



Special Report of Action Against Gender Based Violence

SUBMITTED TO THE
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AFFAIRS, COMMUNITY & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
DECEMBER 2020



Acknowledgment

This report is the fall out of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence implemented by Community Development Advocacy Foundation (CODAF)/Rural Community Empowerment Initiative (RUCi) with the funding support from the Government of Delta State from December 4-9, 2020. We want to express our unreserved appreciation to the Commissioner and Director of Women Affairs for recognizing CODAF as a partner in this project. We want to thank head of Churches, Health Centers, Schools and those that granted our team the audience to speak to their members.

We also want to applaud the energy and capacity the CODAF team (Benin Richard, Ubrei-Joe, M. Mariere, Etolor Onyidoubra and Judith Uruemu) expended into implementing this project and developing this report. To those that granted us interview and responded to our structured questionnaires, we are grateful.

The views expressed in this report are solely that of the implementing organization.

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1.0 Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) is violence directed against women, men, girls, youth and children especially the most vulnerable in the society such as women and girls who are the majority of the victims. Gender-based violence is a phenomenon deeply rooted in gender inequality, and continues to be one of the most notable human rights violations within all societies. Domestic violence and GBV have often been seen as domestic/private affairs until women's rights advocates and activists started pushing for the recognition of violence against women and girls as a human rights issue and move the problem of violence against women from the private to the public realm.

Worldwide, 35% women have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence. Similarly, 7% of women have been sexually assaulted by someone other than a partner, also as much as 38% of murders of women are committed by an intimate partner and 200 million women have experienced female genital mutilation/cutting¹. Domestic violence against men exists in Nigeria and the motives range from self-defence, provocation, infidelity, financial hardship and drunkenness². Gender-based violence disproportionately affects girls and women, particularly through certain forms of violence such as child marriage, intimate partner violence, verbal and physical abuse, starvation, female genital mutilation, and human trafficking.

While women are usually the immediate victims of gender violence, the consequences of gender violence extend beyond the victim to the society as a whole. Gender violence threatens family structures; children suffer emotional damage when they watch their mothers and sisters being battered; two-parent homes may break up, leaving the new female heads of household to struggle against increased poverty and negative social repercussions. Psychological scars often impede the establishment of healthy and rewarding relationships in the future. Victims of gender violence may vent their frustrations on their children and others, thereby transmitting and intensifying the negative experiences of those around them. Children, on the other hand, may come to accept violence as an alternative means of conflict resolution and communication. It is in these ways that violence is reproduced and perpetuated³.

As the world retreated inside homes due to the lockdown measures introduced to curb the COVID-19 pandemic, reports showed an alarming increase in the already existing pandemic of violence against women. As stated in the UN Secretary-General's report, "Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19". "Accompanying the crisis has been a spike in domestic violence reporting, at exactly the time that services, including rule of law, health and shelters, are being diverted to address the pandemic"⁴. For this reason, the world is campaigning and seeking solutions (through the 16 days of activism) to the escalations of the violence and conflicts being produced as a result of GBV. The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign to challenge violence against women and girls. The campaign runs every year from 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day. It was

¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialsustainability/brief/violence-against-women-and-girls>

² http://ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_9_No_3_March_2019/7.pdf

³ http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/svaw/advocacy/modelsessions/causes_effects.PDF

⁴ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/take-action/16-days-of-activism>

initiated in 1991 by the first Women's Global Leadership Institute, held by the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) at Rutgers University⁵.

The 2020 edition with the global theme: "Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!" is widely celebrated by different civil society organizations, local, states and National Governments and relevant stakeholders across the globe. This year, the Delta State Government through the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and Social Development, collaborated with Delta State Civil Society Organizations to campaign assiduously against GBV. Community Development Advocacy Foundation (CODAF)/Rural Community Empowerment Initiative (RUCEi) is pleased to implement this action to ending GBV in selected communities in Ughelli North Local Government Areas of Delta State.

