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USAID/NIGERIA GENDER ANALYSIS

September 2024

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ACRONYMS

ADS	Automated Directives System
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CEFMU	Child, Early, and Forced Marriages and Unions
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DO	Development Objective
EG	Economic Growth
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDA	Inclusive Development Analysis
IDAMS	Inclusive Development Activity for Mission Support
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IP	Implementing Partner
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex
MDA	Ministries, Departments, and Agencies
MHH	Menstrual Health and Hygiene
MNCH	Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NRHC	National Human Rights Commission
PHC	Primary Health Care

SAP	State Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Center
SHoA	State House of Assembly
SOGIESC	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, or Sex Characteristics
SRGBV	School-related Gender-Based Violence
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
TB	Tuberculosis
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAPP	Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Associations
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WEE	Women’s Economic Empowerment
WEP	Women’s Empowerment Principles

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the requirements of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Automated Directives System (ADS) 201.3.2.9 and ADS 205, USAID/Nigeria contracted Banyan Global to undertake a countrywide gender analysis to inform the Mission’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) for 2025-2030. Its objectives were to identify (1) current gender gaps and trends in the country; (2) the norms, behaviors, relations, structures, and systems that sustain and perpetuate gender inequality, including gender-based violence (GBV); (3) the perspectives and priorities of local organizations, government stakeholders, and the private sector actors; and (4) sector-specific opportunities for advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment. Drawing from primary and secondary data and building upon previous USAID analyses, this report provides an overview of key findings and recommendations on the following priority sectors and key areas of work:

- **Economic Growth:** Cross-cutting barriers to women’s economic empowerment (WEE), access to quality jobs, and agricultural livelihoods.
- **Food, Water, and Climate:** Food security; water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); and environmental impacts.
- **Education:** Education systems and “Start to Finish” (i.e., entry, retention, dropout, completion, and return).
- **Health:** Holistic health care, systems strengthening, and GBV-related health issues.
- **Democracy and Governance:** Political participation and leadership, legal frameworks and mechanisms affecting gender equality, GBV prevention and response, and civil society.
- **Peace and Conflict:** Gendered dimensions of conflict, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding.

Research consisted of three phases. First, the research team conducted a desk review of existing literature. Second, the team held virtual meetings with USAID technical offices and implementing partners (IPs) to validate the findings from the desk research, identify additional lines of inquiry, and refine the stakeholder list. Finally, the team conducted three weeks of in-person data collection across Nigeria’s six geopolitical zones, holding key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions. In total, the research engaged 136 people. Findings were validated in May 2024 through a workshop, and recommendations were further refined with USAID/Nigeria staff. Table I presents the most relevant findings and recommendations for this gender analysis.

TABLE 1: GENDER ANALYSIS KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
ECONOMIC GROWTH	
CROSSCUTTING BARRIERS TO WEE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure deficits, including unreliable electricity and poor road conditions, critically impede economic growth and disproportionately limit women’s economic opportunities. • Women have lower rates of financial account ownership and access to credit, limiting their financial inclusion and economic opportunities. • GBV significantly hinders women’s economic contributions in the formal and informal sectors. • Inequitable gender norms significantly restrict women’s access to economic resources and decision-making authority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in Infrastructure Informed by Consultative Processes. Invest in reliable electricity, transportation infrastructure, and water systems while accounting for the needs of different people. Engage in planning processes for infrastructure that include gender-inclusive stakeholder consultations, inclusive considerations in project prioritization, and gender analysis within viability assessments and risk evaluations. • Increase Financial and Digital Inclusion. Design activities to include targeted financial literacy components and interventions to address the gender digital divide. Partner with financial service providers to design gender-inclusive market-specific financial products and services, such as options for high-frequency, low-denomination transactions, savings mechanisms, and financial capability resources.¹ • Address GBV through Economic Growth Programming. Coupled with cross-sectoral strategies, strengthen GBV prevention, mitigation, and response within economic growth programming, improving safety at locations of trade/sale (e.g., streets, markets, borders), developing sexual harassment and abuse policies in workplaces, and requiring IPs to develop GBV risk mitigation strategies.² • Shift Gender Norms. Include components in new activities that aim to shift gender norms to increase women’s economic agency across households, employers, and society. Engage men and boys as agents of change, including through household methodologies that promote a more equitable distribution of care responsibilities and decision-making roles. Evidence-based approaches to transforming norms can be found in “Shifting Social Norms to Advance Women’s Economic Empowerment in Nigeria: Resource Brief,” developed for USAID/Nigeria.
ACCESS TO QUALITY JOBS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most women workers are informally employed in agriculture and parts of the informal economy. They are disproportionately concentrated in the most vulnerable and lowest-paying jobs. • Women earn less than men due to occupational segregation, lower rates of representation in senior positions, and systemic discrimination. • With the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector comprising 13 percent of Nigeria’s gross domestic product, investing in programs that help women enter and advance in ICT presents a significant opportunity to promote inclusive growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Inclusive Workforces and Women in Leadership. Partner with private sector entities, especially in growth sectors like energy and ICT, to design strategies that promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in workplace practices and corporate leadership.³ Collaborate with companies to design and implement gender-sensitive policies, such as equitable recruitment practices, equal pay initiatives, and anti-harassment policies. Explore incentivizing businesses to increase women’s representation at senior levels and in corporate boards. • Support Women in Informal Sectors. Develop comprehensive programs that provide business training, mentorship, and startup grants specifically tailored for women in informal sectors. Partner with microfinance institutions, local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and community organizations to ensure that these women

- In the energy sector, low rates of women's participation are driven by significant wage gaps and underrepresentation in leadership positions. However, emerging opportunities in renewable energy and off-grid markets offer promising avenues for increasing women's engagement and entrepreneurship.
- While women's entrepreneurship in Nigeria is substantial, women entrepreneurs are less likely to be formalized, adequately funded, and connected to markets.

receive the financial literacy, business management skills, and access to credit needed to transition to formalized business activities.

- **Support Educational and Vocational Training in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM).** Develop educational programs that encourage the participation of women and youth in STEM fields. Offer scholarships, mentorship, and internship opportunities to young women pursuing careers in STEM. Partner with technology companies and academic institutions to create pathways for women to enter and advance in STEM careers, including coding bootcamps, hackathons, and innovation labs.

AGRICULTURAL LIVELIHOODS

- Land inheritance is heavily influenced by local customs, which typically favor men.
- Women generally rely on family members who are men and intra-household relations for land access, with widows⁴ and women in polygamous households⁵ facing greater insecurity.
- Women in the agricultural sector face significant barriers in accessing resources like fertilizers, seeds, and technology that could boost their productivity and earnings.
- Climate change poses additional challenges to agricultural livelihoods and disproportionately affects women.

- **Expand Women's Access and Control over Land.** Partner with civil society and community leaders to encourage more gender-equitable interpretations of customary inheritance practices, particularly supporting widows' rights. Provide legal aid to women and families on their rights under statutory and customary law, including the importance of wills. Work with the government to explore joint-titling options.⁶ Implement household methodologies that encourage shared decision-making for land use.

- **Promote Climate-Resilient Farming Techniques.** Develop and disseminate climate-resilient farming techniques with a priority focus on women farmers. Collaborate with agricultural extension services, research institutions, and NGOs to provide training on sustainable practices such as crop diversification, agroforestry, and conservation agriculture. Ensure that these techniques are tailored to local contexts and accessible to women through hands-on workshops, demonstration plots, and mobile technology platforms that deliver timely, relevant information.

- **Enhance Access to Agricultural Support Services.** Link women farmers to and encourage the use of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and other agricultural support services. Work with community leaders to ensure that women have access to land for farming. Provide training on financial literacy, group management, and savings strategies.

FOOD, WATER, AND CLIMATE

FOOD SECURITY

- Women are disproportionately impacted by worsening food security and often lack access to agricultural resources and decision-making power that would enable them to improve resilience and yields.
- Malnutrition is a serious concern that particularly affects women, girls, and boys⁷ as inequalities in food intake can lead to anemia, stunting, and wasting.

- **Increase Investments Targeting Women Farmers.** Coordinate with local cooperatives and interest groups, women's organizations, government partners, and agricultural actors in the private sector to increase investments that drive productivity and resilience and close gender gaps in agriculture. Investments should aim to improve women's access to land, resources, and technology, as well as strengthen their decision-making authority.
- **Tackle Gender Norms around Malnutrition.** Work with civil society, government health agencies, and partners to lead comprehensive social and behavioral change activities to raise awareness of the

- Conflict drives food insecurity and intensifies the national food crisis, especially for women and girls.

disproportionate impacts of malnutrition on women, girls, and boys. Promote dietary and nutritional information-sharing at the family level to shift gender norms and make decision-making around food more gender equitable.

- **Address the Effects of Crisis and Conflict on Food Systems.** Strengthen coordination with government and humanitarian organizations to address how the food security crisis is exacerbated by ongoing conflicts, especially in northeastern Nigeria. Prioritize women and girls (particularly widows), orphans, women-headed households, those living with disabilities, and other vulnerable segments of the population that are disproportionately exposed to food insecurity.

WASH

- Inadequate WASH infrastructure and the exclusion of women from decision-making processes pose health and safety challenges, particularly for women and girls in rural areas, internally displaced person (IDP) camps, and areas experiencing drought or industrial growth.

- **Foster Dialogue while Increasing Women’s Voices in Decision-Making Spaces.** Coordinate with women’s organizations, government partners, and private sector entities such as oil companies in rural areas and elsewhere to address the gendered implications and risks of rapid industrial growth, especially around water collection and sourcing, water systems, and sanitation management.

- **Improve WASH Infrastructure and Increase the Number of Safe and Accessible WASH Facilities.** Use dialogues to pursue public-private partnership opportunities to update water management systems and increase the availability of safe and accessible WASH facilities. Create new and rehabilitate existing infrastructure in schools, markets, IDP camps, remote communities, and other priority locations to reduce the water-related health risks and security concerns affecting women and girls.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- Women and other people with constrained access to resources, knowledge, and agency face significant challenges in adapting to climate change and natural disasters.⁸

- The oil industry—the largest contributor to the national economy—has compounded environmental challenges through gas flaring and oil spills,⁹ polluting the air, water, and farmlands.¹⁰

- Climate change and environmental degradation are gravely affecting water availability, disproportionately affecting women and girls who are primarily responsible for water collection.

- **Strengthen Implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Gender and Climate Change.** Actively support and enhance the implementation of the NAP, ensuring that women’s voices are integral to climate-related planning and action by involving them in decision-making processes at all levels. Collaborate with women’s organizations and advocacy groups to guarantee that policies and actions reflect the unique needs and perspectives of women, particularly those in communities most vulnerable to the risks of climate change.

- **Invest in Community-Based Initiatives.** Increase investments in community-based initiatives that address resource depletion and focus on sustainable agricultural practices, reforestation efforts, and renewable energy initiatives that can provide both environmental and economic benefits to communities. Collaborate with local cooperatives, civil society organizations, and government agencies to develop projects that integrate GBV prevention into environmental programming.

- **Foster Technological Innovation for Water Management.** Partner with technology firms, research institutions, local organizations, and government bodies to develop and implement innovative solutions that address water scarcity. Promote the use of sustainable water management practices, such as rainwater harvesting,

efficient irrigation systems, and water recycling technologies. Ensure that these solutions are accessible to women, particularly those in rural and underserved areas, by providing training and resources to enable their effective use and maintenance.

EDUCATION

EDUCATION SYSTEMS

- Several national-level policies aim to foster adequate and inclusive learning environments; however, resource constraints have historically hindered their implementation.
- Underinvestment has resulted in unsafe school environments and inadequate school infrastructure, depressing student attendance, especially for girls and learners with disabilities.
- Evidence indicates that gender parity in school workforces helps close gender gaps in educational access and learning outcomes, particularly for girls.¹¹ However, professional development opportunities for teachers are limited, and the representation of teachers who are women varies widely across the country.

- **Increase Budgetary Allocations to Advance Existing Gender Equality and Social Inclusion-related Policies and Improve Implementation.** Support initiatives to ensure that national and state budgets allocate adequate funding and resources for education, gender mainstreaming, and the most underserved areas and groups, focusing in particular on regions with low school completion rates. Partner with civil society and government actors to advocate for the implementation of gender- and inclusion-responsive education policies and supporting mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating inclusion in education by, among other things, collecting gender- and disability-disaggregated data.
- **Support Quality Facilities and Infrastructure Improvements.** Collaborate with government actors, private sector partners, and stakeholders that promote community security to create safe and inclusive school environments for all students. Create new and refurbish existing WASH facilities, follow tried-and-tested models to improve accessibility for children with disabilities, and enact measures to upgrade school security to help deter violence.
- **Improve Gender Balance in Teacher Deployment while Enhancing Capacity.** Work with government partners to identify and implement teacher remuneration and employment solutions, including by supporting efforts in the North and in rural areas to increase the number of teachers who are women. Promote inclusive and supportive learning environments by expanding teacher professional development on topics such as parent engagement and reducing biases in classroom management and curricula.

START TO FINISH: ENTRY, RETENTION, COMPLETION, AND RETURN

- Educational metrics for early schooling years are approaching gender parity, but significant disparities persist by location (urban/rural) and wealth quintile.¹²
- Gender-based challenges, including social and cultural norms, contribute to children missing or dropping out of school, with retention and completion rates showing significant geographic and gender disparities.
- Drug and substance abuse among in- and out-of-school youth is a growing concern across the country.

- **Strengthen Efforts to Close Geographic- and Wealth-related Gaps.** Take proactive measures to support closing the remaining disparities in education that disproportionately impact rural and low-income groups. In programs, use an intersectional lens that accounts for gender identity and disability status. Support government and multilateral investments that are aligned with the implementation of key national “out-of-school children” activities, quality vocational training programs (including those targeting adults), and related efforts to improve educational outcomes, expand opportunities to return to school, and promote inclusive education for all learners.
- **Address Gender-based Barriers, including Social and Cultural Norms.** Create interventions to shift norms that hinder the pursuit of education, particularly in the North, South East, and rural areas. Engage parents, families, community leaders, and local civil society and

- School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) affects nearly half of girls and over one-third of boys in school.
- Crises exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and have a direct, often gendered, impact on education delivery and attendance.
- Adult education and vocational training programs are needed, especially for women and girls who dropped out of or never attended school, but existing opportunities are limited.

community-based organizations, including those led by women, to address the gender-specific reasons learners drop out and/or miss school.

- **Tackle Growing Youth Drug Use and Abuse Concerns.** Raise awareness among government, civil society, and IPs about the increased drug and substance abuse impacting learners and out-of-school youth. Coordinate with key stakeholders to lead comprehensive gender-sensitive drug prevention and response programming that addresses the gender-specific needs and circumstances of in- and out-of-school youth.
- **Address All Forms of Violence Affecting Education.** Support government and education stakeholders to implement comprehensive SRGBV and crisis-related violence prevention and response programming that emphasizes safe schools and learning environments. Promote interventions that reinforce existing policy guidance, such as the [National Policy on Safety, Security and Violence-Free Schools with its Implementing Guidelines](#) (2021) and the [Minimum Standards for Safe Schools](#) (2021). Build the capacity of school staff and students at all educational levels to mitigate risks, identify incidents, and respond effectively to SRGBV and other forms of violence.

HEALTH

HOLISTIC HEALTH CARE AND SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

- Gender and inclusion considerations affect every facet of health, including issues most typically addressed by primary health care (PHC) providers.
- While immunization rates vary significantly by vaccine and region—with northern Nigeria historically having the highest rates of immunization rejection¹³—maternal education level is the most significant determinant of vaccination rates.¹⁴
- Quality sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services are not widely available,¹⁵ and the National Health Insurance Scheme often does not cover family planning services or contraceptives.¹⁶
- Although the maternal mortality rate has improved, persistent challenges such as inaccessible facilities, inadequate infrastructure, high service costs, insufficient antenatal care, reliance on traditional birth attendants, and limited access to emergency obstetric care continue to hinder progress in addressing maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH) issues.¹⁷
- Menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) remain significant issues due to high costs of sanitary products and limited access to clean water.

- **Elevate Awareness of Gender-specific Health Issues among Providers and Decision-makers.** Leverage convening opportunities with government, private sector, IPs, and local health partners to expand knowledge of the broad spectrum of gender and health issues that (1) impact not only women and girls but also men, boys, and gender-diverse individuals and (2) extend beyond MNCH and SRH services to include TB, malaria, HIV, GBV, mental health, public health emergencies, and general noncommunicable diseases. Prioritize strengthening PHC and local capacity to meet health needs with gender-responsive and culturally sensitive standards and emergency services. Promote comprehensive and high-quality delivery that improves equitable coverage and accessibility.
- **Address Gender and Social Norms that Restrict Access to and Utilization of Health Facilities and Services.** Bring local health advocacy organizations, community leaders, and health actors together to address critical barriers and enhance uptake of health services. Particular attention should be given to addressing gender and social norms that restrict the mobility, access to, and decision-making related to health care for women, men, boys, girls, and gender-diverse individuals. Expand upon models like youth-friendly and faith-based facilities that are reported to provide more supportive health care.²¹ Develop evidence-based social and behavior change interventions that specifically engage men and individuals responsible for household decision-making.
- **Support Health Law, Policy, and Strategy Implementation with an Inclusive Lens.** Invest in

- Trends in the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) epidemic are “mixed”; lower among the general population and higher among key groups, including female sex workers, men who have sex with men, and people who inject drugs. Although HIV prevalence has steadily declined over the last 20 years, prevalence and incidence among women is higher in every age group compared to men.
- Tuberculosis (TB) disproportionately affects men, who account for 54 percent of notified cases¹⁸ and are more likely than women to discontinue care, leading to worse health outcomes.¹⁹
- Malaria remains a significant health issue, with women, especially pregnant women, and children living in households headed by women, at highest risk.²⁰

activities that encourage collaboration among government, private sector, and diverse civil society actors to advance existing laws, policies, and strategies and integrate gender- and inclusion-based considerations into implementation guidance at all governing levels. Devote specific support to those frameworks that have received broad buy-in, such as the [Nigeria Health Sector Renewal Compact](#) and the National Primary Health Care Development Agency’s [Primary Healthcare Transformation Agenda: Strategy for PHC Revitalization in Nigeria \(2023–2030\)](#). Both of these frameworks tackle infrastructure, service quality, and equity issues to strengthen Universal Health Coverage. Additional laws and governmental bodies to focus on include the [National Health Act \(2014\)](#), [Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention Act \(2018\)](#), [National Health Insurance Authority Act \(2022\)](#), [Mental Health Act \(2021\)](#), and the [Basic Health Care Provision Fund](#). Each of these represent tools that can be utilized at the governmental level to advance gender equity in health care.

HEALTH ISSUES RELATED TO GBV

- Health care is a key avenue for identifying and addressing GBV incidents, as health providers are often the first—and sometimes the only—point of contact for survivors.
- Though overall rates of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) are declining,²² and though UNICEF reports that over 60 percent of both women and men who have heard about it think that it should end,²³ FGM/C remains a concern in Nigeria.

• **Promote the Availability of Emergency and Comprehensive SRH Services for GBV Response.** Support initiatives that increase the provision of clinical and non-clinical post-violence care services such as post exposure prophylaxis and mental health services related to sexual assault, emergency contraceptives, prenatal and postnatal care, and emergency obstetric care. Coordinate closely with women’s organizations, government stakeholders (including those leading Sexual Assault Referral Centers [SARCs]), and private health care providers to foster partnerships between health, education, and social services; address the broader determinants of health; and enhance service delivery and referrals.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

- Women’s voices are not being heard in decision-making processes because they are poorly represented in governance and leadership at all levels.
- Sustained efforts are needed to increase the number of women candidates. Prospective candidates require dedicated support to overcome the challenges posed by short election periods, limited political capital, and violence in politics.
- Barriers within political parties, including financial demands, underrepresentation in decision-making roles, and a lack of leadership opportunities, significantly hinder women’s involvement and advancement.

