inheritance, Political participation

The validated tool was used to facilitate the capacity building of faith and traditional leaders in the two geopolitical zones (NW and SW) and is now being used by our beneficiaries in creating more awareness on the issue of gender justice and harmful traditional practices. The research was centered on Girl child education, Female genital mutilation, Child marriage, Inheritance, Political participation and 5 sermons for each category was developed.

Outcomes:

1. A blueprint for policy formulation and implementation geared towards adopting the right strategies for countering gender inequality in Nigeria developed.
2. The need to have a real movement for gender justice in Nigeria, bound by a common strategy and goal determined.
3. The correct interpretation of the holy scriptures on issues around gender justice espoused.

Objective/Outcome 2:

Objective:

To build the capacity of faith and traditional leaders on the theological perspectives to gender justice in Nigeria

Outcomes:

1. Improved understanding of theological basis for gender justice; thereby leading to gender justice messaging with scriptural backings.
2. Increased willingness and commitment by faith and traditional leaders to take the lead in dealing with the key issues bordering gender discrimination and inequality in Nigeria.
3. Increased capacity and commitment of both faith and traditional leaders to address the challenges of gender discrimination.

Objective/Outcome 3:

To create awareness on the dangers associated with gender injustice and harmful traditional practices from the theological perspective.

Outcome:

1. Increased awareness of both faith and traditional leaders on the issue of gender justice in Nigeria.
2. Increased understanding on the misinterpretation of scriptures on issues around gender justice and harmful traditional practices.

Objective/Outcome 4:

Objectives:

1. To determine the level of gender injustice/inequalities being perpetrated in the governance process in Nigeria
2. To determine the role of faith and traditional leaders in mainstreaming gender justice in governance

Outcomes:

1. Government at all are more committed in mainstreaming gender justice in the governance process in Nigeria.
2. Faith and traditional leaders are more committed to addressing any form of gender injustice at all level of governance.

LESSONS LEARNT

Lessons were learnt in all the engagement with partners, traditional and religious leaders. Some of the lessons include:

1. The collaboration with religious bodies like CAN, WOWICAN, JNI and FOMWAN brought a lot of success to the project

2. The production of documentary which is meant to be an advocacy tool needs to be precise and clear in its message in addressing a particular form of SGBV or any harmful traditional practices.
3. The project brought a lot of clarity on the roles of faith and traditional leaders to end all forms of gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices from the theological perspective.
4. Working closely with already established community structures like youth groups, women group and council of traditional leaders has proved to be very effective in ensuring project sustainability.
5. We also realized that the COVID 19 lockdown had a lot of negative impact on women; there was an increase in domestic and gender-based violence which further justified the need for the intervention.
6. The need to capacitate faith and traditional leaders on the use of existing online platforms for meetings became imperative in the realities of COVID-19. This is coming on the backdrop that COVID 19 has come and has encourages virtual meeting. Based on this reality, some of Side by Side meetings will be done virtually. Therefore, their capacity building on the use of online meeting platforms has become imperative.

INNOVATIONS

1. The use of members of the SBS steering committee members as resource persons during trainings to encourage ownership of the process.
2. The production of documentary to emphasise the danger associated to SGBV and other harmful traditional practices.

CHALLENGE/RECOMMENDATION

Challenges:

The following were challenges encountered during the period of implementation:

1. The documentary which was supposed to be a major tool for awareness creation and campaign was not concluded but has however been moved to the new phase of the project.
2. The inadequacy of funds limited the number of beneficiaries from a particular geopolitical zone. The printing of the concluded research report and sample sermons also met halt because of the inadequacy of funds. SBS intends meeting other funders who are also advocates of gender justice for collaboration and partnership.
3. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic also contributed to the slow pace of the implementation of the project. Report from various sources including the National Human

Right commission say that the lockdown led to an increased rate of gender-based violence. This is seen as a reversal to the gains recorded before the lockdown. However, efforts are been put in place to create more awareness on the need to end all forms of gender-based violence in Nigeria especially in the new phase of the project.

Recommendation:

1. Quarterly meeting of the SBS movement steering committee either virtually or physical depending on the availability of funds
2. The movements need to synch and join forces with other CA partners inother to reduce SGBV and other harmful traditional practices to the barest minimum.
3. The position of the co-chairs should be rotational, 3 years or 5years as will be agreed by the steering committee members.