2.0 Methodology

CODAF adopted a participatory research documentation, interview, gathering of testimonies and sensitization in the implementation of the 16 days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV). CODAF invested time and resources into gathering of evidence-based data on the level of awareness of the criminality of GBV, its causes and impacts in Ughelli North. The research made use of a review of secondary materials, interviews with key stakeholders, primary data through surveys and focus group discussions. The intentions of this methodology were to help CODAF to understand the local context of GBV and to harness local available solutions to the problem of GBV and to develop advocacy and campaign guides towards creating awareness for the eradication of GBV in the area. A total of 200 persons were engaged in an interview session in line with structured questionnaire and 10 testimonies were collected but only 4 quality testimonies and quotes were documented in this report.

Feedback from the research were used as advocacy and sensitization messages to engage women, men, children and youths. But because of the nature of the campaign and because the outcome of the research showed that women are the main victims of GBV, more females were engaged in the campaign. In the sensitization programmes organized by CODAF, we were able to track about 300 persons engaged directly during the different sensitization programmes. The activity was conducted in 10 communities in Ughelli North LGA. The team had access to victims of GBV, the team visited hospitals, markets, base of sex workers, schools and churches. In these places, testimonies were collected from victims and relative of victims and also perpetrators of GBV.

The sensitization was very interactive because it was used to validate the feedback from the field. Apart from gathering a sizable number of persons together in line with COVID 19 protocols, our team further engaged with individuals and families separately. Our target was to reach out to about 500 persons which was achieved following our adopted methodology of carrying evangelism against GBV. We also spoke to some prominent individuals in the society to get their buying into the campaign. Some Pastors ensured that our team had access to their members and they went as far as making the campaign a sermon in their churches thereby increasing the number of people reached.

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/16_Days_of_Activism_against_Gender-based_Violence

3.0 Output/Outcome

3.1 Assessment of the state of Gender-based Violence in Ughelli North,

An assessment on the level of awareness on the legal implication of GBV revealed that majority of the perpetrators still see GBV as a corrective measure to earn themselves the desired respect while undermining the aspects of human rights. The non-recognitions of victims of GBV as right holders significantly ignore the place of the law in preserving these rights.

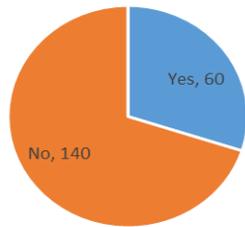


Figure 1: Shows level of awareness of the illegality of GBV

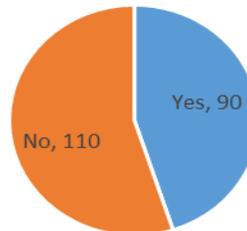
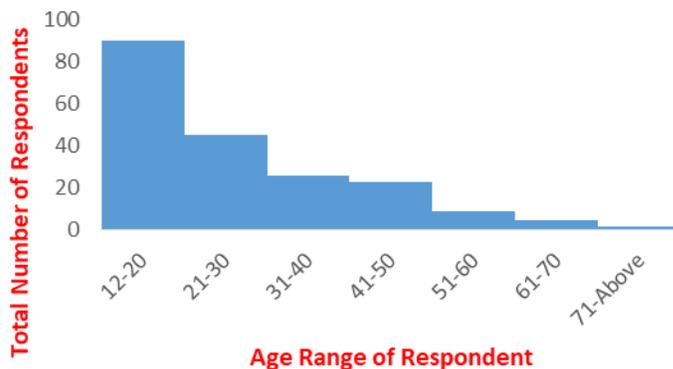


Figure 2: Shows the number of persons that have been victims of GBV

In line with figure 1 above only 43% of the people interviewed agreed that Gender base Violence is a crime condemned by Law while 57% said that GBV is not a crime. CODAF team was able to track 90 respondents who have been victims of GBV and when asked on the action they took, it was confirmed from them that many of the people could not take any action because they felt it will escalate violence. Only few had used the instruments of the law to fight back at perpetrators of GBV especially in the issues relating to rape. Our findings in these regards showed that human right organizations and law enforcement agencies need to be given technical and financial support to increase awareness raising on this subject matter. When the respondent was asked to rank the categories of GBV they had been victim of, verbal and physical abuses was ranked the highest while sexual harassment, molestation, starvation, rape and forced marriage got the lowest ranking.

Figure 3: Age Range of Victims of GBV



Our evaluation shows that being a victim of GBV is dependent on the age and sex of the individual. Feedback from respondent showed that people within the ages of 12 to 30 are usually the primary victims of verbal and physical abuses, sexual harassment, molestation, starvation, rape and forced marriage and majority of the respondents are females.