• **Enhance Women’s Political Participation.** Foster women’s decision-making and leadership roles in political parties by advocating for the establishment of proportional representation systems.²⁴ Support activities that engage institutional bodies, such as the Senate and the House of Representatives, to pass legislative reforms that promote women’s proportional representation in political party operations. Support civil society organizations in advocating for the passage of the Gender and Equality Opportunity bill at state levels and invest in building cadres of women in the political and leadership pipeline.

- In recent years, repeated attempts to utilize legal measures to advance gender equality have been unsuccessful.

LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS AFFECTING GENDER EQUALITY

- The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs has made strides in developing gender equality and women’s empowerment policies, but limited influence, funding constraints, and coordination issues hinder effective implementation.
- Nigeria’s legal framework related to gender equality is underpinned by a constitutional provision prohibiting sex discrimination, which has been instrumental in overturning some discriminatory laws and regulations.²⁵ Implementation of laws against discrimination, however, remains inconsistent, with some laws, like the Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act of 2014, justifying discrimination against people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics (SOGIESC).

• Strengthen Gender Mainstreaming at All Levels.

Support and strengthen collaboration between the Ministry of Women Affairs and other Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to improve the implementation of laws, policies, and programs that promote and protect women’s rights at all levels. Prioritize and support focused strategic planning (covering one- or two-year periods) for the Ministry on its focus areas of gender mainstreaming and GBV. Strengthen the capacity of Gender Desk Officers/Focal Points across all sectors.

• Examine Approaches for Improving Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex (LGBTQI+) Rights and Services.

Explore opportunities to support LGBTQI+-led organizations in Nigeria under the [Multi-Donor LGBTI Global Human Rights Initiative](#). Hold discussions with local LGBTQI+ groups to understand their needs and identify opportunities to provide support, such as through legal aid, psychosocial support, and emergency assistance. Ensure these efforts are conducted in a way that protects the identity of the organizations and individuals involved, minimizing exposure to risk.

GBV PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

- Despite the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act’s comprehensive provisions, inconsistent enforcement and limited awareness across states hinder its effectiveness in addressing GBV.
- SARCs are multi-sectoral centers that deliver critical response services and raise awareness about GBV, but they face significant challenges in accessibility, management, and service quality.
- GBV cases are rarely prosecuted under the VAPP Act due to underreporting, inadequate law enforcement training, and lengthy legal processes.

• Strengthen the Implementation of GBV Prevention and Response Mechanisms.

Develop a more coordinated response to GBV across services, including health care, judicial response, and pathways to economic empowerment. Strengthen established SARCs with technical assistance, supplies, and personnel training. Encourage the review of state VAPP acts to identify gaps and ways to improve implementation, service coordination, monitoring, and reporting on GBV. Increase attention on GBV prevention by working with men and boys to promote positive masculinities in communities.²⁶

CIVIL SOCIETY

- Across the gender inequalities described in this section, Nigeria’s vibrant civil society plays a critical role in advocating for policy reforms, raising awareness, and implementing programs and services to meet unmet needs.

• Invest in Long-Term Support for Civil Society Organizations who are Working to Advance Gender Equality and Social Inclusion.

Prioritize long-term funding for community and grassroots organizations that are led by women or are otherwise working to reduce gender and inclusion-based inequalities. Funding should include long-term institutional and programmatic support to shift gender and social norms and increase women’s voice and agency.

GENDERED DIMENSIONS OF CONFLICT

- Insecurity in Nigeria affects boys, girls, and gender-diverse individuals in unique ways, disrupting their education, increasing the risk of Child, Early, and Forced Marriages and Unions (CEFMU) for girls, and creating conditions that foster youth recruitment into gangs and armed groups.
- Conflict significantly impacts livelihoods and household roles, driving migration, particularly by boys and men, to urban areas and compelling girls and women to rely on survival strategies to meet basic food and protection needs.
- Most of Nigeria's 3.4 million IDPs are women and children,²⁷ and they face numerous challenges, including hunger, inadequate infrastructure, WASH issues, and security threats.
- Women are underrepresented in IDP camp leadership roles, and cultural and religious norms further discourage their participation in leadership positions.
- GBV is exacerbated by conflict conditions, which drive sexual violence, intimate partner violence (IPV), trafficking, and CEFMU.

- **Strengthen IPs' Understanding of Gendered Conflict Dynamics.** Encourage all IPs to integrate a conflict lens into their activities' gender analysis. Utilize the conflict analysis commissioned by USAID/Nigeria to tailor strategies for girls, boys, women, men, and gender-diverse individuals across geopolitical zones. Pursue sector-specific priorities to address the gender-specific ways individuals are impacted by conflict, such as girls dropping out of school due to CEFMU, recruitment of boys into groups who use violence, harmful survival strategies like sex-for-food, and how men, women, and gender-diverse individuals are received in new communities when migrating.
- **Improve Prevention and Response for Forms of GBV that are More Prevalent in Conflict-Affected areas.** Enhance GBV response by training providers in conflict-affected areas to address the specific types of GBV that are prevalent in their communities. Expand prevention and response efforts, particularly in and around IDP camps. Ensure that services are equipped to support boys and men who experience GBV by improving providers' awareness of the norms that make boys and men less likely to report such incidents.
- **Ensure Inclusive Access to IDP Camp Services.** Promote awareness of common inclusion gaps in IDP camps. Share best practices for ensuring that camp services reach and are informed by the needs of all individuals. Special attention should be paid to reaching widows, persons with disabilities, and individuals without family support.
- **Increase Funding Commitments and Prioritize Long-Term Support to Women-Led Grassroots Organizations.** Improve financial and technical support for women-led grassroots organizations that are well-positioned to support women and girls in conflict and humanitarian settings. Work with these organizations to expand women's roles in formal decision-making processes, including IDP camp leadership.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACEBUILDING

- Women are playing crucial roles in conflict resolution and peacebuilding but are excluded from formal peacebuilding processes, especially at state and national levels.
- Despite Nigeria's efforts to implement its NAP for Women, Peace, and Security, inadequate execution and limited awareness among key stakeholders remain major challenges.
- Government reintegration and amnesty programs do not adequately address the specific needs of women and girls.

- **Promote the Inclusion of Women in Peacebuilding, Conflict Resolution, and Security Initiatives.** When designing reintegration programs, address the distinct experiences of women, girls, men, boys, and gender-diverse individuals in conflict. Support the Ministry of Women Affairs to implement the proposed components of the third NAP. Provide technical assistance to identified states to support the development and implementation of State Action Plans on Women, Peace, and Security. These could be states that the Mission has specific interests in. Promote the inclusion and participation of women in peace councils at the ward and community levels as an entry point for advancing their representation at higher levels of decision-making.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Following the requirements of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Automated Directives System (ADS) 201.3.2.9 and ADS 205, USAID/Nigeria contracted Banyan Global to undertake a countrywide gender analysis to inform the Mission's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) for 2025–2030. This analysis examines the following questions across six priority sectors (Economic Growth; Food, Water, and Climate; Education; Health; Democracy and Governance; and Peace and Conflict) for USAID/Nigeria:

- What gender gaps and trends are taking place at the country and sector levels? What gender barriers will impede the achievement of the CDCS development objectives (DOs)?
- What are the norms, behaviors, relations, structures, and systems that sustain and perpetuate gender inequality, including gender-based violence (GBV)?
- What are the perspectives and priorities of local organizations, government stakeholders, and the private sector for advancing gender equality?
- What sector-specific opportunities are there to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, including opportunities for transformational change?

The report addresses the crosscutting themes of preventing and mitigating GBV, shifting gender norms, strengthening institutions, and reducing the gender digital divide. It analyzes the intersecting variables of age, geography, and marital status.

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

Banyan Global prepared this report after a multistage process that included a review of secondary data sources and primary data collection, which consisted of four virtual consultations with USAID staff, 41 semi-structured interviews, and eight focus groups and engaged a total of 136 people (35 men, 103 women). The research team met with stakeholders from April 29 to May 17, 2024, in each of Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, including the Federal Capital Territory, Benue, Katsina, Adawama, Enugu, Rivers, Ogun, and Lagos. Stakeholders included representatives from USAID, USAID implementing partners (IPs), other donors, national and subnational governments, national and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), local civil society, traditional and customary leaders, and private sector enterprises, including agricultural cooperatives.

Findings were validated through a workshop with 47 participants (11 USAID staff, 36 IP staff), and recommendations were further refined with USAID staff. Table I presents the most relevant findings and recommendations identified through the analysis of primary and secondary data and the validation workshop. Due to limited time and the necessity for a multisectoral analysis, it was not possible to delve thoroughly into every theme. For instance, due to time and scheduling constraints, there were few interviews with the state Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), which affected the analysis of topics. Additionally, the research team did not carry out primary data collection on health-related topics, and instead utilized findings from a USAID-commissioned sectoral gender analysis conducted in 2023. Alongside this country-level gender analysis, USAID/Nigeria commissioned an inclusive development analysis (IDA) through the Inclusive Development Activity for Mission Support (IDAMS). Banyan Global coordinated with the IDA research team to align the two studies where possible. Refer to the IDA for additional information specific to persons with disabilities, youth, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and nondominant

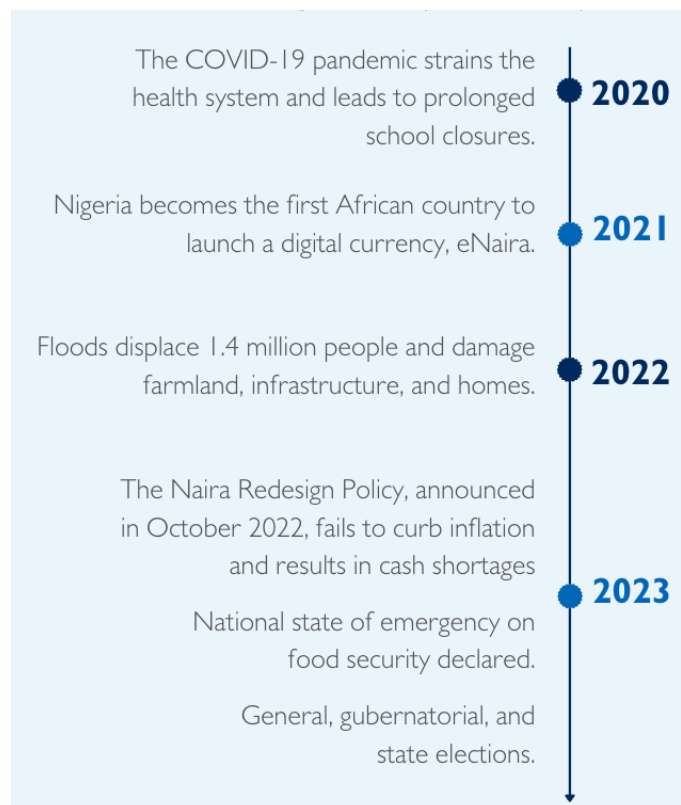
ethnic/religious groups. (For additional information on the gender analysis methodology, consult Annex B.)

Where possible, this report includes information on the experiences of gender-diverse individuals; however, quantitative data is largely unavailable, as shown in the Relevant Statistics tables at the start of each sector section. Although data is primarily presented based on binary gender identities due to these limitations, achieving gender equality requires that all individuals—women, men, girls, boys, and gender-diverse individuals—enjoy equal rights, agency, and access to education, healthcare, justice, and economic opportunities. Gender-diverse individuals often face heightened harassment, discrimination, and violence due to their gender identity and likely face additional barriers in accessing resources, securing economic opportunities, and exercising decision-making agency.

COUNTRY-LEVEL GENDER EQUALITY OVERVIEW

This gender analysis seeks to identify trends, changes, and continuities since USAID/Nigeria completed a country-level gender analysis in February 2020, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. **Figure I** provides a timeline of key developments in Nigeria since the previous analysis. Over the past four years, Nigeria has experienced heightened food insecurity, elevated inflation rates, and the continued impacts of climate change. GDP per capita continued to decline, from \$2360 in 2019 to \$877 in 2024.²⁸

FIGURE I: TIMELINE 2020-2023



Nigeria is ranked 125th out of 146 countries in the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Index, rising from 130th in 2023. Across the Index’s four dimensions, Nigeria ranks highest in Economic Participation and Opportunity (49th), a reflection of its relatively narrow gender gaps in labor participation and senior management positions (and notwithstanding the prevalence of significant earned income disparities). Nigeria’s Health and Survival score is the next highest at 97th, as the country is approaching near parity in sex ratio at birth but lagging in parity of healthy life expectancy. Substantial improvements are especially needed in Political Empowerment (136th) and Educational Attainment (138th) to overcome Nigeria’s persistent gender gaps in political representation, literacy, and secondary education.²⁹

FIGURE 2. MAP OF NIGERIA



FIGURE 2 SOURCE: Nigeria Malaria Indicator Survey 2021 (Link).

Nigeria’s gender inequalities are embedded in and intersect with significant geographic and urban/rural disparities. Stark inequalities in poverty, health, education, and government spending exist between the northern and southern states. The North’s poverty rate is 20 percentage points higher than the south’s, a gap that has widened since 1980, when both regions had similar rates. The south spends 2.3 times more per citizen than the North, which exacerbates these disparities. Urban/rural disparities are also significant; 72 percent of rural residents live in poverty, compared to 42 percent of urban residents.³⁰ The search for better economic opportunities and stability has led to high rates of internal migration; less than 40 percent of women and slightly over 50 percent of men still reside in their place of birth.³¹ Addressing development challenges through a gender lens while reducing broader inequalities is crucial for sustainable progress in Nigeria.

Through interviews, focus groups, and workshops with USAID staff and IPs, four crosscutting issues emerged as priorities for all DOs: (1) Preventing and Mitigating GBV, (2) Shifting Gender Norms, (3) Strengthening Institutions, and (4) Reducing the Gender Digital Divide. These issues, examined in the following sector sections, can be addressed only through a cross-sectoral approach.

GBV is a deeply entrenched and pervasive issue. It significantly restricts what opportunities individuals can pursue and diminishes their well-being across all DOs. GBV affects individuals’ mobility, educational prospects, economic opportunities, and political participation, and it has severe and often long-lasting psychological and health impacts. Interviews and focus groups revealed that individuals of all gender identities experience forms of GBV;

however, stigma, shame, and economic dependency on perpetrators often deter survivors from reporting these abuses.³² Data indicate that authorities treat a substantial portion of GBV cases, particularly intimate partner violence (IPV) and domestic abuse cases, as private matters rather than criminal issues, frequently advising survivors to pursue private settlements instead of judicial action.³³

To address GBV, USAID programming must integrate sector-specific mitigation, prevention, and response approaches, including helping to shift the norms that normalize and perpetuate GBV. This programming should include targeted investments that improve the accessibility, quality, and timeliness of GBV response services, which are frequently not coordinated with each other or linked to judicial processes. This report highlights sector-specific GBV findings and shows how GBV impedes the achievement of a wide range of development goals. For example, child, early, and forced marriages and unions (CEFMU) often force girls to drop out of school and, as a result, diminish their future economic prospects. Inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure increases girls' and women's exposure to GBV risks, especially when they must travel long distances to access WASH facilities. School-related GBV (SRGBV) leads to worse learning outcomes and higher dropout rates. Rates of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) remain high, particularly in the South East and South West regions. Additionally, GBV is used as a weapon of conflict, which creates particular challenges for girls, boys, women, men, and gender-diverse individuals living in conflict-affected areas.

Social norms and values in Nigeria significantly shape gender roles, contributing to and reinforcing gender inequalities across sectors. The prioritization of women's domestic roles to the exclusion of other political, economic, and social possibilities for women is a recurring theme throughout this report (although the strength of this norm varies across states and communities). Though up-to-date nationwide data are unavailable, a 2014 survey indicated that support for equal rights and opportunities is generally higher among women, individuals with higher levels of education, and residents of southern states.³⁴ Religious beliefs can influence individuals' perceptions of gender roles, but they are not always statistically significant predictors of their attitudes about gender equality.³⁵ This report highlights how restrictive gender norms affect all individuals, influencing how they experience and cope with challenges such as poverty, insecurity, and inadequate infrastructure. As USAID implements activities to shift harmful gender norms, it is crucial to assess risks and strategically engage boys, men, and influential groups to mitigate potential backlash. Persistent resistance to policies aimed at increasing women's political participation (discussed further in the [Democracy and Governance section](#)) underscores the significant challenges confronting local, national, and international efforts to influencing power dynamics.

Stronger institutional systems are necessary to better address gender-specific needs across education, health, and GBV response services and improve inclusive political participation and effective policymaking. This report highlights the need for enhanced funding, coordination, and service delivery at the federal, state, and local government levels to improve outcomes for boys, girls, men, women, and gender-diverse individuals. Enhancing the role of Gender Desk Officers across the line ministries will help mainstream gender considerations in planning, budgeting, and implementation processes (see "Legal Frameworks and Institutional Mechanisms Affecting Gender Equality" in the Democracy and Governance section for more information). Moreover, robust sex-disaggregated data collection and gender-responsive research and analysis are essential for crafting policies and programs that recognize and address people's different needs and will lead to more targeted and effective approaches to gender mainstreaming and service provision.

The gender digital divide in Nigeria poses a significant barrier to women's and girls' abilities to participate and take advantage of evolving opportunities in the digital economy. Whereas 54 percent of men use mobile internet, only 34 percent of women do.³⁶ This

stark disparity is driven by several interlinking factors. First, women have less access than men to technology. Sixty-eight percent of women do not own a smartphone,³⁷ and interviewees in Rivers noted that some women resort to transactional sexual relationships to acquire digital devices. Other factors contributing to women’s low rates of digital participation include low literacy and digital literacy levels and restrictive social norms around technology use. Individuals who are in rural areas, internally displaced, older, or face economic constraints are also more likely not to be digitally connected.

Addressing the digital divide requires a cross-sectoral approach that improves digital access and literacy across all sectors. It is essential to consider how programming might inadvertently exclude those who are not digitally connected or skilled. Initiatives should focus on expanding women’s and girls’ access to affordable technologies and providing them with tailored digital skills training to help them participate fully in Nigeria’s evolving digital landscape. Further strategies to close the gender digital divide can be found in “[Understanding the Gender Digital Divide in Nigeria](#),” developed for USAID/Nigeria.

ECONOMIC GROWTH: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

TABLE 2. SNAPSHOT OF RELEVANT STATISTICS

- In 2023, the labor force participation rate was 65.9 percent for men and 52.2 percent for women.³⁸ Women’s share of labor force participation is not changing significantly.³⁹
- Financial exclusion rates stand at 30 percent for women and 21 percent for men.⁴⁰
- Entrepreneurs who are women earn 66 percent less profit than entrepreneurs who are men, and women in wage employment earn 22 percent less than men in wage employment.⁴¹ Existing studies suggest that differences in women’s and men’s rates of educational attainment and occupational choices contribute to the gender wage gap.⁴²
- Women own only 20 percent of enterprises in Nigeria’s formal sector, and about 12 percent of directors on corporate boards are women.⁴³

Nigeria is facing stalled economic growth, rising unemployment rates (particularly among youth), and historically unprecedented inflation that recently reached 31.7 percent, a 24-year high. Rising insecurity and adverse climate shocks have further slowed economic recovery, pushing millions into poverty (38.9 percent of the population in 2023).⁴⁴ As Nigeria seeks to grow the non-oil economy and implement economic reforms, addressing gender disparities is crucial. Barriers in access to financial services, land ownership, digital literacy, and decision-making power marginalize women and impede their full and meaningful participation in employment, entrepreneurship, and key sectors such as agriculture, information and communication technology (ICT), and energy. Across all states, there are pressing needs for livelihood support initiatives.

CROSSCUTTING BARRIERS TO WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT (WEE)

This section explains how weak infrastructure, limited access to finance, GBV, and traditional gender norms are crosscutting barriers that discourage women’s economic participation and limit the growth of women-led enterprises.

Infrastructure deficits, including unreliable electricity and poor road conditions, critically impede economic growth and disproportionately limit women’s economic opportunities. Approximately 45 percent of Nigerians lack access to reliable electricity, which has wide-ranging gendered impacts from household chores to resource allocation and access to essential services. Rural/urban disparities in Nigeria are particularly pronounced, with only 26 percent of rural

Nigerians having reliable access to electricity (compared to 94 percent of urban Nigerians). Rural areas also have particularly poor road conditions, which increase travel times and transportation costs.⁴⁵ In a 2016 study, women entrepreneurs in Nigeria identified transportation issues as a barrier to business growth, and more recent interviews confirmed that these issues persist.⁴⁶ For example, women members of a cooperative in Ogun shared that it can take up to two hours to transport goods 20 kilometers.⁴⁷ Though these infrastructure barriers affect all Nigerians, they disproportionately impact the economic activities of women because they frequently engage in small-scale trading that relies on these transport networks.

Women have lower rates of financial account ownership and access to credit, limiting their financial inclusion and economic opportunities. In 2021, only 35 percent of women had accounts with financial institutions or mobile money service providers (compared to 55.5 percent of men).⁴⁸ A broader shift towards cashless policies has created time burdens and liquidity challenges for informal workers who rely on cash-based transactions and are much likely to be women.⁴⁹ Women have also reported lower levels of trust in mobile money service providers and financial agents, which highlights the need for targeted support to help them adapt to cashless policies.⁵⁰ Overall, the number of loans made to men is double the number of loans made to women, and the gender gap is widening as women are less likely than men to own land and other assets that can be used as collateral for loans.⁵¹ Social norms compound these challenges, as women are often informally required to seek their husbands' permission to access financial services. Women are also more likely to rely on loan options from social networks and savings groups, such as cooperatives and Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), which are more accessible because they have less stringent requirements and more flexible terms than traditional financial institutions. Though there has been some progress in expanding women's access to banks and credit, gender norms, disparities in utilizing formal financial services, and the need for tailored financial literacy programs continue to limit women's financial inclusion.

GBV significantly hinders women's economic contributions in the formal and informal sectors. In a 2016 survey by the Nigerian Labor Congress, 57.5 percent of women workers reported experiencing GBV and harassment at their workplaces.⁵² Informally employed women, such as traders and hawkers, are particularly vulnerable to GBV. In some states, interviewees reported that women's economic activities, especially when conducted in public or communal spaces, expose them to increased risks of violence and harassment.⁵³ A 2023 study noted that women with higher education and income levels are more likely to experience IPV,⁵⁴ underscoring the need for GBV risk mitigation in WEE programs. Furthermore, a 2024 study found that women who have experienced IPV are more likely to leave their jobs, estimating that IPV reduces the likelihood of a woman working by 4.14 percent and results in nearly \$3 billion USD in lost productivity for Nigeria annually.⁵⁵ High levels of GBV are enabled by significant policy gaps and inadequate response mechanisms for survivors of GBV.⁵⁶ These gaps not only perpetuate violence but also discourage women from participating in the economy.

Inequitable gender norms significantly restrict women's access to economic resources and decision-making authority. In many communities, women are expected to prioritize family responsibilities over economic activities, and early marriage, childbearing, and domestic duties profoundly limit women's abilities to pursue educational and employment opportunities.⁵⁷ According to the Gender Social Norms Index, 80 percent of Nigerians (71 percent of women, 88 percent of men) are biased against women's economic participation, with many believing that men make better executives and have more rights to jobs.⁵⁸ Women often lack a voice in household economic decisions, with men controlling access to finances and livelihood opportunities. Economically active women face additional challenges, including norms that require them to seek men's permission to take certain jobs or start businesses.⁵⁹ This dynamic is common in both rural and urban settings.

Nevertheless, existing studies suggest that gender norms are more restrictive in the northern states and, as a result, lead to greater gender gaps in labor participation and agricultural productivity.⁶⁰ In Katsina, traditional leaders and community members stated during interviews that women's roles should be confined to the household; these views, common across Nigeria, affect young girls' educational and career aspirations and trajectories.⁶¹ Across regions, certain jobs are perceived as being more appropriate for men.⁶² Norms around early marriage, care responsibilities, and what jobs are appropriate for women contribute to gender gaps in the economy.

ACCESS TO QUALITY JOBS

Most women workers are informally employed in agriculture and parts of the informal economy. They are disproportionately concentrated in the most vulnerable and lowest-paying jobs. Ninety-one percent of women are self-employed in agriculture, petty trade, and small-scale entrepreneurial activities. While these roles offer flexibility, they are typically insecure and low-paying and offer few formal labor protections.⁶³ Nationally, only 14.4 percent of women are engaged in waged work (compared to 23.5 percent of men).⁶⁴ This gender gap is more pronounced in rural areas where formal job opportunities are scarce, which drives many people to seek employment in cities.⁶⁵ With agricultural opportunities declining, the share of women in service sectors such as transport, education, and medical services is increasing.⁶⁶

Women earn less than men due to occupational segregation, lower rates of representation in senior positions, and systemic discrimination. Women in wage employment earn 22 percent less than men.⁶⁷ However, women's and men's different rates of educational attainment and occupational choices contribute significantly to this gender wage gap.⁶⁸ The wage gap is more pronounced in low-paying jobs, while there is a smaller gap between women and men working in the same roles in urban areas and in higher-paying occupations.⁶⁹ Though women and men are represented nearly equally at lower employment levels, the share of women sharply declines in senior positions.⁷⁰ Interviews and qualitative secondary data indicate that the allocation of career rewards to men and familial/domestic responsibilities to women is normalized.⁷¹ Focus group participants in Enugu shared that key positions are typically given to men.⁷² Gender differences in educational experiences and job interests (see the Education section for more details), compounded by restrictive gender norms and systemic discrimination, result in gender pay gaps and vertical and horizontal occupational segregation.⁷³

With the ICT sector comprising 13 percent of Nigeria's GDP, investing in programs that help women enter and advance in ICT presents a significant opportunity to promote inclusive growth.⁷⁴ However, women are currently underrepresented in the ICT sector. Comprising only 22 percent of engineering and technology graduates,⁷⁵ women's access to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) is limited by prevailing gender norms that discourage them from pursuing careers in these fields (see "Start to Finish" in the Education section for more details).⁷⁶ Though the government has launched a variety of initiatives to support technology entrepreneurs, these efforts do not include targeted efforts to increase women's participation in ICT. Retention challenges and the exclusion of women from leadership positions in the technology workforce hinder progress.⁷⁷

In the energy sector, low rates of women's participation are driven by significant wage gaps and underrepresentation in leadership positions. However, emerging opportunities in renewable energy and off-grid markets offer promising avenues for increasing women's engagement and entrepreneurship. Women are particularly underrepresented in energy decision-making and policy-formulating bodies. The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission has 118 men and 56 women employees, with 20 men and only four women

employees at the management level and men holding all seven commissioner positions. In the public sector, women constitute less than a third of total employees and are primarily concentrated in lower-level, non-decision-making positions. However, the emerging fields of renewable energy and off-grid solutions offer new avenues for increasing women's involvement and improving gender equity in the energy sector. Initiatives such as [USAID Power Africa](#) aim to improve access to quality jobs for women in these growth areas, focusing on reducing gender disparities and promoting sustainable development. Strengthening women's roles in the energy sector through education, training, and policy advocacy can enhance their impact and ensure they benefit equally from opportunities in this evolving field.⁷⁸

While women's entrepreneurship in Nigeria is substantial, women entrepreneurs are less likely to be formalized, adequately funded, and connected to markets. In Nigeria, 23 million women entrepreneurs own 41 percent of all micro-businesses.⁷⁹ Though statistical data on women's representation in specific sectors are not available, women are often associated with the fashion, beauty, and hospitality sectors.⁸⁰ Women entrepreneurs typically operate their micro-businesses in informal settings such as home-based studios, online platforms, and street vending stands, which limits their growth potential and exposure to larger markets.⁸¹ Women-led small and medium enterprises earn up to 39 percent less profit than those led by men.⁸² Additionally, only 10 percent of loans from financial service providers are given to women-led businesses.⁸³ Almost all funding for women-led businesses (97 percent) is raised in Lagos or the southern region, suggesting that women in the North confront greater barriers to accessing capital.⁸⁴ Supporting women-owned businesses by improving their access to financial services, business training, and market integration is critical for economically empowering women and fostering inclusive economic growth.⁸⁵

AGRICULTURAL LIVELIHOODS

Land inheritance is heavily influenced by local customs, which typically favor men.

Because the 1978 Land Use Act allows for the use of customary rights for rural land ownership, most land transfers follow customary practices that often exclude women. Less than 10 percent of women hold land titles,⁸⁶ with particularly low rates in the South East (0.9 percent) and North Central (3.8 percent) regions. Additionally, up to 40 percent of land lacks formal documentation.⁸⁷ Some initiatives to improve women's land ownership have focused on reinterpreting customary laws and promoting legal literacy, legal aid, and awareness of gender equality.⁸⁸ A key area in need of reform in customary laws is the inheritance rights of widowed women.⁸⁹

Women generally rely on family members who are men and intra-household relations for land access, with widows⁹⁰ and women in polygamous households⁹¹ facing greater insecurity. Without direct control over land, women have limited control over productive inputs, crop choices, and land use.⁹² A study in Ogun found that 78 percent of women have low bargaining power in household land-related decisions, particularly regarding land transfers.⁹³ Without land in their names, the ability to use land as collateral for loans,⁹⁴ and unequal participation in household decision-making, women face barriers to accessing and maximizing land use. Access to land can reduce food insecurity,⁹⁵ support wealth generation, and provide stable shelter.⁹⁶

Women in the agricultural sector face significant barriers in accessing resources like fertilizers, seeds, and technology that could boost their productivity and earnings.

Nationally, women account for 37 percent of labor in crop production, with regional variation from 32 percent in the North to 51 percent in the South.⁹⁷ In rural areas, 70 percent of women-headed households rely on farming as their primary source of income.⁹⁸ Most women farmers engage in subsistence farming and play major roles in food processing and selling of agricultural products. However, due to limited access to essential inputs, women's plots are 30 percent less productive

nationally than those managed by men.⁹⁹ An analysis of public spending on agriculture inputs and mechanization found that these investments primarily benefit value chains dominated by men, leaving women at a disadvantage. To improve productivity and economic outcomes for women farmers, increased support is needed to access extension services, expand market access, and facilitate a transition to higher-value crops.¹⁰⁰

Climate change poses additional challenges to agricultural livelihoods and disproportionately affects women. In the Niger Delta, environmental degradation caused by gas flaring and oil spills severely affects farming activities, with women often bearing the brunt of these impacts.¹⁰¹ Women also face greater difficulties in adapting to climate change due to their limited access to resources and decision-making power within agricultural households.¹⁰² Implementing gender-sensitive climate adaptation strategies is critical to ensuring that women can effectively respond to environmental challenges and sustain their agricultural activities (see “Food Security” in the [Food, Water, and Climate section](#) for more information).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Crosscutting Barriers to WEE

- **Invest in Infrastructure Informed by Consultative Processes.** Invest in reliable electricity, transportation infrastructure, and water systems while accounting for the needs of different people. Plan infrastructure through gender-inclusive stakeholder consultations, inclusive considerations in project prioritization, and gender analysis within viability assessments and risk evaluations. For more guidance on gender integration in infrastructure, refer to the [World Bank’s Public-Private Partnership Gender Toolkit](#).¹⁰³
- **Increase Financial and Digital Inclusion.** Design new activities to include targeted financial literacy components and interventions to address the gender digital divide. Partner with financial service providers to design gender-inclusive market-specific financial products and services, such as options for high-frequency, low-denomination transactions, savings mechanisms, and financial capability resources.¹⁰⁴
- **Address GBV through Economic Growth Programming.** Coupled with cross-sectoral strategies, strengthen GBV, prevention, mitigation, and response within economic growth programming, improving safety at locations of trade/sale (e.g., streets, markets, borders), developing sexual harassment and abuse policies in workplaces, and requiring IPs to develop GBV risk mitigation strategies.¹⁰⁵
- **Shift Gender Norms.** Include components in new activities that aim to shift gender norms to increase women’s economic agency across households, employers, and society. Engage men and boys as agents of change, including through household methodologies that promote a more equitable distribution of care responsibilities and decision-making roles.¹⁰⁶ Evidence-based approaches to transforming norms can be found in “[Shifting Social Norms to Advance Women’s Economic Empowerment in Nigeria: Resource Brief](#),” developed for USAID/Nigeria.

Access to Quality Jobs

- **Promote Inclusive Workforces and Women in Leadership.** Partner with private sector entities, especially in growth sectors like energy and ICT, to design strategies that promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in workplace practices and corporate leadership.¹⁰⁷ Collaborate with companies to design and implement gender-sensitive policies, such as equitable recruitment practices, equal pay initiatives, and anti-harassment policies.

Explore incentivizing businesses to increase women’s representation at senior levels and in corporate boards.

- **Support Women in Informal Sectors.** Develop comprehensive programs that provide business training, mentorship, and startup grants specifically tailored for women in informal sectors. Partner with microfinance institutions, local NGOs, and community organizations to ensure that these women receive the financial literacy, business management skills, and access to credit needed to transition to formalized business activities.
- **Support Educational and Vocational Training in STEM.** Develop educational programs that encourage the participation of women and youth in STEM fields. Offer scholarships, mentorship, and internship opportunities to young women pursuing careers in STEM. Partner with technology companies and academic institutions to create pathways for women to enter and advance in STEM careers, including coding bootcamps, hackathons, and innovation labs.

Agricultural Livelihoods

- **Expand Women’s Access to and Control over Land.** Partner with civil society and community leaders to encourage more gender-equitable interpretations of customary inheritance practices, particularly supporting widows' rights. Provide legal aid to women and families on their rights under statutory and customary law, including the importance of wills. Work with the government to explore joint-titling options.¹⁰⁸ Implement household methodologies that encourage shared decision-making for land use, as described in the “Shift Gender Norms” recommendation.
- **Promote Climate-Resilient Farming Techniques.** Develop and disseminate climate-resilient farming techniques with a priority focus on women farmers. Collaborate with agricultural extension services, research institutions, and NGOs to provide training on sustainable practices such as crop diversification, agroforestry, and conservation agriculture. Ensure that these techniques are tailored to local contexts and accessible to women through hands-on workshops, demonstration plots, and mobile technology platforms that deliver timely, relevant information.
- **Enhance Access to Agricultural Support Services.** Link women farmers to and encourage the use of VSLAs and other agricultural support services. Work with community leaders to ensure that women have access to land for farming. Provide training on financial literacy, group management, and savings strategies.

FOOD, WATER, AND CLIMATE: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

TABLE 3. SNAPSHOT OF RELEVANT STATISTICS

- Between 2020 and 2022, 21.3 percent of Nigeria’s population experienced hunger, and severe food insecurity has increased in recent years.¹⁰⁹ In 2023, the World Food Programme reported that 18.6 million people were food-insecure in Nigeria and projected to increase to 26.5 million by the 2024 lean season (May-August).¹¹⁰
- The Nigerian Government declared a WASH sector state of emergency in 2018. By 2019, reports noted that 60 million were without access to basic drinking water, 80 million lacked access to improved sanitation facilities, and 167 million were without basic hand washing facilities.¹¹¹
- “In 2018, Nigeria had the highest number of displaced people due to dramatic weather-related events in Africa (more than 500,000).”¹¹²
- A 0.5-meter projected sea level increase is estimated to affect 27 to 53 million people in Nigeria by the end of the century, requiring relocation for many.¹¹³

The interconnected challenges of food insecurity, water scarcity, and climate change are intensifying across Nigeria, significantly impacting the country’s most vulnerable populations. These challenges

disproportionately affect women and girls, who play crucial roles in agriculture and household resource management but face systemic barriers that diminish their access to and control over resources. Rising food insecurity, inadequate WASH infrastructure, and climate stresses on natural resources urgently require interventions to address the gendered impacts, build resilience, and promote equity.

FOOD SECURITY

Women are disproportionately impacted by worsening food security and often lack access to agricultural resources and decision-making power that would enable them to improve resilience and yields. Food insecurity is becoming increasingly widespread in Nigeria, with 21.3 percent of the country’s population experiencing hunger between 2020 and 2022.¹¹⁴ In July 2023, the government declared a national food emergency due to shortages and rising prices. Women comprise a significant portion of smallholder farmers,¹¹⁵ more than 70 percent in some regions.¹¹⁶ However, they face higher levels of poverty and food insecurity compared to men, due to limited access to and control over agricultural resources.¹¹⁷ Although women-headed households with better access to land are less likely to be food-insecure,¹¹⁸ they typically utilize fewer agricultural enhancements (e.g., fertilizers, pesticides, and technologies), resulting in lower productivity¹¹⁹ by 20-30 percent.¹²⁰

Malnutrition is a serious concern that particularly affects women, girls, and boys,¹²¹ and food intake inequalities can lead to anemia, stunting, and wasting. Women are the primary decision-makers regarding diet;¹²² however, gender inequalities in decision-making and norms around food allocation often result in women and girls eating less.¹²³ Studies have found that these inequalities in food intake lead to a variety of malnutrition concerns, including anemia, which affects women’s long-term reproductive health, and a higher prevalence of stunting in boys under five.¹²⁴ Additionally, while national rates of wasting for girls and boys are decreasing,¹²⁵ these aggregates disguise major geographic variations, as wasting prevalence ranges from 8 percent to 61 percent for girls aged 0–5 and 2.5 percent to 50 percent for boys aged 0–5 across geopolitical zones.¹²⁶ A similar trend exists across locations, with wasting prevalence ranging from 11 percent to 36 percent in urban areas and 11 percent to 70 percent in rural areas.¹²⁷

Conflict drives food insecurity and intensifies the national food crisis, especially for women and girls. Ongoing conflicts, particularly in the northeastern states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe, disrupt food production, contribute to rising food prices, and push regions toward catastrophic food insecurity.¹²⁸ While sex-disaggregated data are not available, the most vulnerable segments of the population—women and girls (particularly widows), orphans, women-headed households, and those living with disabilities—are likely at greater risk of food-related challenges under these conditions (see “Gendered Dimensions of Conflict” in the [Peace and Conflict section](#) for more information).¹²⁹

WASH

Inadequate WASH infrastructure and the exclusion of women from decision-making processes pose health and safety challenges, particularly for women and girls in rural areas, IDP camps, and areas experiencing drought or industrial growth. Only 35 percent of Nigeria’s population has access to basic water and sanitation facilities,¹³⁰ contributing to the waterborne diseases and open defecation, which affects 19 percent of the population nationally and 41 percent in the North Central region.¹³¹ Women and girls, who are primarily responsible for water collection and household sanitation,¹³² often miss educational opportunities and face increased

risks of GBV when traveling long distances for water and privacy (see “Start to Finish” in the [Education section](#) for more details).¹³³ In areas where water is scarce, with limited or unusable boreholes such as near IDP camps, reports note that some individuals controlling water sources demand “friendship” and inappropriate favors in exchange for access.¹³⁴ Additionally, large companies are purchasing land and erecting fences in some parts of the country, further restricting access to essential resources such as water and firewood. This increases women’s time burden and exposure to security risks when traveling greater distances.¹³⁵ Despite their critical roles in water consumption and management, women are frequently excluded from decision-making processes related to water management and sanitation projects;¹³⁶ meanwhile, men are more likely to attend the water management training necessary to maintain and repair water systems.¹³⁷ (For information on WASH and schools, see both “Education System” and “Start to Finish” in the [Education section](#)).