In another exercise, the former victims of GBV were giving the opportunity to rank the categories of their perpetrators and they placed them in the following order starting from highest

to the lowest (step parent- siblings- neighbors- relative- spouse- guardian- father- mother - employer). Apart from drunkenness and vulnerability that creates the atmosphere for GBV, others include blackmail, the attitude of the perpetrator, and also the attitude of the victim. CODAF has observed that failure to address this issue also entails a significant cost for the future. Numerous studies have shown that children growing up with violence are more likely to become survivors themselves or perpetrators of violence in the future. One characteristic of gender-based violence is that it knows no social or economic boundaries and affects women and girls of all socio-economic backgrounds: this issue needs to be addressed in both developing and developed countries. Decreasing violence against women and girls requires a community-based approach, and sustained engagement with multiple stakeholders.

3.2 Awareness/Community-based advocacy

During the various campaign and sensitization sessions, we were firm on informing our audience based our research finding that the main feature of gender-based violence is that it makes women the primary victims because of their gender. That GBV involves power imbalances where, most often, men are the perpetrators and women the victims. During the different sessions CODAF team explored in detail the causes and contributing factors of gender-based violence, various effects of gender-based violence on victims and their families, perpetrators and the society as a whole, as well as examine a variety of possible social responses to the phenomenon.







Furthering the sensitization, the team gave a mini lecture on the causes of GBV and a brainstorming approach was therefore adopted to get the participants to share their experiences and the following concept was highlighted. Participants affirmed that the cultural ideologies of different tribes which give men total control over women, and the poverty/low socio-economic status, and unemployment of people often results to GBV. The participants hinted that male control of wealth and decision-making in the family and when one witnesses marital violence as a child. Another factor all the target audience echoed very loud during the different sessions were actions that restricts movement of people and leads to a compulsory stay at home orders for everyone as was experienced with the case of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The parts of the sensitization that dealt on the effects of GBV was quite emotional as victims shared their experiences with CODAF team while shedding tears. From the testimonies received, we gathered that “while women are usually the immediate victims of gender violence, the consequences of gender violence extend beyond the victim to the society as a whole. Gender violence threatens family structures; children suffer emotional damage when they watch their mothers and sisters being battered; two-parent homes may break up, leaving the new female heads of household to struggle against increased poverty and negative social repercussions”.

4.0 Quotes and Testimonies from Partners and Target Audience

[One Cause of Domestic Violence is emotional unequal yoking.... Barr. Paul Onoriode Emerhana](#)

*According to him “one thing I learnt early in my emotional life was never to date a lady few years my junior. The age difference must be loud and clear. The reason is simple! A man of 30years is an emotional “small brother” of a lady of 26 or 27years. When she was 18years old she probably had started receiving advances from older guys meanwhile an 18years old may still be battling with identity challenges. Do not be “unequally yoked” means so much. Women are more emotionally matured than men of their age bracket so that when she begins to react with emotional seniority most men receive it as disrespect. Otherwise, why will a man beat up a woman he calls his wife? When your wife is your far junior but emotional par and she gets you livid; two things you are allowed to do: see her immediately as a baby and let go or walk up to her and hug her. Tell her it is okay. **“How dare you”! Is the beginning of domestic violence**⁶.*

[Why I left home, by Miss Tessy \(not real name\)](#)

I left home because my father was always abusing me verbally and telling me that I will not amount to anything in life. This is because he hated my mother so much as they were no longer together. In trying to prove to him and myself, I got into prostitution and left Port Harcourt at the age of 14 and I am 20 years old now. If my father and mother were still together as couples, I am sure I would be better off today, but I still think I will become someone in life to really prove my father wrong.

⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/1025977439/posts/10221259051918937/>

I left my marriage because my husband was abusive. Ms. Favour (surname withheld)

My husband and I were living a peaceful life and were supportive of each other until he got a good job. He became very abusive and always gives me emotional tortures. We were unable to get children of our own while we were together, only for me to find out on facebook that he was going to do "child dedication" the very next Sunday of the week I found out. I was really broken but prepared to hold on to my marriage. Regrettably, things got irreconcilably bad and we had to part ways....