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Women and other people with constrained access to resources, knowledge, and agency face significant challenges in adapting to climate change and natural disasters.¹³⁸

Climate-related events such as water and air pollution, landslides, erosion, desertification, drought, flooding, and heat waves place stress on natural resources and exacerbate food insecurity and malnutrition. These conditions strain natural resources and jeopardize the livelihoods of families who rely on subsistence farming and fishing. Women are concentrated in small-scale, rain-fed agriculture, which increases their vulnerability to climate-related challenges. Men, who typically have more resources, decision-making power,¹³⁹ mobility, and vocational options,¹⁴⁰ have more flexibility to adapt when climate change affects their livelihood. For example, as heat waves and diminished rainfall threaten crop production, food security, and individual health,¹⁴¹ some men have pursued logging as an alternative source of income.¹⁴² However, logging contributes to deforestation and land degradation, creating additional difficulties for women when they collect resources such as oysters and firewood.¹⁴³

The oil industry—the largest contributor to the national economy—has compounded environmental challenges through gas flaring and oil spills,¹⁴⁴ polluting the air, water, and farmlands.¹⁴⁵ The environmental impacts of the oil industry are particularly evident in Rivers and Bayelsa in the Niger Delta region, which have experienced increased rates of resource depletion, food insecurity, and harmful practices such as “sex-for-fish” to access scarce resources. Such conditions also spur violence by youth against oil companies and supporting parts of government.¹⁴⁶ As one interviewee shared, “When your farmland has been destroyed, it affects your livelihood. Of course you are mad. This leads to conflict in the Niger Delta region.”¹⁴⁷

The [National Action Plan \(NAP\) on Gender and Climate Change for Nigeria](#) highlights the inclusion of women, who have been traditionally underrepresented, in climate-related decision-making processes and the importance of gender-sensitive adaptation strategies.¹⁴⁸ Addressing these complex issues requires concerted, gender-sensitive efforts to manage climate change-driven impacts on food and income-generation and help communities adapt to changing conditions.

Climate change and environmental degradation are gravely affecting water availability, disproportionately affecting women and girls who are primarily responsible for water collection. Rainfall delays cause boreholes to dry up, leading to water shortages, especially in rural areas and IDP camps where alternative water sources are limited.¹⁴⁹ In coastal regions such as Rivers and Ondo in the South South and South West, rising sea levels, which can cause saltwater to contaminate freshwater sources, increase the risk of water scarcity.¹⁵⁰ Further, in Ogun and Rivers, Nigeria’s oil boom has led to increased gas flaring and water contamination, further straining already-limited water sources and increasing the costs of safe drinking water. As one interviewee noted,

“We used to drink rainwater. That was the sweetest, freshest water. But we can’t do that anymore because of the gas flaring. We have to buy Pure Water, but it is too expensive for us.”¹⁵¹ Water shortages also heighten GBV risks for women, girls, and, in some cases, boys, as they spend more time accessing water. Effectively managing water resources and collection safely in the face of worsening water scarcity and contamination will require innovative solutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Food Security

- **Increase Investments Targeting Women Farmers.** Coordinate with local cooperatives and interest groups, women’s organizations, government partners, and agricultural actors in the private sector to increase investments that drive productivity and resilience and close gender gaps in agriculture. Investments should aim to improve women’s access to land, resources, and technology, as well as strengthen their decision-making authority.
- **Tackle Gender Norms around Malnutrition.** Work with civil society, government health agencies, and partners to lead comprehensive social and behavioral change activities to raise awareness of the disproportionate impacts of malnutrition on women, girls, and boys. Promote dietary and nutritional information-sharing at the family level to shift gender norms and make decision-making around food more gender equitable.
- **Address the Effects of Crisis and Conflict on Food Systems.** Strengthen coordination with government and humanitarian organizations to address how the food security crisis is exacerbated by ongoing conflicts, especially in northeastern Nigeria. Prioritize women and girls (particularly widows), orphans, women-headed households, those living with disabilities, and other vulnerable segments of the population that are disproportionately exposed to food insecurity.

WASH

- **Foster Dialogue while Increasing Women’s Voices in Decision-Making Spaces.** Coordinate with women’s organizations, government partners, and private sector entities such as oil companies in rural areas and elsewhere to address the gendered implications and risks of rapid industrial growth, especially around water collection and sourcing, water systems, and sanitation management.
- **Improve WASH Infrastructure and Increase the Number of Safe and Accessible WASH Facilities.** Use dialogues to pursue public-private partnership opportunities to update water management systems and increase the availability of safe and accessible WASH facilities. Create new and rehabilitate existing infrastructure in schools, markets, IDP camps, remote communities, and other priority locations to reduce the water-related health risks and security concerns affecting women and girls.

Environmental Impacts and Climate Change

- **Strengthen Implementation of the NAP on Gender and Climate Change.** Actively support and enhance the implementation of the NAP, ensuring that women’s voices are integral to climate-related planning and action by involving them in decision-making processes at all levels. Collaborate with women’s organizations and advocacy groups to guarantee that policies and actions reflect the unique needs and perspectives of women, particularly those in communities most vulnerable to the risks of climate change.

- **Invest in Community-Based Initiatives.** Increase investments in community-based initiatives that address resource depletion and focus on sustainable agricultural practices, reforestation efforts, and renewable energy initiatives that can provide both environmental and economic benefits to communities. Collaborate with local cooperatives, civil society organizations, and government agencies to develop projects that integrate GBV prevention into environmental programming.
- **Foster Technological Innovation for Water Management.** Partner with technology firms, research institutions, local organizations, and government bodies to develop and implement innovative solutions that address water scarcity. Promote the use of sustainable water management practices, such as rainwater harvesting, efficient irrigation systems, and water recycling technologies. Ensure that these solutions are accessible to women, particularly those in rural and underserved areas, by providing training and resources to enable their effective use and maintenance.

EDUCATION: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

TABLE 4. SNAPSHOT OF RELEVANT STATISTICS

- The average number of years of schooling is 10.3 for boys and 10.1 for girls.¹⁵²
- Rates of enrollment in public and private primary schools are nearing gender parity, with a combined total of 94 girls enrolled for every 100 boys.¹⁵³
- While children’s primary school attendance rose nationally from 61 percent in 2016 to 68 percent in 2021,¹⁵⁴ less than 50 percent of children eligible for primary education in Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Kebbi, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara attended school in 2021.¹⁵⁵ Eighty-two percent of children in urban areas attend school, compared to 60 percent in rural communities.¹⁵⁶ Eighty-eight percent of children from the wealthiest quintile attend primary school, compared to only 39 percent of children from the poorest quintile.¹⁵⁷
- About 12.1 million children aged 6–17 years old (18 percent of the school-eligible population) are out of school. Though gender disparities are limited for many national-level metrics, gender disparities are more pronounced in the northern states.¹⁵⁸
- Fifty-four percent of school-age children and youth with disabilities have accessed schooling at some point in their lives. Between girls and boys, the difference is 2 percentage points, with girls slightly advantaged. The urban-rural gap is larger, with a difference of 19 percentage points.¹⁵⁹

Challenges related to education policy implementation, resourcing, accessibility, safety, and security are prevalent and affect education quality across all levels. These challenges are compounded by persistent gender and inclusion disparities rooted in entrenched social norms and beliefs that hinder learner participation. One in five Nigerian youth is not engaged in any form of education, employment, or training, with girls twice as likely as boys to be in this status. International Labour Organization findings suggest that almost three out of four Nigerian youth living with disabilities are in this category, a rate three times higher than youth without disabilities.¹⁶⁰ Additionally, social media narratives suggesting that financial success can be achieved without education influence youth participation.¹⁶¹ Currently, only 28 percent of girls and 25 percent of boys aged 7–14 years old possess foundational reading skills, and only 25 percent of boys and girls have foundational numeracy skills¹⁶² -- both essential skill for success.¹⁶³ Limited education has wide-reaching impacts, contributing to inequality, a lack of access to meaningful employment opportunities, and the perpetuation of intergenerational poverty.¹⁶⁴

EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Several national-level policies aim to foster adequate and inclusive learning environments; however, resource constraints have historically hindered their implementation. The [National Policy on Gender in Basic Education](#) (2006), the [National Policy on Education](#) (2013), the [National Policy on Inclusive Education in Nigeria](#) (2016), and the [National](#)

[Gender Policy](#) (2021) include provisions to improve access, retention, and completion and to eliminate discrimination.¹⁶⁵ State governments are responsible for devising and implementing state-level education policies.¹⁶⁶ Guiding documents, such as the [2021 National Gender in Education Policy and its Implementation Guide](#), support these efforts by addressing gender gaps in education. However, except for where donor support has been instrumental, resource constraints have hindered the realization of these policies' aims.¹⁶⁷ Despite being a signatory to the [Education 2030](#) agenda, which calls for countries to allocate four to 6 percent of GDP to education, Nigeria allocates only 1.4 percent. Education budgets have remained stagnant and fall well short of targets. Although 40 percent of education spending is directed to basic education, specialty divisions, such as those mandated to support persons with disabilities, are particularly underfunded.¹⁶⁸ Local sources noted that corruption in the education sector negatively affects areas that require critical investments.¹⁶⁹ Some states, however, show promise in revamping education with a focus on inclusivity. Enugu, for example, allocates 33 percent of its state budget to education and invests in learning resources for persons with disabilities. It also upgraded its special needs staff to the government payroll¹⁷⁰ and introduced the [Enugu State's Smart and Green School Initiative](#), which is planning to create inclusive classrooms for students with special needs.¹⁷¹

Underinvestment has resulted in unsafe school environments and inadequate school infrastructure, depressing student attendance, particularly for girls and learners with disabilities. Safety concerns and inadequate, gender-blind infrastructure produce disparities in educational access and quality. Most schools lack private toilet facilities, with only 11 percent of schools providing separate facilities for girls with provisions for menstrual hygiene management.¹⁷² Many girls miss school during their periods,¹⁷³ and infrastructure issues contribute to widespread poor menstrual health, particularly in the North and rural areas.¹⁷⁴ One government official shared that 92 percent of schools lack decent toilet facilities, noting the gender implications: "A young girl on her period, what kind of inclusive school do you have if she can't go to the bathroom?"¹⁷⁵ These types of infrastructure issues affect not only girls' school attendance but also their performance, retention, and overall engagement.¹⁷⁶

Students with disabilities, especially girls, face similar educational barriers due to planning and facilities that overlook their needs.¹⁷⁷ In other cases, education infrastructure is absent or nearly unusable, as in many IDP camps where schools are frequently unavailable or of poor quality.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, poor security leaves schools vulnerable to bandits and kidnappers,¹⁷⁹ particularly in the South East, where schools lack fences.¹⁸⁰ Limited school facilities are often further compromised by conflict-related damage.¹⁸¹ Boko Haram has targeted schools and students, a strategy that has gender-differentiated effects on student enrollment as families are displaced or withdraw girls from school at higher rates than boys (see the Peace and Conflict section for more information).¹⁸²

Evidence indicates that gender parity in school workforces helps close gender gaps in educational access and learning outcomes, particularly for girls.¹⁸³ However, professional development opportunities for teachers are limited, and the representation of teachers who are women varies widely across the country. The education system employs 1.4 million teachers (776,000 women and 618,000 men), but, women's representation decreases at higher education levels, with more women employed in private than public institutions.¹⁸⁴ While the national picture shows some gender balance in the school workforce, state-level variations are significant; for example, only 15 percent of teachers in public primary schools in Jigawa are women, compared to 93 percent in Anambra. Southern states tend to have more women teachers, whereas northern states and rural areas have very few.¹⁸⁵ Increasing the number of teachers who are women could help foster greater positive parental engagement in education, including for girls, as parents tend to give more support to women teachers than men.¹⁸⁶ Strengthening parent-teacher relationships overall is another approach to improving engagement.

Low teacher pay and insufficient professional development create teacher retention challenges. A government official reported that teacher absenteeism is as high as 52 percent in some areas, and 68 percent of teachers have not received professional development in the last five years.¹⁸⁷ However, a positive example can be found in Enugu, where special needs staff, previously part-time and not government employees, were upgraded to full-time staff on the government payroll, prompting improved performance.¹⁸⁸

START TO FINISH: ENTRY, RETENTION, COMPLETION, AND RETURN

Educational metrics for early schooling years are approaching gender parity, but significant disparities persist by location (urban/rural) and wealth quintile.¹⁸⁹ Pre-primary education attendance (ages 3–5) is crucial for school readiness, yet a 2021 survey found that, nationally, only 51 percent (53 percent girls, 50 percent boys) of first graders attended pre-primary school the previous year. The North East has the lowest pre-primary enrollment rate at just 25 percent.¹⁹⁰

National primary school enrollment rates (ages 6–11) are equal for boys and girls (around 42 percent), but children from wealthy households are three times more likely to start Grade 1 at the appropriate age than children from low-income households. Additionally, children with mothers who have some secondary education are twice as likely as children with mothers without secondary education to begin primary school on time.¹⁹¹ In 2018, out of 28.6 million primary school learners enrolled in Nigeria, 48.6 percent were girls, and gender disparities were more pronounced in the North West. **Figure 3** illustrates gender parity in primary schools by state, where the number “1” represents parity. Using a color scale, parity increases from lighter to darker colored states. For

FIGURE 3. GENDER PARITY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS BY STATE



FIGURE 3 SOURCE: World Bank and IIEP-UNESCO Dakar. 2021. *Education Sector Analysis: Assessing the Status of Education in the Federation and Oyo, Adamawa and Katsina States*. (Link)

example, in Sokoto, Kebbi, and Zamfara, just 63 to 74 girls are enrolled in primary school for every 100 boys. Attendance rates illustrate similar disparities, with more boys attending primary school than girls.¹⁹² Girls are more likely than boys to be out of school across all six geopolitical zones.¹⁹³ However, interviewees suggested that attitudes are changing: “Now everyone wants to send all of their children to school,” regardless of gender identity.¹⁹⁴

Gender-based challenges, including social and cultural norms, contribute to children missing or dropping out of school, with retention and completion rates showing significant geographic and gender disparities.¹⁹⁵ Nationally, 73 percent of Nigerian children complete primary school, and 84 percent of those go on to lower secondary school, with boys and girls completing schooling at the same rate (73 percent). Bauchi and Kebbi in the North have the lowest overall completion rates (30 and 39 percent, respectively), while Imo and Anambra in the South have the highest (98 and 99 percent, respectively).¹⁹⁶

Nationally, 68 percent of Nigerian youth complete lower secondary school and 54 percent complete upper secondary school. While boys and girls in lower secondary school complete schooling at nearly the same rate, boys complete upper secondary school at a higher rate than girls. Secondary completion rates, are lower in the North, with the North West and North East regions having the lowest rates. For example, Bauchi and Jigawa (in the North) have upper-secondary completion rates of 17 and 19 percent, while Lagos and Anambra (in the South) have the highest at 85 and 90 percent, respectively.¹⁹⁷ Girls complete secondary school rates at lower rates in the North than in the South.¹⁹⁸

Educational disparities are particularly pronounced for adolescent girls, who face barriers that limit access to school, including early marriage and childbearing responsibilities. In the North East and North West, many girls drop out early or never go to school.¹⁹⁹ Youth with disabilities and children in displaced communities, such as those in Katsina, also experience high rates of being out of school, compounding other vulnerabilities. Additionally, girls are often channeled into fields like the arts and humanities rather than STEM, which limits their earning potential after graduation (see “Access to Quality Jobs” in the Economic Growth section). Youth who leave school between ages 10 and 12 often enter unpaid household work or unskilled jobs, while those who leave around age 15 tend to engage in entry-level work in manufacturing or family businesses.

Out-of-school rates are also high among youth with disabilities, with interviewees in some areas noting that women with disabilities have lower education levels than men with disabilities.²⁰⁰ Out-of-school rates are higher for children in displaced communities, such as in Katsina and elsewhere, compounding other inequities and gender disparities. Youth who leave school between the ages of ten and 12 are more likely to enter engage in household work or unskilled occupations, while those who leave around the age 15 tend to engage in income-generating activities in manufacturing or family enterprises.²⁰¹

Girls face distinct barriers that their access to education, including the gendered division of labor, prioritization of boys’ schooling, stigma surrounding menstruation, elopement,²⁰² child marriage (especially in the North),²⁰³ teen pregnancy, and early motherhood.²⁰⁴ Cultural norms and poverty often result in the neglect of girls’ education.²⁰⁵ In northern Nigeria, norms prioritize educational opportunities for sons²⁰⁶ and household responsibilities for girls. In some areas, up to 78 percent of primary-aged girls drop out of school because of household responsibilities.²⁰⁷ Parental attitudes that perceive formal education as promoting “bad behavior”²⁰⁸ further inhibit girls’ access to schooling. When girls do pursue education, they predominantly pursue the arts and humanities rather than data, technology, and STEM-related fields, which channels them into less financially

lucrative sectors after graduation (see “Access to Quality Jobs” in the [Economic Growth section](#) for more details).²⁰⁹

Menstruation-related taboos also significantly affect girls’ school attendance, retention, and performance outcomes across regions, but particularly in the North and rural inadequate facilities makes it difficult for girls to engage in school in a consistent and sustainable way (see “WASH” in the [Food, Water, and Climate section](#) for more information). In the South East, some girls experience “seasonal period exits” due to cyclical absenteeism.²¹⁰ Adolescent pregnancy, including resulting from rape,²¹¹ also leads families to withdraw girls from school.

Economic challenges, including poverty and school-related expenses, create financial pressures that force students to drop out. In the South,²¹² boys often leave school early for income-generating opportunities.²¹³ In Katsina, Almajiri boys and street children face extreme poverty, which leads them to look and beg for money instead of attending school.²¹⁴ Financial hardships also leads girls to hawk goods in the streets, disrupting their education and increasing risk of abuse.²¹⁵ Poverty also drives young women into early instead of pursuing education.²¹⁶ Shifting social and cultural norms is critical to promoting accessible, gender-inclusive education.

Drug and substance among in- and out-of-school youth is a growing concern across the country. Recent reports have indicated that youth, and even primary-aged children, abuse drugs.²¹⁷ One study found the trend to affect at least nine different states.²¹⁸ These reports echo concerns raised during primary data collection in at least four states (Benue, Katsina, Ogun, Rivers). In the North East, drug and substance abuse among secondary school students has plagued education stakeholders over the last decade.²¹⁹ In Rivers, many young people turn to drugs after leaving school or when facing unemployment after graduation.²²⁰ The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency has expanded its presence in some areas due to this epidemic among youth.²²¹ Community reports share that the impacts of drug use include cultism,²²² violence, reduced attention spans, impaired reasoning,²²³ and increased transmission risks of infectious diseases such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).²²⁴ Drugs also affect education, and research links adolescent drug usage to an increased likelihood of perpetuating SRGBV. Additionally, drugs are sometimes used to manage menstrual pain²²⁵ and as a coping mechanism among some GBV survivors.²²⁶

SRGBV affects nearly half of girls and over one-third boys in school; 44 percent of female students and 35 percent of male students are estimated to have experienced physical or sexual violence by teachers or classmates.²²⁷ Further, teachers who are men perpetrate more physical violence against students than teachers who are women, and students who are boys are more likely to perpetrate physical violence against a classmate (regardless of their gender identity).²²⁸ Male and female students experience similar rates of classmate-perpetrated sexual violence (6 percent); however, female students are more likely to experience teacher-perpetrated sexual violence, with 2 percent reporting this experience.²²⁹ Girls who experience violence miss more school days than boys who experience violence, but boys are less likely to disclose their experiences.²³⁰ Stigma deters reporting and a culture of silence limits disclosure, especially among girls in some areas who fear accusations of attempting to seduce their teachers.²³¹ This culture of silence also extends to universities, where harassment and violence remain inadequately addressed.²³² SRGBV leads to poor learning outcomes, school dropout, and health issues, with girls facing early and unwanted pregnancies and higher rates of sexually transmitted diseases. Despite the severity, SRGBV is often underreported, and policy responses are underfunded and receive limited government attention.²³³

Crises exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and have a direct, often gendered, impact on education delivery and attendance. Violence near schools has caused many students to withdraw, temporarily or permanently,²³⁴ with one study noting a 2 percentage point drop in

enrollment due to violence.²³⁵ In entire education system in the North, has been undermined by Boko Haram’s repeated attacks on education institutions, administrators, teachers, and students.²³⁶ Girls have been directly targeted, and families are increasingly reluctant to send them to school.²³⁷ An estimated 2,000 to 8,000 women and girls have been abducted overall, and crisis-related impacts on education have been “just as damaging for girls as [they have been] for boys.”²³⁸ Further, conflict heightens GBV risks and influences family decisions around girls’ education.²³⁹ Girls face heightened risks as many need to travel long distances to school, which exposes them to sexual exploitation, abuse, and other forms of GBV.²⁴⁰ Many displaced children in IDP camps do not have access to schools. Community members in Benue shared that there are no schools in or around the local IDP camps and that, although some camp managers have volunteered to teach, displaced children are falling through the educational cracks.²⁴¹

Adult education and vocational training programs are needed, especially for women and girls who dropped out of or never attended school, but existing opportunities are limited. Adult education programs offer opportunities for skills development and socioeconomic advancement that can be especially beneficial for women, girls, and marginalized populations who have married, had children, or were otherwise removed from school and lack the necessary resources to return.²⁴² More than 4.6 million students and trainees (of which 46 percent are women) are enrolled in post-secondary institutions, and this group includes 1.5 million (of which 40 percent are women) at technical and vocational training institutions.²⁴³ Though there is a high demand for post-secondary pursuits, only a fraction of applicants, including young women, are admitted. Although vocational and technical schools are part of the Education for Renewed Hope Agenda: Roadmap for the Nigerian Education Sector (2024–2027) operational plan²⁴⁴ and other government education policies, this analysis found that implementation has not been prioritized.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Education Systems

- **Increase Budgetary Allocations to Advance Existing Gender Equality and Social Inclusion-related Policies and Improve Implementation.** Support initiatives to ensure that national and state budgets allocate adequate funding and resources for education, gender mainstreaming, and the most underserved areas and groups, focusing in particular on regions with low school completion rates. Partner with civil society and government actors in advocating for the implementation of gender- and inclusion-responsive education policies and supporting mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating inclusion in education by, among other things, collecting gender- and disability-disaggregated data.
- **Support Quality Facilities and Infrastructure Improvements.** Collaborate with government actors, private sector partners, and stakeholders that promote community security to create safe and inclusive school environments for all students. Create new and refurbish existing WASH facilities, follow tried-and-tested models to improve accessibility for children with disabilities, and enact measures to upgrade school security to help deter violence.
- **Improve Gender Balance in Teacher Deployment while Enhancing Capacity.** Work with government partners to identify and implement teacher remuneration and employment solutions, including by supporting efforts in the North and in rural areas to increase the number of teachers who are women. Promote inclusive and supportive learning environments by expanding teacher professional development on topics such as parent engagement and reducing biases in classroom management and curricula.

Start to Finish: Entry, Retention, Dropout, Completion, and Return

- **Strengthen Efforts to Close Geographic- and Wealth-related Gaps.** Take proactive measures to support closing the remaining disparities in education that disproportionately impact rural and low-income groups. In programs, use an intersectional lens that accounts for gender identity and disability status. Support government and multilateral investments that are aligned with the implementation of key national “out-of-school children” activities, quality vocational training programs (including those targeting adults), and related efforts to improve educational outcomes, expand opportunities to return to school, and promote inclusive education for all learners.
- **Address Gender-based Barriers, including Social and Cultural Norms.** Create interventions to shift norms that hinder the pursuit of education, particularly in the North, South East, and rural areas. Engage parents, families, community leaders, and local civil society and community-based organizations, including those led by women, to address the gender-specific reasons learners drop out and/or miss school
- **Tackle Growing Youth Drug Use and Abuse Concerns.** Raise awareness among government, civil society, and IPs about the increased drug and substance abuse impacting learners and out-of-school youth. Coordinate with key stakeholders to lead comprehensive gender-sensitive drug prevention and response programming that addresses the gender-specific needs and circumstances of in- and out-of-school youth.
- **Address All Forms of Violence Affecting Education.** Support government and education stakeholders to implement comprehensive SRGBV and crisis-related violence prevention and response programming that emphasizes safe schools and learning environments. Promote interventions that reinforce existing policy guidance, such as the [National Policy on Safety, Security and Violence-Free Schools with its Implementing Guidelines](#) (2021) and the [Minimum Standards for Safe Schools](#) (2021). Build the capacity of school staff and students at all educational levels to mitigate risks, identify incidents, and respond effectively to SRGBV and other forms of violence.

HEALTH: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

TABLE 5. SNAPSHOT OF RELEVANT STATISTICS

- Nearly 20 percent of all global maternal deaths occur in Nigeria.²⁴⁵
- Forty percent of HIV infections in Nigeria occur among young people aged 15–24. In 2021, 14,000 young women aged 15–24 acquired HIV, compared to 3,600 young men.²⁴⁶ HIV prevalence is nearly four times higher among women aged 20–24 than among men of the same age range (1.3 percent vs. 0.4 percent).²⁴⁷
- Eighty-two percent of Nigerians have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.²⁴⁸ Studies have found that a higher proportion of women have not received the vaccine.²⁴⁹
- Eight countries account for more than two-thirds of tuberculosis (TB) cases globally; Nigeria has the sixth highest TB incidence, with 4.5 percent of total cases.²⁵⁰ Men in Nigeria have higher incidence estimates and actual notified cases across all age groups compared to women.²⁵¹
- Four countries account for almost half of all malaria cases globally; Nigeria leads this group with 27 percent of global cases. Nigeria also leads in malaria-related deaths globally at 31 percent.²⁵² Nationally, 35 percent of men and 40 percent of women in Nigerian households sleep under mosquito nets (treated or untreated). Fewer pregnant women in Nigeria’s southern households (an average of 24 percent) sleep under nets than in northern households (an average of 54 percent). Fifty-nine percent of women use at least one dose of preventive treatment during pregnancy.²⁵³
- Under the COVID-19 restrictions, reports of GBV quadrupled in Lagos, Ogun, and the Federal Capital Territory over a two-month period.²⁵⁴
- In Bauchi, 75 percent of women aged 20–49 were first married before the age of 18, the highest rate among all Nigeria’s states. Nationally, 45 percent of women aged 20–24 have spouses who are at least ten years older than them.²⁵⁵

Nigeria faces severe health care challenges, with many communities lacking nearby facilities, experiencing pricing that limits essential services to those who can afford them,²⁵⁶ receiving poor quality care²⁵⁷ from undertrained health workers.²⁵⁸ Further, emergency services, including emergency obstetric care, are limited.²⁵⁹ This backdrop is critical to understanding how biological sex and gender identity shape access to and utilization of health services, and how social norms and gender inequalities compound existing barriers to achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC).²⁶⁰ Interviews found that many women do not use health centers due to various traditional views (particularly around childbirth), high costs,²⁶¹ restricted mobility, and the need to obtain their husbands' permission for health-related decisions or payments.²⁶² Masculinity norms that discourage help-seeking behavior lead many men to delay or forgo health care. Due to insufficient time, resource constraints, and long distances to the nearest health care facility, families often seek care for children only when conditions become severe. Further persons of diverse SOGIESC, such as transgender persons, often face stigma, discrimination, and abuse, creating major impediments to healthcare access.²⁶³ This section examines gender equality issues within Nigeria's health landscape.

HOLISTIC HEALTH CARE AND SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

Gender equality and inclusion considerations affect every facet of health, including issues most typically addressed by primary health care (PHC) providers. Pre-existing gender inequalities often worsen during public health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed the limitations of Nigeria's health care system²⁶⁴ and compounded access to service issues. These weaknesses increased wait times, intensified mobility restrictions, and decreased patients' confidence in receiving fair treatment.²⁶⁵ Women, girls, and persons residing in IDP camps with already-constrained WASH systems were particularly affected.²⁶⁶ Widespread vaccine hesitancy, fueled by conspiracies, rumors, and fears about fertility, led many, including women, to refuse the COVID-19 vaccine. Further, the number of children missing basic vaccines surged from 3.7 million in 2019 to 23 million in 2020.²⁶⁷ While sex-disaggregated data on the number of female community health extension workers and officers are not publicly available, qualitative evidence suggests that the majority of these workers and officers are women and that they could benefit from additional training and preparation to respond effectively to future health crises.²⁶⁸

While immunization rates vary significantly by vaccine and region—with northern Nigeria historically having the highest rates of immunization rejection²⁶⁹—maternal education level is the most significant determinant of vaccination rates.²⁷⁰ Stakeholders recently expanded integrated vaccine campaigns for COVID-19, polio, measles, diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus.²⁷¹ In Yobe, local community engagement strategies, which included women's empowerment initiatives and involved men in programming, improved immunization acceptability.²⁷²

Quality sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services are not widely available,²⁷³ and the National Health Insurance Scheme often does not cover family planning services or contraceptives.²⁷⁴ Moreover, taboos around discussing sexual matters, which are especially strong in northern Nigeria, limit the availability and dissemination of accurate and reliable SRH information.²⁷⁵ Additionally, provider biases based on age, marital status, disability, as well as sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics (SOGIESC) lead to discrimination in service delivery.²⁷⁶ Women are often denied the power to make reproductive health decisions. For example, in some states, women must show proof of spousal consent for contraceptives and unmarried women are denied emergency contraceptives.²⁷⁷ As key informants noted, "men impose on [women] the number of children they want."²⁷⁸ Further, both young men and young women experience difficulties in accessing health information and services.²⁷⁹ Facilities are reported to turn adolescents away, prioritizing child health. Where services are available, interventions have mostly focused on girls with little attention for boys.²⁸⁰ In their experiences,

young women report disrespectful treatment and judgment when seeking SRH services at general hospitals, making informed health decisions challenging.²⁸¹

Although Nigeria’s maternal mortality rate has improved, persistent challenges such as inaccessible facilities, inadequate infrastructure, high service costs, insufficient antenatal care, reliance on traditional birth attendants, and limited access to emergency obstetric care continue to hinder progress in addressing maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH) issues. ²⁸² Despite reaching a two-decade low in maternal mortality in 2020 (1,047 deaths per 100,000 live births),²⁸³ only 67 percent of births are attended by skilled health personnel.²⁸⁴ Interviewees expressed deep concerns about childbirth complications and the high mortality rate of women. They noted that while midwives are respected and often relied upon due to the scarcity of PHC facilities, there is a pressing need for additional training for midwives, particularly as existing PHCs are closing.²⁸⁵

Menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) remain significant issues due to high costs of sanitary products and limited access to clean water. Women and girls use unsanitary alternatives such as tissue and rags which leads to various negative health consequences,²⁸⁶ such as urinary tract illnesses, abdominal inflammatory disorders, and susceptibility to sexual diseases.²⁸⁷ These problems are particularly acute in IDP communities.²⁸⁸ Views and taboos around menstruation also influence hygiene management and willingness to use WASH facilities.²⁸⁹ Menstruation is frequently perceived as dirty and shameful, and in some parts of the country, there are restrictions on bathing, washing sanitary cloth for reuse, and disposal of menstrual products.²⁹⁰

Trends in the HIV epidemic are “mixed”; lower among the general population and higher among key groups, including female sex workers, men who have sex with men, and people who inject drugs.²⁹¹ Although HIV prevalence has steadily declined over the last 20 years, reaching 1.3 percent (15–49 years) in 2018 at the time of the National AIDS Indicator and Impact Survey, both prevalence and incidence among women is higher in every age group compared to men. Key factors driving these rates include: 1) masculinity norms which influence men’s likelihood of having multiple sexual partners (including unprotected sex with younger women), and 2) women’s limited power to negotiate safer sex with their partners, limited access to resources, and higher risk of poverty which influences women’s higher likelihood of engaging in transactional sex.²⁹² Primary data, for example, revealed that conflict and crises compound these issues, causing some girls to seek support from militants, drug dealers, and cultists, which leads to high rates of sexual assault, rape, adolescent pregnancy, and HIV.²⁹³ Transactional sex is also prominent among all key groups and transgender persons.²⁹⁴ Key groups (which comprise approximately 1 percent of the population) account for nearly 23 percent of new infections; 40 percent of new infections are attributed to this group when counted with their partners.²⁹⁵ Transgender persons also face heightened risk of infection, but are less likely to seek or receive appropriate medical care due to experiences with discrimination.²⁹⁶

TB disproportionately affects men, who account for 54 percent of notified cases²⁹⁷ and are more likely than women to discontinue care, leading to worse health outcomes.²⁹⁸ Additionally, a recent USAID health sector gender analysis found that some groups, including men who have sex with men, transgender persons, persons who inject drugs, and female sex workers, experience hostile attitudes when seeking TB treatment, even more often than when seeking treatment for HIV.²⁹⁹ Fear of discrimination, for example, has driven these groups towards less reliable pharmacies prone to selling fake or ineffective medical products. While the [National Strategic Plan for Tuberculosis Control](#) (2021–2025) does not use a strong gender lens, the [USAID/Nigeria Tuberculosis Roadmap for 2024](#) includes targeted outreach and community engagement in spaces traditionally dominated by men.³⁰⁰

Malaria remains a significant health issue, with women, especially pregnant women, and children living in households headed by women at highest risk.³⁰¹ Malaria cases in Nigeria account for 27 percent of global cases and 31 percent of global deaths; the highest of any country.³⁰² Those residing in high-transmission zones such as Jigawa, Kebbi, Zamfara, and Sokoto are at particular risk. Women are at a higher risk of getting malaria and experiencing worse health outcomes due to their early morning chores, which increase their exposure to mosquito bites, and their restricted mobility, which limits their ability to seek timely treatment.³⁰³ Further, malaria during pregnancy is associated with increased risk to both mother and baby, including illness such as anemia, severe disease, death, spontaneous abortion, stillbirth, premature delivery, and low birth weight (a leading cause of child mortality).³⁰⁴ In Nigeria, studies have found that malaria complicates up to 58 percent of pregnancies.³⁰⁵ Additionally, while households managed by women demonstrate a stronger awareness of malaria prevention compared to households managed by men, children under five face higher risk of malaria living in households headed by women due to existing inequalities and difficulties accessing resources.³⁰⁶ The [National Malaria Strategic Plan 2021–2025](#) guides approaches to tackle this crisis, including targeted interventions for key groups.

Climate change-related health issues are also on the rise, particularly in Rivers, Bayelsa, and the Niger Delta region. Air and water pollution, oil spills, and other environmental issues are reportedly contributing to pulmonary issues, disease, neonatal deaths, malnutrition, and toxicities that could cause infertility and cancer,³⁰⁷ and key informants confirmed that these environmental issues are seriously affecting people's health.³⁰⁸

HEALTH ISSUES RELATED TO GBV

Health care is a key avenue for identifying and addressing GBV incidents, as health providers are often the first—and sometimes the only—point of contact for survivors. GBV can lead to health issues that require specific medical care, such as testing for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis, antiretroviral medications for individuals who are HIV-positive, and emergency contraceptives.³⁰⁹ Despite the high prevalence of GBV in Nigeria, GBV is underreported, especially by women and girls with disabilities³¹⁰ and men and boys, who may feel ashamed to report.³¹¹ Interviews revealed that, in severe cases, boys have experienced medical issues that require surgery (e.g., rectal repair).³¹²

Though overall rates of FGM/C are declining,³¹³ and though UNICEF reports that over 60 percent of both women and men who have heard about it think that it should end,³¹⁴ FGM/C remains a concern in Nigeria. The Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey recorded a recent uptick in rates of FGM/C among girls aged 0–14, finding that FGM/C prevalence increased in this age group from 16.9 percent in 2013 to 19.2 percent in 2018.³¹⁵ Ninety-one percent of girls aged 0–15 who have undergone the procedure were cut before the age of one.³¹⁶ Interviews in Enugu revealed that girls undergo Type IV FGM/C³¹⁷ and that community members believe that the procedure protects their children.³¹⁸ FGM/C can cause numerous and significant health-related harms, leading to a lack of sexual pleasure, pain during intercourse, childbirth complications, and lasting disability.³¹⁹

Adolescent pregnancy, which is both a cause and a consequence of CEFMU,³²⁰ also puts girls at increased health risks. Particularly high rates of adolescent pregnancy are found in Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara, Katsina, Kano, Jigawa, Bauchi, and Niger (**Figure 4**).³²¹

FIGURE 4. HOT SPOT ANALYSIS OF ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY IN NIGERIA (2018)

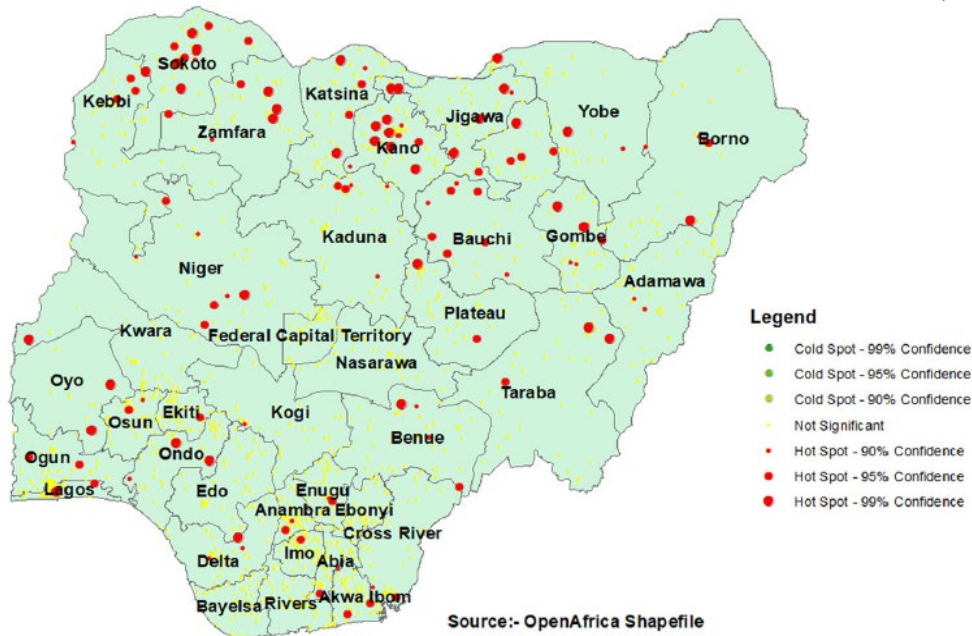


FIGURE 4 SOURCE: Afolabi Bolarinwa, Obasanjo, Zemenu Tadesse Tessema, James Boadu Frimpong, Taiwo Oladapo Babalola, Bright Opoku Ahinkorah, and Abdul-Aziz Seidu. 2022. “Spatial distribution and factors associated with adolescent pregnancy in Nigeria: a multi-level analysis.” *Archives of Public Health*, 80 (January 2022). (Link)

Health care providers are critical actors in efforts to address GBV-related health challenges. In addition to providing medical services, they connect survivors to legal services, long-term psychosocial support, and economic empowerment programs through referrals to places such as Nigeria’s Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs). SARCs provide comprehensive medical care, including forensic examinations, injury treatment, timely medications, counseling, and other resources, to help address survivors’ immediate medical and psychosocial needs (see “GBV Prevention and Response” in the Democracy and Governance section for more information).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Holistic Health Care and Systems Strengthening

- **Elevate Awareness of Gender-specific Health Issues among Providers and Decision-makers.** Leverage convening opportunities with government, private sector, IPs, and local health partners to expand knowledge of the broad spectrum of gender and health issues that (1) impact not only women and girls but also men, boys, and gender-diverse individuals and (2) extend beyond MNCH and SRH services to include TB, malaria, HIV, GBV, mental health, public health emergencies, and general noncommunicable diseases. Prioritize strengthening PHC and local capacity to meet health needs with gender-responsive and culturally sensitive standards and emergency services. Promote comprehensive and high-quality delivery that improves equitable coverage and accessibility.
- **Address Gender and Social Norms that Restrict Access to and Utilization of Health Facilities and Services.** Bring local health advocacy organizations, community leaders, and health actors together to address critical barriers and enhance uptake of health services. Particular attention should be given to addressing gender and social norms that restrict the mobility, access to, and decision-making related to health care for women, men,

boys, girls, and gender-diverse individuals. Expand upon models like youth-friendly and faith-based facilities that are reported to provide more supportive health care.³²² Develop evidence-based social and behavior change interventions that specifically engage men and individuals responsible for household decision-making.