Community Activism against Gender Based Violence in action. When a man loose self-control and molest little children, such man loses his respect and community status.....Edjekota Community

Edjekota community is located at Ughelli North local government Area. In October one Mr. Ufuoma Mukoro (Community Secretary), sexually assaulted his niece, aged 7. The community got involved by asking him to pay a fine of #20, 000 and other community services and also suspended him from participating in all social activities that concerns the community. The girl's father informed CODAF during this Campaign.

5.0 Recommendation/ Sustainability/Long term Plan

The concluding session was an opportunity for our target audience especially those that had been victims of GBV to speak up on the solutions they feel can best protect them from GBV. CODAF team, however, documented the following as part of the social responses to GBV.

1. Provision of accessible and equipped health care services to address the health concerns for people who are violated based on medical reasons,
2. Setting up of a dedicated agency in all the local government areas in Delta State to render victim assistance services
3. Relevant groups should work with perpetrators by subjecting them to psychological therapies
4. Promotion of media advocacy, awareness campaigns and education on the legal and long-term implications of GBV
5. Provision of legal responses mechanisms to help checkmate GBV in the society
6. Every community must adopt best practices that have special protection for women and children against GBV,
7. All religious bodies must ensure that sermons on ending GBV must be preached at every religious gathering.

Appendix

**Community Development Advocacy Foundation
&
Delta State Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and Social Development.
16 Days Activism Against Gender-based Violence 2020
Theme: Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent and Collect!
QUESTIONNAIRE**

NOTE: Answers provided here are strictly confidential and for statistical data collation only and will not be made public as your privacy is your right.

Names are not required.

Location: Ughelli.

Please tick the appropriate answers only

AGE RANGE	12-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70- Above

1. Do you understand that Gender base Violence is a crime condemned by Law? (Yes...)(No...)
2. Have you been a victim of any form of Gender base Violence? (Yes...) (No...)
3. If yes what kind of violence were you a victim of?
 - Sexual,
 - Physical abuse,
 - Verbal abuse,
 - Molestation,
 - Starvation,
 - Rape,
 - Forced Marriage
4. How old were you when you had this/these experience?

<p>5. Who was the perpetrator of the violence?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spouse, <input type="checkbox"/> • Father, <input type="checkbox"/> • Mother, <input type="checkbox"/> • Step Parent, <input type="checkbox"/> • Siblings, <input type="checkbox"/> • Neighbours, <input type="checkbox"/> • Relative <input type="checkbox"/> • Employer, <input type="checkbox"/> • Guardian <input type="checkbox"/> 	<p>6. What was responsible for the violence against you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerability <input type="checkbox"/> • Attitude of the perpetrator, <input type="checkbox"/> • Drunkenness, <input type="checkbox"/> • Black mail, <input type="checkbox"/> • Attitude of the victim <input type="checkbox"/>
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About CODAF

Community Development Advocacy Foundation (CODAF) also known and registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission as RURAL COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE (RUCEi), CAC/IT/NO 121951. Founded in 2013, CODAF works to bridge the communication gap between policy makers and the grassroots AND raise awareness of rural dwellers and empowering them to be active players in environmental decision making. This mandate is anchored on article 24 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights which states that “All peoples shall have the right to a general satisfactory environment favourable to their development”.

CODAF's commitment in promoting local struggles for environmental justice won its recognition as the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) of the year award by Jewel Affairs, a movie industry at the Isoko Award Night in December 2018.

CODAF is the Co-Chair on Environment for Open Governance Policy in Delta State and the Delta Central Coordinator for Delta State COVID-19 Emergency Intervention Group. CODAF is also a member of Green Alliance Nigeria, a Nigerian NGO coalition for the protection of the Environment and the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG). With support from TMG, CODAF mobilized other CSOs for the monitoring of the 2019 general elections.

Vision

We envision a self-sufficient community in the management of their environment and resources without any form of marginalization.

Mission

To engage in intervention projects that builds the capacity and empowers rural community people to defend their collective rights to participating in natural resource governance through a right-based approach.

Our Focus

1. Environment,
2. Community Action and Governance,
3. Agriculture,
4. Gender and Youth Action

Contact Us

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