- **Support Health Law, Policy, and Strategy Implementation with an Inclusive Lens.** Invest in activities that encourage collaboration among government, private sector, and diverse civil society actors to advance existing laws, policies, and strategies and integrate gender- and inclusion-based considerations into implementation guidance at all governing levels. Devote specific support to those frameworks that have received broad buy-in, such as the [Nigeria Health Sector Renewal Compact](#) and the National Primary Health Care Development Agency’s [Primary Healthcare Transformation Agenda: Strategy for PHC Revitalization in Nigeria \(2023–2030\)](#). Both of these frameworks tackle infrastructure, service quality, and equity issues to strengthen UHC. Additional laws and governmental bodies to focus on include the [National Health Act \(2014\)](#), [Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention Act \(2018\)](#), [National Health Insurance Authority Act \(2022\)](#), [Mental Health Act \(2021\)](#), and the [Basic Health Care Provision Fund](#). Each of these represent tools that can be utilized at the governmental level to advance gender equity in health care.

Health Issues Related to GBV

- **Promote the Availability of Emergency and Comprehensive SRH Services for GBV Response.** Support initiatives that increase the provision of clinical and non-clinical post-violence care services such as post exposure prophylaxis and mental health services related to sexual assault, emergency contraceptives, prenatal and postnatal care, and emergency obstetric care. Coordinate closely with women’s organizations, government stakeholders (including those leading SARCs), and private health care providers to foster partnerships between health, education, and social services; address the broader determinants of health; and enhance service delivery and referrals.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

TABLE 6. SNAPSHOT OF RELEVANT STATISTICS

Political Participation and Leadership

- Nigeria ranks 182 out of 187 countries in women’s representation in national parliaments.³²³
- Women comprised less than 10 percent of Presidential and National Assembly candidates in the 2023 presidential elections, down from 12 percent in 2019.³²⁴ After the 2023 election, 14 women were elected within the 358-member House of Representatives and 4 women within the 109-member Senate.
- At the subnational level, only 9.9 percent of the 1,019 candidates running for the State Houses of Assembly (SHoA) in the 2023 election were women, and only 4.7 percent (48 women) won seats.³²⁵
- Women comprise 47.5 percent of registered voters and are considered a significant voting bloc to mobilize for elections. However, only 25.7 percent of registered voters participated in the 2023 election (sex-disaggregated data were not available).³²⁶

GBV

- Thirty-one percent of girls in Nigeria are married before the age of 18, and 12 percent are married before the age of 15. In contrast, only 1.6 percent of boys are married before the age of 18. Fifty-two percent of women aged 20–24 in the North West and 51.1 percent in the North East were married before their 18th birthday.³²⁷
- Thirty-one percent of women aged 15–49 have experienced physical violence, and 9 percent have experienced sexual violence.³²⁸
- Twenty-five percent of women and girls aged 25–49 in Nigeria have undergone FGM/C.³²⁹
- Seven hundred and sixty-three of the 841 sex-trafficked survivors identified by the Government of Nigeria in 2022 were women; 290 of the 543 labor-trafficked survivors were women.³³⁰

Nigeria faces significant governance challenges, with ongoing corruption and rising insecurity contributing to widespread political apathy and diminished public trust.³³¹ Increasing the political participation of women and other underrepresented groups at the local, state, and federal levels is critical to enhancing citizen engagement. Repeated unsuccessful attempts to pass gender equality bills, including quotas for women's political representation, highlight the entrenched resistance to measures that would alter existing power arrangements. As Nigeria grapples with stabilizing the economy and delivering basic services, it is crucial to address implementation challenges in gender mainstreaming, especially those impeding the effective execution of the National Gender Policy and the [Violence Against Persons Prohibition \(VAPP\) Act](#).

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

Women's voices are not being heard in decision-making processes because they are poorly represented in governance and leadership at all levels. At the national level, Nigeria is among the bottom ten countries globally in women's parliamentary representation.³³² Women's representation in Nigeria's National Assembly (the Senate and the House of Representatives) has declined since the 2011 election, despite never exceeding 7 percent.³³³ In the current National Assembly, which was elected in 2023, there are only four women among the 109 Senate seats and 16 women among the 360 House seats.³³⁴ At subnational levels, low levels of women's representation persist, with women occupying less than 5.4 percent of SHoA positions and no woman ever having been elected as Governor. Fifteen states—many within the North West and North East regions—do not have any women elected to their SHoAs, and the highest number of women elected to any SHoA is six (Ekiti).³³⁵ The limited number of women in political positions means that decisions at all levels of government, including those decisions that directly affect women, are being made by men.³³⁶

Sustained efforts are needed to increase the number of women candidates. Prospective candidates require dedicated support to overcome the challenges posed by short election periods, limited political capital, and violence in politics. In the 2023 election, only 10 percent of over 15,000 candidates running for positions at the national and subnational levels were women.³³⁷ In many areas, there are no women candidates standing for local government offices,³³⁸ and, in general, there are no consistent, long-term efforts to build a cadre of and support for women candidates. Instead, these efforts are concentrated around election periods. By law, campaigning is permitted for only 90 days, and this brief window is a barrier for raising women's voices and establishing their reputations in a political landscape in which they are not recognized players.³³⁹ Many women entering politics are newcomers who lack political capital and are, as a result, competitively disadvantaged. Furthermore, the perception that the political landscape is violent, particularly toward women, discourages some from running for office and participating in politics.³⁴⁰ Forms of violence against women in politics include physical and verbal abuse, assault, and threats to property and life. Opponents and, in many cases, men within their own parties deploy these tactics when they feel threatened by women candidates' and politicians' popularity. The media often perpetuate false and harmful narratives about women in politics.³⁴¹

Barriers within political parties, including financial demands, underrepresentation in decision-making roles, and a lack of leadership opportunities, significantly hinder women's involvement and advancement. Notably, 90 percent of women candidates ran for office under smaller parties. Historically, candidates from smaller parties have faced challenges that make them unlikely to win elections (notwithstanding rare exceptions such as the Labour Party).³⁴² Within political parties, women remain underrepresented and marginalized in leadership structures³⁴³ and are mostly utilized to engage women or youth voters.³⁴⁴ Women political aspirants are generally sidelined to advance the political careers of men in the party.³⁴⁵ The Independent

National Election Commission's [2021–2025 gender policy](#) identifies encouraging gender equity in political parties as a priority.³⁴⁶ Though no party currently has a quota system, there are efforts currently underway to work with state parliamentarians to pass progressive laws that promote women's representation within political parties.³⁴⁷ Although some political parties have reduced nomination fees for women candidates, women, especially those who are looking to become a candidate of a large party, report that they are taken seriously only if they can demonstrate the ability to finance their campaign.³⁴⁸ Party structures also often favor novice candidates who, nevertheless, wield financial influence, which discourages competent but less influential women from remaining in politics.

In recent years, repeated attempts to utilize legal measures to advance gender equality have been unsuccessful. The 2006 National Gender Policy proposed 35 percent gender quotas for both elected and appointed positions, but no legislative changes have been made to implement them. In early 2022, the National Assembly rejected constitutional reform bills that aimed to (1) mandate that women must hold a minimum of 35 percent of federal and state executive council seats and ministerial and commissioner positions, (2) establish 111 new National Assembly seats reserved for women, and (3) ensure that women hold at least 35 percent of political party positions. Additionally, lawmakers rejected an indigeneship bill that would have permitted women to attain indigenous status in their husbands' state after five years of residency, thereby making them eligible to run for public offices in that state.³⁴⁹ Women who are married to men from different states remain unable to run for office outside their state of origin.³⁵⁰ While this research could not assess the extent to which indigeneship requirements limit women's participation specifically, the issue was raised in focus groups in Enugu. The notion of indigeneship limits the political inclusion of anyone who is not living in their ancestral state.³⁵¹

LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS AFFECTING GENDER EQUALITY

The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs has made strides in developing gender equality and women's empowerment policies, but limited influence, funding constraints, and coordination issues hinder effective implementation. The Ministry advises the government on policies related to gender equality, women's empowerment, and social inclusivity and builds partnerships between the government and civil society. It developed the 2006 National Gender Policy, which was updated for [2021–2026](#) with stakeholders' inputs and the African Development Bank's assistance. The updated policy details sector-specific and crosscutting priorities related to legislation, policy frameworks, and social norms; however, limited resources and coordination significantly inhibit its implementation at both the federal and state levels. The Ministry seeks to create a "Gender Cadre" composed of Gender Officers to facilitate gender mainstreaming, but challenges persist. Most line ministries have Gender Desk Officers, but they often lack influence and authority and face funding and technical capacity constraints.³⁵² Interviewees highlighted the need to better define and recognize the roles of these officers. Additionally, they noted that the selection process for officers has been inconsistent and officers have varying levels of performance depending on the support from their MDAs.³⁵³ Coordination is limited, especially regarding budgets, which are often allocated without input from Gender Desk Officers.³⁵⁴ Issues significantly inhibit implementation of the current version of the National Gender Policy at both the federal and state levels. With fluctuating government support for gender mainstreaming programs, the Ministry of Women Affairs and civil society organizations fill critical gaps in addressing these needs.³⁵⁵

Nigeria's legal framework related to gender equality is underpinned by a constitutional provision prohibiting sex discrimination, which has been instrumental in overturning

some discriminatory laws and regulations.³⁵⁶ Implementation of laws against discrimination, however, remains inconsistent, and some laws, like the Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act of 2014, explicitly justify discrimination against individuals of diverse SOGIESC. The National Gender Policy notes that the three-tiered legal system of national, state, and local governance impedes the implementation and enforcement of laws at the local level and complicates efforts to address gender-discriminatory customary laws. The country's diverse ethno-religious-cultural landscape further complicates these efforts,³⁵⁷ as some communities, especially those in the northern states, adhere to norms in the absence of adequate information on local legal frameworks.³⁵⁸ For an overview of federal legal frameworks pertaining to gender equality issues (e.g., inheritance, employment, GBV, and LGBTQI+ rights), refer to [Annex D](#).

Individuals with diverse SOGIESC face significant severe criminalization coupled with discrimination. The [Same-Sex Marriage \(Prohibition\) Act of 2014](#) criminalizes same-sex relationships, public displays of affection between same-sex couples, and limits LGBTQI+ rights organizations, with penalties ranging from ten to 14 years in prison.³⁵⁹ This law is used to justify human rights violations against LGBTQI+ individuals, including torture, sexual violence, arbitrary detention, and extortion.³⁶⁰ Sharia law in northern states also criminalizes transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals.³⁶¹ A survey of men who have sex with men found they hide their sexual orientation out of fear of being discovered, with 60 percent reporting having experienced physical abuse, 62 percent being denied housing, and 77 percent being treated differently when their identity was known.³⁶² The media often reinforces homophobic narratives, further legitimizing discrimination.³⁶³

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is responsible for promoting and protecting human rights in Nigeria, investigating violations, and assisting victims in seeking redress, but it faces challenges related to independent funding and staffing shortages. In 2022, the NHRC investigated 2.3 million complaints, resolving 1.6 million. Notably, it launched a GBV hotline, with 8 percent of complaints related to gender-based violence. Additionally, 25 percent of complaints addressed quality-of-life issues like poverty and unemployment. With donor funding, NHRC implements special projects including police reform, monitoring police stations, and reconciliation initiatives.³⁶⁴ However, the NHRC's 2019–2022 strategy highlights how the Commission relies highly on funding from the Government of Nigeria, a potential risk for independence. The strategy notes understaffed field offices that are only in 24 states, leaving 12 states without an office and no presence outside state capitals for receiving complaints.³⁶⁵

GBV PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Despite the VAPP Act's comprehensive provisions, inconsistent enforcement and limited awareness across states hinder its effectiveness in addressing GBV. While the Act entitles every survivor to comprehensive medical, psychological, social, and legal assistance, many survivors receive insufficient support due to stigma, financial constraints, and the physical inaccessibility of services.³⁶⁶ The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons is the regulatory body for the VAPP Act, and the Ministry of Women Affairs manages shelters and coordinates GBV policies with the justice sector and other state entities.³⁶⁷ Though the Inter-Ministerial GBV Management Committee was established in July 2010 to coordinate response efforts across the country, few actions have commenced.³⁶⁸ SARCs and helplines exist, but GBV response services are largely driven and supported by civil society, and their sustainability is heavily dependent on donor funding.³⁶⁹

SARCs are multi-sectoral centers that deliver critical response services and raise awareness about GBV, but they face significant challenges in accessibility, management, and service quality. With 42 centers across 22 states and the Federal Capital Territory,³⁷⁰ SARCs

are mostly located in urban or peri-urban areas.³⁷¹ They provide medical assistance, counseling, and legal services, as well as referrals to police, hospitals, and civil society organizations.³⁷² Management issues stem from providers' lack of technical capacity and weak coordination.³⁷³ For example, some SARCs provide substandard medical services due to insufficiently trained forensic examiners and the lack of essential materials such as examination kits,³⁷⁴ contributing to a disconnect between medical and legal services.³⁷⁵ Established and managed in various ways, some SARCs were created by and supported through international programs and state ministries, while others, such as those in Lagos, are independent nonprofits.³⁷⁶ These different models lead to varying quality and reputations. Interviews indicated SARCs are generally not survivor-centered,³⁷⁷ though those supported by development partners tend to perform better.³⁷⁸ For instance, UNFPA runs a holistic SARC in Adamawa that charges no fees for services.³⁷⁹ Though usage rates of SARCs have increased since the establishment of the first center in 2013,³⁸⁰ social stigmas continue to discourage people from seeking services.³⁸¹ Furthermore, fees for medical care and psychosocial support³⁸² create barriers and drive clients to seek alternatives from other organizations.³⁸³

GBV cases are rarely prosecuted under the VAPP Act due to underreporting, inadequate law enforcement training, and lengthy legal processes. First, cases are significantly underreported due to stigmatization, which is compounded by law enforcement officers' attitudes toward survivors. Survivors also face financial burdens when they need to pay for medical examiners and transportation. Additionally, a lack of knowledge and training among local leaders, police, prosecutors, and judges, combined with a lengthy legal process, hinders the pursuit of justice.³⁸⁴ Most states try VAPP cases in state high courts or mainstream courts, which are often overwhelmed and not specialized. In contrast, some states try VAPP cases in family courts or specialized courts, which often results in faster case resolutions.³⁸⁵ Despite these efforts, the pervasive lack of trust in the legal process and the reluctance to report incidents formally complicate the prosecution of GBV cases.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Across the gender inequalities described in this section, Nigeria's vibrant civil society plays a critical role in advocating for policy reforms, raising awareness, and implementing programs and services to meet unmet needs. However, civil society organizations face attacks, including targeting, intimidation, harassment, and cyberbullying, that are intended to silence and discredit their efforts.³⁸⁶ The restrictive and unevenly enforced legal environment further obstructs their ability to organize protests, engage with policymakers, and advocate for changes,³⁸⁷ particularly regarding GBV and reproductive rights.³⁸⁸ While this research did not include an in-depth analysis of the activities and needs of Nigeria's civil society, civil society organizations are critical partners in addressing the issues detailed in this section.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Political Participation and Leadership

- **Enhance Women's Political Participation.** Foster women's decision-making and leadership roles in political parties by advocating for the establishment of proportional representation systems.³⁸⁹ Support activities that engage institutional bodies, such as the Senate and the House of Representatives, to pass legislative reforms that promote women's proportional representation in political party operations. Support civil society organizations in advocating for the passage of the Gender and Equality Opportunity bill at state levels and invest in building cadres of women in the political and leadership pipeline.

Legal Frameworks and Institutional Mechanisms Affecting Gender Equality

- **Strengthen Gender Mainstreaming at All Levels.** Support and strengthen collaboration between the Ministry of Women Affairs and other MDAs to improve the implementation of laws, policies, and programs that promote and protect women's rights at all levels. Prioritize and support focused strategic planning (covering one- or two-year periods) for the Ministry on its focus areas of gender mainstreaming and GBV. Strengthen the capacity of Gender Desk Officers/Focal Points across all sectors.
- **Examine Approaches for Improving LGBTQI+ Rights and Services.** Explore opportunities to support LGBTQI+-led organizations in Nigeria under the [Multi-Donor LGBTI Global Human Rights Initiative](#). Hold discussions with local LGBTQI+ groups to understand their needs and identify opportunities to provide support, such as through legal aid, psychosocial support, and emergency assistance. Ensure these efforts are conducted in a way that protects the identity of the organizations and individuals involved, minimizing exposure to risk.

GBV Prevention and Response

- **Strengthen the Implementation of GBV Prevention and Response Mechanisms.** Develop a more coordinated response to GBV across services, including health care, judicial response, and pathways to economic empowerment. Strengthen established SARCs with technical assistance, supplies, and personnel training. Encourage the review of state VAPP acts to identify gaps and ways to improve implementation, service coordination, monitoring, and reporting on GBV. Increase attention on GBV prevention by working with men and boys to promote positive masculinities in communities.³⁹⁰

Civil Society

- **Invest in Long-Term Support for Civil Society Organizations who are Working to Advance Gender Equality and Social Inclusion.** Prioritize long-term funding for community and grassroots organizations that are led by women or are otherwise working to reduce gender and inclusion-based inequalities. Funding should include long-term institutional and programmatic support to shift gender and social norms and increase women's voice and agency.

PEACE AND CONFLICT: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

TABLE 6. SNAPSHOT OF RELEVANT STATISTICS

- Women and children constitute 79 percent of all people in IDP camps in Nigeria because conflicts have caused a higher rate of death and abduction among men.³⁹¹
- There are approximately 15 million widows in Nigeria, with conflict contributing to higher rates and gendered patterns of widowhood.³⁹² Nine percent of women are widows, compared to 1 percent of men.³⁹³
- Sexual violence by armed groups, security forces, and other conflict actors is reportedly increasing. In 2021, the UN documented 601 incidents of sexual violence by conflict actors. Eighty percent of these incidents constituted rape and 5 percent constituted sexual slavery.³⁹⁴
- The percentage of women military personnel increased from 6 percent in 2006 to 10 percent in 2021.³⁹⁵

Nigeria faces multiple conflicts and security challenges, including the protracted Boko Haram insurgency in the North East, long-running unrest and militancy in the Niger Delta, increasing violence between herders and farming communities that is currently spreading southward from the

central belt, and separatist Biafra agitation in the South East.³⁹⁶ Additionally, cult-related violence has led to increased abductions and ritual killings across the country.³⁹⁷ Some areas are inaccessible to humanitarian services due to banditry.³⁹⁸ Conflict-related violence and instability affect people differently depending on their gender identity, age, and geographic location. This section analyzes gendered experiences of conflict and peacebuilding.

GENDERED DIMENSIONS OF CONFLICT

Insecurity in Nigeria affects boys and girls in unique ways, disrupting their education, increasing the risk of CEFMU for girls, and creating conditions that foster youth recruitment into gangs and armed groups. In insecure regions, about three in four children aged ten and above have not completed six years of basic schooling.³⁹⁹ This issue is even more pronounced in the North East due to Boko Haram’s destruction of schools and student kidnappings, which have caused parents to withdraw their children and schools to close.⁴⁰⁰ Interviewees reported that, in insecure areas, boys’ education is often prioritized, while girls are more likely to drop out and marry.⁴⁰¹ Among IDPs, boys’ school attendance is 12 percentage points higher than girls’.⁴⁰² CEFMU are associated with higher rates of controlling partner behavior and IPV.⁴⁰³ Reports indicate that gangs and armed groups are recruiting youth, both boys and girls.⁴⁰⁴ Studies show that youth who have dropped out of school are more likely than in-school youth to be recruited,⁴⁰⁵ with poverty and limited opportunities serving as push factors for joining gangs⁴⁰⁶ (see “Start to Finish” in the Education section for additional information about how conflict disrupts education).

Conflict significantly affects livelihoods and household roles, driving migration, particularly by boys and men, to urban areas and compelling girls and women to rely on survival strategies to meet basic food and protection needs. People often migrate from rural areas when instability disrupts their safety and livelihoods.⁴⁰⁷ In the North East, Niger Delta, North Central, and South East, many farmers, especially women farmers, are discouraged from tending their farms due to the threat of attacks and crop destruction.⁴⁰⁸ “Sit-at-home” orders by the Indigenous People of Biafra, a separatist group, have uniquely disrupted livelihoods in the South East. Although the government announced the successful conclusion of negotiations to end the policy,⁴⁰⁹ the orders disproportionately affected women in the informal economy who rely on daily market transactions.⁴¹⁰ Men and boys are more likely to move to urban areas to avoid recruitment or kidnapping,⁴¹¹ while women serve as caregivers and, increasingly, heads of households, as the conflict has led to a rise in the number of widows and orphans. Facing reduced agricultural prospects and increased food insecurity,⁴¹² women and girls may resort to survival methods including transactional sex⁴¹³ and marrying militants for protection and food⁴¹⁴ (see “Food Security” in the Food, Water, and Climate section for more information).

Most of Nigeria’s 3.4 million IDPs are women and children,⁴¹⁵ and they face numerous challenges, including hunger, inadequate infrastructure, WASH issues, and security threats. While disaggregated national data are unavailable, the UN estimated the IDP composition in the North East was 24 percent women, 19 percent men, 31 percent girls, and 26 percent boys in 2023.⁴¹⁶ In cities like Lagos, the absence of designated IDP camps forces migrants to live in informal settlements without access to basic services.⁴¹⁷ Sex-disaggregated data on informal settlements generally could not be identified. Women and younger children are more likely to live in camps managed by the National Emergency Management Agency and a State Emergency Management Agency⁴¹⁸, and they are more likely to struggle with safety, healthcare, education, and livelihood issues.⁴¹⁹ Despite high fertility rates in camps, health services primarily address basic needs rather than reproductive health concerns, and there are shortages of medical professionals. Moreover, the scarcity of toilets and inadequate waste management systems in camps exacerbate urinary tract infections and other health problems for women and girls.⁴²⁰ Interviewees reported that camp

programs and aid distribution do not adequately reach women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities due to implicit biases in their design that prioritize men as heads of households.⁴²¹

Women are underrepresented in IDP camp leadership roles, and cultural and religious norms further discourage their participation in leadership positions. Women are underrepresented in camp leadership roles, and women leaders report that, although they are trusted to represent their interests, they are frequently outnumbered and overshadowed by men who downplay women's issues. According to the Commissioner of Women's Affairs in Borno, cultural and religious norms prevent women from assuming leadership positions in government, and they are often discouraged from expressing interest in such roles.⁴²²

GBV is exacerbated by conflict conditions, which drive sexual violence, IPV, trafficking, and CEFMU. GBV is perpetrated both by armed groups and the security forces as well as government officials entrusted with a responsibility to protect.⁴²³ Women and girls are increasingly being targeted, abducted by armed groups, and subjected to rape and forced marriage during captivity,⁴²⁴ and they also face stigmatization and possible rejection by their families and communities upon their release.⁴²⁵ Men and boys are also the targets of sexual violence and abduction, and they are even less likely to report to authorities.⁴²⁶ As noted earlier, transactional sex and CEFMU are survival strategies used by women and girls.⁴²⁷ The trafficking of women, girls, and boys is a major concern in Adamawa, Benue, and Katsina due to the protracted conflict and insufficient protections at IDP camps.⁴²⁸ Despite its prevalence, GBV remains underreported because of the normalization of violence, the fear of stigma, victim-blaming, and the desire to protect family reputations.⁴²⁹ Few protections to ensure access to basic rights and services are in place, and the effects of these protection gaps are compounded by the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators.⁴³⁰

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACEBUILDING

Women are playing crucial roles in conflict resolution and peacebuilding but are excluded from formal peacebuilding processes, especially at state and national levels. Interviewees highlighted that women are often the first responders, taking on responsibilities such as caring for children, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and the sick. Women use informal networks and groups to support the survivors of sexual slavery by Boko Haram,⁴³¹ provide aid to adolescents, fundraise for legal and emergency services, strengthen GBV response services, deliver psychological support, and mediate at the family and community levels.⁴³² Despite their active grassroots involvement, they need more funding and technical support and greater recognition in the state's peace and security architecture.⁴³³

Despite Nigeria's efforts to implement its NAP for Women, Peace, and Security, inadequate execution and limited awareness among key stakeholders remain major challenges. Nigeria developed its first NAP in 2013, followed by a second in 2017, with a third under development. Sixteen states have developed State Action Plans (SAPs). The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs leads the implementation of the NAP and has established a multisectoral national steering committee to coordinate across government MDAs.⁴³⁴ However, stakeholder awareness and progress on implementing the NAP remain limited.⁴³⁵ Only three states in the South South (Rivers, Delta, and Bayelsa) have SAPs, and no state in the South West or South East has one.⁴³⁶ Interviewees highlighted that limited support and prioritization by donors and development partners contribute to these gaps.⁴³⁷ UN Women and the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs continue to advocate for Nigeria to implement its commitments to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 fully.⁴³⁸

Government reintegration and amnesty programs do not adequately address the specific needs of women and girls. While the government has disarmament, demobilization, and

reintegration programs such as Operation Safe Corridor, which has aimed to provide “recruits with a voluntary exit route from Boko Haram,”⁴³⁹ interviewees noted these programs focus primarily on men and boys. A gender-aware, community-specific approach that considers how gender identity, age, and socioeconomic status affect an individual’s relationships with armed groups and conflict is needed. Women and girls associated with Boko Haram, such as those abducted into sexual slavery, face ongoing stigma, discrimination, and revictimization;⁴⁴⁰ however, current programs are not addressing their experiences. Additionally, changes in women’s roles during and after conflict often challenge traditional gender norms that designate men as the primary providers for the household, which can complicate men’s social reintegration and increase women’s vulnerability to GBV. Men and women may also have different preferences for reconciliation approaches. A study in Yobe, Borno, and Adamawa indicated that women may be more hesitant to embrace community-level reconciliation and reintegration efforts than men, with some women preferring legal accountability for acts of sexual violence.⁴⁴¹

RECOMMENDATIONS

Gendered Dimensions of Conflict

- **Strengthen IPs’ Understanding of Gendered Conflict Dynamics.** Encourage all IPs to integrate a conflict lens into their activities’ gender analysis. Utilize the conflict analysis commissioned by USAID/Nigeria to tailor strategies for girls, boys, women, men, and gender-diverse individuals across geopolitical zones. Pursue sector-specific priorities to address the gender-specific ways individuals are affected by conflict, such as girl dropouts due to CEFMU, recruitment of boys into groups who use violence, harmful survival strategies like sex-for-food, and how men and women are received in new communities when migrating.
- **Improve Prevention and Response to Forms of GBV that are More Prevalent in Conflict-Affected Areas.** Enhance GBV response by training providers in conflict-affected areas to address the specific types of GBV that are prevalent in their communities. Expand prevention and response efforts, particularly in and around IDP camps. Ensure that services are equipped to support boys and men who experience GBV by improving providers’ response skills and awareness of the norms that make boys and men less likely to report such incidents.
- **Ensure Inclusive Access to IDP Camp Services.** Promote awareness of common inclusion gaps in IDP camps. Share best practices for ensuring that camp services reach and are informed by the needs of all individuals. Special attention should be paid to reaching widows, persons with disabilities, and individuals without family support.
- **Increase Funding Commitments and Prioritize Long-Term Support to Women-Led Grassroots Organizations.** Improve financial and technical support for women-led grassroots organizations that are well-positioned to support women and girls in conflict and humanitarian settings. Work with these organizations to expand women’s roles in formal decision-making processes, including IDP camp leadership.

Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding

- **Promote the Inclusion of Women in Peacebuilding, Conflict Resolution, and Security Initiatives.** When designing reintegration programs, address the gender-specific experiences of all individuals in conflict. Support the Ministry of Women Affairs to implement the proposed components of the third NAP. Provide technical assistance to identified states to support the development and implementation of SAPs on Women, Peace, and Security. These could be states that the Mission has specific interests in. Promote the inclusion and participation of women in peace councils at the ward and community levels as an entry point for advancing their representation at higher levels of decision-making.

ANNEX A: SCOPE OF WORK

PURPOSE

The [2021 ADS 205.3.3](#) requires a gender analysis as part of the design of country strategies. The gender analysis must be completed prior to completing a revised CDCS so that its findings will appropriately inform strategic decisions about each DO and IR. The analysis must provide country and sector-level quantitative and qualitative information on the key gender gaps in each of the USAID gender analysis domains at the country level and in specific sectors where Mission resources are likely to be concentrated.

Banyan Global will carry out a strategy-level gender analysis under the GITA II Task Order to inform USAID/Nigeria’s 2025–2030 CDCS. USAID/Nigeria is also conducting an Inclusive Development Analysis through Inclusive Development Activity for Mission Support (IDAMS). Banyan Global will collaborate with the IDAMS teams to the fullest extent possible, with a focus on the coordination steps noted in this scope of work.

BACKGROUND

The USAID/Nigeria’s current CDCS results framework is in Table A.I. Inclusion is one of the Missions’ four cross-cutting strategic priorities. USAID/Nigeria focuses on empowering youth, religious minorities, and other marginalized people in its approach to inclusion. The CDCS prioritizes gender equality issues, needs, and approaches, including addressing GBV.

TABLE A.I. USAID/NIGERIA CDCS (2020–2025)			
GOAL: A healthier, more educated, prosperous, stable, and resilient Nigeria			
DO1: Broadened and Inclusive Economic Growth	DO2: A Healthier, Better Educated Population	DO3: Accountable, Inclusive, and Responsive Governance Strengthened	Special Objective: Greater Stability and Early Recovery Advanced in Selected States
IR1.1 Incomes, food security, and nutrition in targeted geographies improved	IR2.1 Improved health and disease outcomes of priority populations in targeted states	IR3.1 Strengthened conflict prevention and response	IR4.1 Humanitarian assistance provided equitably and efficiently
IR1.2 Energy access increased	IR2.2 Improved learning outcomes in targeted states	IR3.2 Enhanced civic voice and accountability	IR4.2 Public provision of basic services re-established and strengthened
IR1.3 Private sector contribution to inclusive economic growth increased		IR3.1 Enhanced credibility of elections	IR4.3 Economic resilience deepened
IR1.4 Water resources management and		IR3.4 Increased accountability and	IR4.4 Community stabilization enhanced

services improved		effectiveness of public institutions	
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In looking toward the new CDCS, USAID/Nigeria is considering how to elevate gender, GBV, and inclusion. The gender analysis and supporting technical assistance will support USAID/Nigeria explore ways to incorporate these priorities within the CDCS framework.

OBJECTIVES OF THE GENDER ANALYSIS

The gender analysis will build upon previous analyses and examine the following questions. Specific lines of inquiry will be detailed for the sector, cross-cutting themes, and key populations identified in Table A.2:

- What gender gaps and trends are taking place at the country and sector levels? What gender barriers will impede the achievement of the CDCS DOs?
- What are the norms, behaviors, relations, structures, and systems that sustain and perpetuate gender inequality, including GBV?
- What are the perspectives and priorities of local organizations, government stakeholders, and the private sector for advancing gender equality?
- What sector-specific opportunities are there to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment, including opportunities for transformational change?

TABLE A.2: KEY ELEMENTS OF THE GENDER ANALYSIS			
GENDER ANALYSIS DOMAINS	DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES	CROSS-CUTTING THEMES	KEY POPULATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices • Cultural norms and beliefs • Gender roles, responsibilities, and time use • Access to and control over assets and resources • Patterns of power and decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DO1: Economic Growth • DO2: Health and Education • DO3: Peace and Democratic Governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GBV prevention and response • WEE • Conflict prevention and response • Corruption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth and adolescent girls

Intersectional Characteristics: The gender analysis will reflect the intersection of sex and gender identity with other intersecting identities that may or may not lead to experience of heightened marginalization or exclusion in society. The following intersectional variables will be examined through the analysis: age, marital status, religion, geographic location (urban, rural, and peri-urban).

Geographic Focus Areas: The analysis will cover all six geopolitical zones of Nigeria, with the level of focus for each to be decided in coordination with USAID. The depth of field work will be determined by the gaps identified in the desk review and the extent to which existing findings need to be validated. Data collection will cover all six geopolitical zones to the extent needed, and that security allows travel.

METHODOLOGY AND DELIVERABLES

- Desk Review: A desk review will be conducted of existing literature, including USAID and third party gender analyses, research papers, reports, policy documents, evaluations, and quantitative data sets. The review will be organized as draft sector briefs.
- Virtual Consultations with USAID: Banyan Global will deliver virtual sessions with USAID technical teams per sector, to validate the desk findings, refine recommendations, and identify additional lines of inquiry for primary data collection.
- Virtual Consultations with IPs: Banyan Global, through individual or small group consultations, will validate findings, collect input on lines of inquiry, and brainstorm contacts, organizations, or community profiles to be reached through primary data collection.
- Proposal for Primary Data Collection: Banyan Global will submit a proposal for primary data collection, informed by the desk review and virtual consultations with USAID staff and IPs. Primary data collection will address specific information gaps necessary to inform the CDCS. The proposal will include a target number of interview/focus groups, stakeholder list with geographic information, and interview/focus group guides. Banyan Global will coordinate with USAID to add additional contacts to the stakeholder list as needed.
- Primary Data Collection: Primary data collection will be coordinated with IDAMS to the extent possible. For budgeting purposes, the following level of primary data collection is estimated but subject to adjustment based on the primary data proposal- Travel to six regions and two major cities (Abuja and Lagos), completion of 40 interviews and/or focus groups, for a total of 14 days of primary data collection.
- Briefing on Findings and Proposal for Workshops: During the primary data collection period, Banyan Global will deliver a briefing to the USAID/Nigeria Gender and Inclusion Advisor and, as available, staff working on the draft CDCS. This briefing will include findings from primary data collection and presenting the planned approach and agenda for the upcoming workshop. Banyan Global will combine the IP and USAID staff workshops to deliver one in person for both audiences.
- Workshop on Gender Analysis Findings and Recommendations: Banyan Global will lead a workshop with IPs and USAID staff to validate findings and draft recommendations. If possible, Banyan Global will aim to conduct this workshop in coordination with the IDAMS team. After sessions held jointly with IPs and USAID, Banyan Global will facilitate a session with only USAID staff focused on refining recommendations with an eye toward which recommendations are feasible and are likely to significantly address root causes of gender inequality. The workshop will surface items for which there is support among USAID staff.
- Final Deliverables for Gender Analysis: Banyan Global will submit drafts of the following deliverables and update based on USAID feedback.
 - CDCS Gender Analysis report (public): This report should be one part of a Gender and Inclusion analysis, with the inclusive development part developed by IDAMS. The GITA II report should be 508 compliant, follow the format below:
 - Executive Summary
 - Table of Contents
 - Acronyms
 - Introduction, Background, Methodology
 - Country Context
 - Findings and Recommendations listed by Sector Brief technical area, noting regional differences where applicable.
 - Annexes
 - Sector Briefs (public): The briefs will extract high level summary information from the main report and encourage reading the full report for more information.

ANNEX B: METHODOLOGY

DESK REVIEW

The research team conducted a desk review of secondary data sources to identify significant gender equality and women’s empowerment constraints, gaps, and advances related to USAID/Nigeria’s sectors. Research was guided by the analytical framework outlined in Table B.1, and six briefs on the following sectors were submitted to USAID/Nigeria:

1. Economic Growth
2. Fragile Contexts: Food, Climate, and Water
3. Education
4. Health
5. Democracy and Governance
6. Peace and Conflict

TABLE B.1: KEY ELEMENTS OF THE GENDER ANALYSIS		
ELEMENT TYPE	APPLICATION	ELEMENTS
GENDER ANALYSIS DOMAINS	Each brief aimed to incorporate content on gender gaps and the root causes of gender inequality related to each domain, as applicable to the sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices • Cultural norms and beliefs • Gender roles, responsibilities, and time use • Access to and control over assets and resources • Patterns of power and decision-making
DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES	Each brief focused on one of USAID/Nigeria’s development priorities. These priorities were informed by USAID/Nigeria’s current CDCS and conversations with USAID about emerging priorities for the Mission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Growth (current CDCS DO1) • Food, Climate, and Water (part of CDCS DO1, but with particular attention given emerging Mission priorities) • Education (part of current CDCS DO2) • Health (part of current CDCS DO2) • Democratic Governance (part of the current CDCS DO3) • Peace and Conflict (part of the current CDCS DO3, while also identifying the gendered dimensions of conflict that affect all sectors)
CROSSCUTTING THEMES	Each brief aimed to explain how these crosscutting themes affect DOs related to the brief.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GBV • The effects of conflict • Gender digital divide
INTERSECTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS	Each brief aimed to incorporate analysis on how individuals at the intersection of these identities experience exacerbated gender inequalities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographical differences • Youth and adolescent girls • Marital status and differences between households headed by men and by women

PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION PLAN

Table B.2 outlines the strengths and limitations of the secondary data found during the literature review and describes how primary data collection addressed these data gaps. Primary data collection was divided into two phases: virtual data collection (Phase 1) and in-person data collection (Phase 2).

Phase 1: The research team conducted virtual meetings with USAID technical offices and IPs to the extent possible. The objectives of these meetings were to (1) validate the desk findings, refine recommendations, and identify additional lines of inquiry for primary data collection and (2) brainstorm contacts, organizations, and community profiles to be reached during in-person data collection.

Phase 2: The research team conducted three weeks of in-person data collection across six geopolitical zones in Nigeria, including the following states and localities: Benue (North Central), Katsina (North West), Adamawa (North East), Enugu (South East), Rivers (South South), and Ogun (South West), as well as Abuja/Federal Capital Territory and Lagos. The research team developed a stakeholder list in collaboration with USAID and met with diverse public, private, and civil society actors through a combination of in-person and virtual key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). KIIs were held with multiple people when appropriate and conducted using a semi-structured approach.

PROPOSED LINES OF INQUIRY

TABLE B.2: PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION TO ADDRESS GAPS IN SECONDARY DATA		
DEVELOPMENT PRIORITY	STRENGTHS OF EXISTING DATA	LIMITATIONS OF EXISTING DATA AND AREAS OF INQUIRY FOR COLLECTING NEW DATA
ECONOMIC GROWTH	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Known very low rates of participation for both men and women in the formal labor force. • Known gender imbalance in senior leadership, including corporate. • Clear that women have less access to resources, assets, financial support, and markets that would enhance their productivity, including in agriculture and entrepreneurial activities. • Emerging trends of large companies purchasing land, with greater impacts on those who are already vulnerable. • Significant gender gaps in both mobile ownership and mobile internet access, with increased risk of technology-facilitated GBV for women. 	<p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not much detailed information on gender disparities within different regions. Limited information on the role of men and boys in supporting or hindering gender equality. • Not much information on gender in power and energy. Limited attention paid to how gender disparities in employment and leadership within the energy sector affect performance and to the barriers and opportunities for women in renewable energy. <p>New Areas of Inquiry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternatives to training for women and girl entrepreneurs to increase their access to opportunities and resources. • Policy and program effectiveness, particularly around the implementation of legal and organizational frameworks to protect against GBV and workplace harassment. • Economic impacts of GBV on women's workforce participation and productivity.

<p>FRAGILE CONTEXTS: FOOD, CLIMATE, AND WATER</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Known that a higher proportion of IDPs are women, though there are significant variations across areas (estimates range from 55 to 80 percent). • Clear that girls and women are responsible for water fetching and related chores. • There is a NAP on Gender and Climate Change for Nigeria (2020–2025). 	<p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little data on the differential impacts of food insecurity on girls, women, men, and boys, particularly since the national emergency was declared in July 2023. • There is limited information available about how well the NAP on Gender and Climate Change has been implemented, especially at the state and local levels. <p>New Areas of Inquiry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proportions of IDPs who are girls and women from one setting to another. • Impacts of the growing private sector and extractive industries such as oil on community safety and health.
<p>EDUCATION</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Near gender parity in enrollment rates across most education levels, but there are regional variations and known gaps by location and wealth quintile. • Known gendered impacts in education, particularly around primary school. • Active policy space, particularly at the national level. • Emerging understanding around how violence affects schooling and the school environment, particularly in the northern regions. 	<p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited data on parental engagement and preferences and how these influence school-based decisions. • Known data limitations for specific groups, such as persons with disabilities. • Limited policy implementation at state, local, and community levels. <p>New Areas of Inquiry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resourcing, particularly at state and lower levels, to implement 2021 National Policy on Gender in Education. • Perspectives on the level of education needed to gain desired employment. • Economic motivations that lead boys to drop out of school, particularly in the southern region. • Skills-building for out-of-school girls and boys, including technical and vocational education and training. • Drug use and rates of SRGBV. • How conflict affects education, particularly for boys and in the southern regions.
<p>HEALTH</p>	<p>A 2023 USAID/Nigeria gender analysis covers this sector.</p>	<p>No primary data collection is recommended for this sector.</p>
<p>DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GOVERNANCE</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of barriers for women’s political leadership, especially at national level. • Known GBV issues and gaps in GBV coordination, prevention, and response mechanisms across states. 	<p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited information on women’s representation at the local and ward levels. • Unclear what is politically feasible for advancing the Gender Policy and what support is needed. • Limited analysis of strengths and weaknesses of women-led civil society groups advocating for gender equality. <p>New Areas of Inquiry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness of Gender Focal Points across line ministries.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where to concentrate efforts? What are unaddressed opportunities?
PEACE AND CONFLICT	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear evidence women and girls are disproportionately affected as IDPs and survivors of GBV. Clear evidence that both boys and girls and communities as a whole are affected by growing insecurity. Known impunity for perpetrators of violence. Anecdotal evidence of how women are working in peacebuilding. 	<p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underreporting of sexual violence among boys, and limited information about impacts of abductions on girls and boys and about reintegration challenges, particularly for girls. <p>New Areas of Inquiry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender role shifts as a result of increased conflict. What can be done to continue girls' and boys' education amidst growing insecurity? Flexible resources to address GBV and conflict-related norms and behaviors within communities. The extent of women's representation in politics, peace negotiations, and leadership roles within refugee camps.

RESEARCH ETHICS

All primary data collection steps conformed with ethical guidelines and included processes to ensure participant confidentiality. Per the [Protection of Human Subjects in Research Supported by USAID](#) policy, the gender analysis is an operational activity meant to improve programmatic performance and, as such, does not require approval by an Institutional Review Board. The research team was trained on the following key elements of research ethics: (1) Do No Harm, (2) Free, Prior Informed Consent, and (3) Confidentiality and Protection of Information.

DO NO HARM

The research team applied a Do No Harm approach that prioritized the safety and well-being of research participants. To do no harm, the team ensured the following:

- Participant and research team safety was prioritized throughout the research process. Data collection procedures were designed to avoid placing the team and participants at risk. Interviews were conducted in locations that were safe and comfortable for both the research team and participants. In some cases, virtual interviews were conducted to accommodate participants' needs and preferences related to comfort, safety, accessibility, and connectivity.
- Small group interviews and focus group discussions were sensitive to group composition (in terms of gender identity, age, power dynamics, etc.) to ensure that participants felt comfortable answering questions in their groups.
- The research team did not ask questions that could cause shame or discomfort or lead to negative consequences for participants, especially those who belong to marginalized, underrepresented, or vulnerable groups.
- If an interview included any GBV-related questions, the interviewers prefaced these questions by mentioning that they would like to ask about how the participant's work addresses GBV and then asked the participant if they were comfortable with proceeding with the set of questions. The team did not ask participants about whether they or someone they knew experienced violence, including GBV; rather, they asked violence-related questions only on the basis of

participants' professional capacities. If a participant disclosed that they had personally experienced violence, the team would have provided information about available services, but none of the participants disclosed personal experiences of violence during the data collection process.

For most participants, there were no anticipated risks to participating. However, the research team assessed risks prior to contacting stakeholders for whom additional precautions would have been necessary, such as members of the LGBTQI+ community, who cannot safely reveal their sexual orientation or gender identity without ramifications, and political activists, who may face consequences if their personal information is discovered. When planning and conducting interviews with individuals and groups at risk, the research team ensured that all precautions were taken during scheduling and that the participants were comfortable.

FREE, PRIOR INFORMED CONSENT

At the beginning of every semi-structured interview or focus group, the research team obtained free and prior informed consent at the organizational and individual levels. Informed consent communicated the following information:

- The purpose of the research and how long the interview was expected to take.
- There were no direct expected benefits to participation. Their perspectives would contribute to informing USAID/Nigeria's strategy, but they would not directly inform funding allocation decisions. Their participation and views would not be considered by USAID when evaluating proposals for new projects and would not affect the likelihood of receiving USAID funding.
- Participation was voluntary and refusing to participate would involve no penalty. They could stop participating at any time.
- Data would be stored confidentially in the form of summary interview notes that would be available only to the research team. Specific consent would be sought if the interviewer wanted to record the conversation. In those circumstances, the interviewer would write up summary notes to share with the research team and delete the recording.
- Any information would be anonymized within the research team's report, and the participants would not be identified by name. The research team would seek participants' permission to include their name and organization on a list that would be shared internally with USAID but not made public. If the participant(s) preferred not to be included in the stakeholder list, then their information would be anonymized.
- Participants could contact the research team after the interview with any questions or concerns.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROTECTION OF INFORMATION

No key informants are referred to by their name or title in the final report. The research team asked participants if their organizations' names could be included in a stakeholder list shared with USAID. If participants did not consent, the research team anonymized their information. The research team determined on a case-by-case basis what level of anonymity and protection was most appropriate and erred on the side of caution.

In cases of anonymity concerns, the research team obscured or did not record personally identifying information, including names, ages, organizations, and even times and dates of interviews. The appropriate data recording method was determined on a case-by-case basis and adhered to the level of disclosure that the participant was most comfortable with, as well as adhering to Do No Harm and ethical data collection protocols.

ANNEX C: STAKEHOLDER LIST

TABLE C.1: STAKEHOLDER LIST

ORGANIZATION NAME	LOCATION
Creative Associates–Learn to Read	Adamawa
State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB)	Adamawa
International Rescue Committee	Adamawa
Goggoji Zumunci Foundation	Adamawa
State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development	Adamawa
DAI State 2 State	Adamawa
State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development	Benue
Elohim Development Foundation	Benue
Environment & Climate Change Amelioration Initiative (ECCAI)	Benue
Sesor Empowerment Foundation	Benue
Foundation for Justice and Peace (FJDP)	Benue
Lawyers Alert	Benue
Community Links & Human Empowerment Initiatives (CLHEI)	Benue
Glorious Teens Ministry	Benue
Okaha Women & Children Development Org (OWACDO)	Benue
State Ministry of Agriculture & Food Security	Benue
Gender and Environmental Risk Reduction Initiative (GERRI)	Benue
Benue State Women Inclusive and Effective SGBV Response Task Force	Benue
Traditional leaders	Ogun
State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development	Ogun
Premier Poverty Alleviation Initiative (PPAI)	Ogun
State Ministry of Environment	Ogun
Value Female Network	Ogun
State Ministry of Gender Affairs	Enugu
State Ministry of Education	Enugu
Traditional leaders	Enugu
Women Aid Collective (WACOL)	Enugu
South Saharan Development Organization (SSDO)	Enugu
Affirmative Action Initiative for Women (NCAA)	Enugu
Joint National Association of Persons with Disability (JONAPWD)	Enugu

Commissioner, Ministry of Education (MOE)	Enugu
Planning Research and Statistics, MOE	Enugu
Joint National Association of Persons with Disability (JONAPWD), Women's Forum	Enugu
Civil Resources Development & Documentation Centre (CIRDDOC)	Enugu
Network of Women in Agriculture, Nigeria	Enugu
Oji River Urban Women Association	Enugu
Community Women (FGD)—CIRDDOC Transparency and Accountability Group (CTAG) Isi-Uzo LGA, Nkanu East LGA and Udi LGA	Enugu
Tamar Sexual Assault Referral Centre (TAMASARC)	Enugu
Women Information Network (WIPNET)	Enugu
Heart of Sustainable Development	Rivers
Niger Delta Women Alliance	Rivers
Gender and Development Action (GADA)	Rivers
Arise For Gender and Livelihoods Initiative (ALIVE)	Rivers
State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development—Department of Girl Child Education and Child Development	Katsina
Two discussions with young women and young men, held separately	Katsina
International Rescue Committee (IRC)	Katsina
The Alliance for Medical Action (ALIMA)	Katsina
Save the Children	Katsina
State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development	Katsina
State Ministry of Education	Katsina
Community Awareness & Development Initiative (CADI)	Katsina
Pioneers Reproductive Health & Youth Association (PREHTA)	Katsina
Coalition of civil society organizations in Katsina State	Katsina
State Ministry of Women Affairs	Lagos
Partnership for Justice/Mirabel Center	Lagos
Leadership Effectiveness, Accountability and Professionalism (LEAP) Africa	Lagos
West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)	Lagos
Baobab for Women's Human Rights	Lagos
Enhancing Financial Inclusion and Access (EFinA)	Lagos
Nigeria Health Workforce Management Activity (implemented by Banyan Global)	Abuja
USAID	Abuja

ANNEX D: LEGAL FRAMEWORKS RELATED TO GENDER EQUALITY

TABLE D.I: LEGAL FRAMEWORKS RELATED TO GENDER EQUALITY

- **Constitution:** Section 42 prohibits discrimination based on “community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion, or political opinion.” Courts have used this section to overturn gender discrimination in laws⁴⁴² but have not expanded protections to include characteristics, such as disability, that are not explicitly listed.⁴⁴³
- **Equal Opportunity and Employment Law:** Since 2016, and most recently in 2023, legislation guaranteeing women’s rights to equal opportunities has repeatedly failed to pass due to cultural and religious opposition.⁴⁴⁴ There is no federal law that prohibits gender discrimination in hiring or employment or mandates equal pay for equal work.⁴⁴⁵ Women are entitled to 12 weeks of paid maternity leave at a minimum of 50 percent salary. Civil servants are granted 14 days of paternity leave.⁴⁴⁶
- **Inheritance:** While the Constitution protects women’s inheritance rights, customary practices often favor male heirs, particularly in eastern Nigeria. The Wills Act and Administration of Estate Laws guide inheritance rights, but customary law holds significant sway. Women marrying under customary or Islamic law are granted fewer legal protections.⁴⁴⁷ Notably, Rivers enacted a law in 2022 that granted women the right to share family property.⁴⁴⁸ The Supreme Court, in *Ukeje vs. Ukeje* (2022), confirmed the right of women to inherit their father’s property.⁴⁴⁹
- **Citizenship:** Nigerian men can confer citizenship to their foreign-born spouses, but Nigerian women cannot do the same for their foreign-born spouses.⁴⁵⁰
- **LGBTQI+ Rights:** The [Same-Sex Marriage \(Prohibition\) Act of 2014](#) criminalizes same-sex relationships and public affection between same-sex couples, restricts LGBTQI+ rights organizations, and imposes ten-to-14-year prison terms for violations.⁴⁵¹ This law is used to justify human rights violations against LGBTQI+ individuals, including torture, sexual violence, arbitrary detention, and extortion.⁴⁵² Sharia law in northern states also criminalizes transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals.⁴⁵³
- **GBV:** The VAPP Act addresses various forms of violence and includes provisions against FGM/C; rape; forceful ejection from home; forced financial dependence and economic abuse; forced isolation; emotional, verbal, and psychological abuse; harmful widowhood practices; and spousal battery, among others.⁴⁵⁴ VAPP has been enacted in 34 states and the Federal Capital Territory but not in Kano⁴⁵⁵ nor Lagos.⁴⁵⁶ (For information on how the law is applied, see “GBV Prevention and Response” in the Democracy and Governance section.)

ANNEX E: ILLUSTRATIVE INDICATORS FOR CDCS

Below are U.S. Government standard foreign assistance indicators (referred to as F indicators) that USAID/Nigeria may consider for aggregating monitoring, evaluation, and learning across activities.

TABLE E.1: CROSS-CUTTING INDICATORS

KEY ISSUE	ILLUSTRATIVE INDICATORS
Cross-cutting: GBV	<p>GNDR-6 Number of people reached by a USG-funded intervention providing GBV services (e.g., health, legal, psycho-social counseling, shelters, hotlines), disaggregated by sex</p> <p>GNDR-13 Number of people trained in GBV prevention, response, or risk mitigation with USG support</p> <p>GNDR-14 Percentage of participants with greater agreement that GBV is not acceptable after participating in USG supported programming, projects, or activities</p>
Cross-cutting: Norms	<p>GNDR-4 Percentage of participants reporting increased agreement with the concept that males and females should have equal access to social, economic, and political resources and opportunities</p>
Cross-cutting: Institutional-Strengthening	<p>GNDR-8 Number of persons trained with USG assistance to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations</p>
Cross-cutting: Digital Divide	<p>GNDR-12 Percentage of women participating in USG assistance activities reporting beneficial use of digital tools or services as a direct result of that assistance</p>
Economic Growth	<p>GNDR-2 Percentage of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income or employment)</p> <p>GNDR-8 Number of persons trained with USG assistance to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations</p> <p>GNDR-11 Percentage of women reporting increased influence over household spending decisions following participation in a USG-assisted intervention</p> <p>YOUTH-3 Percentage of participants who are youth (15-29) in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources [IM-level]</p> <p>EG.3.2-26 Value of annual sales of producers and firms receiving USG assistance [IM-level], disaggregated by sex of proprietor</p> <p>EG.3-i (Feed the Future Indicator) Five domains of empowerment score for women</p> <p>EG.3.2-27 Value of agriculture-related financing accessed as a result of USG assistance [IM-level], disaggregated by sex of recipient</p> <p>EG.3.3-10 Percent of female participants of USG nutrition-sensitive agriculture activities consuming a diet of minimum diversity [IM-level]</p> <p>EG.4.2-1 Total number of clients benefiting from financial services provided through USG-assisted financial intermediaries, including non-financial institutions or actors, disaggregated by sex</p> <p>EG.4.2-7 Number of individuals participating in USG-assisted group-based savings, micro-finance, or lending programs [IM-level], disaggregated by sex</p> <p>EG.5-2 Full-time equivalent employment of firms receiving USG assistance, disaggregated by sex</p> <p>EG.5.1-21 Number of enterprises directly or indirectly supported by USG Micro, Small and Medium enterprise resources, disaggregated by Enterprise Characteristics: Women Owned, Managed, and Controlled</p> <p>EG.5.1-22 Number of enterprises with increased access to finance due to USG assistance, disaggregated by Enterprise Characteristics: Women Owned, Managed, and Controlled</p> <p>EG.5.2-1 Number of firms receiving USG-funded technical assistance for improving business performance, disaggregated by Enterprise Characteristics: Women Owned, Managed, and Controlled</p>

EG.5.2-2 Number of private sector firms that have improved management practices or technologies as a result of USG assistance, disaggregated by Enterprise Characteristics: Women Owned, Managed, and Controlled

EG.6-15 Percent of individuals with better employment following participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs, disaggregated by sex

EG.7.1-1 Number of beneficiaries with improved energy services due to USG assistance, disaggregated by sex

EG.7.3-2 Number of people trained in technical energy fields supported by USG assistance, disaggregated by sex

Food, Water, and Climate

RESIL-2 Percent of participants receiving USG assistance who feel their households are able to recover from shocks and stresses [IM-level], disaggregated by sex

EG.10.2-3 Number of people with improved economic benefits derived from sustainable natural resource management or biodiversity conservation as a result of USG assistance, disaggregated by sex and ethno-linguistic group

EG.11-5 Number of people supported by the USG to adapt to the impacts of climate change, disaggregated by sex

HL.2-7 Number of people receiving improved sanitation service quality from an existing "limited" or "basic" service as a result of USG assistance, disaggregated by sex and urban/rural

HL.8.1-1 Number of people gaining access to basic drinking water services as a result of USG assistance, disaggregated by sex and urban/rural

HL.8.1-3 Number of people receiving improved service quality from an existing basic or safely managed drinking water service as a result of USG assistance, disaggregated by sex and urban/rural

HL.8.2-2 Number of people gaining access to a basic sanitation service as a result of USG assistance, disaggregated by sex and urban/rural

Education

ES.1-1 Percentage of learners targeted for USG assistance who attain a minimum grade-level proficiency in reading skills, disaggregated by sex

ES.1-3 Number of learners in primary schools or equivalent non-school based settings reached with USG education assistance, disaggregated by sex, disability, affected by conflict or crisis, and experiencing marginalization

ES.1-46 Percentage of individuals who transition to further education or training following participation in USG-assisted programs

ES.1-56 Number of learners with improved access to education through USG-assisted programs, disaggregated by sex, disability, affected by conflict or crisis, and experiencing marginalization

ES.1-6 Number of educators who complete professional development activities with USG assistance, disaggregated by sex. Apply additional disaggregation for "trained in gender-responsive education content"

ES.1-60 Percentage of learners targeted for USG assistance who attain a minimum grade-level proficiency in math skills, disaggregated by sex

ES.2-55 Number of learners reached by USG-assisted higher education interventions, disaggregated by sex

Health

HL-4. Health System Responsiveness through Continuity of Care: Average of the service gaps between a) ANCI and ANC4; and b) DPT1/Penta1 and DPT3*/Penta3, in health system strengthening project catchment areas supported by USAID

HL.5.3-1 Number of health workers in newly filled, paid positions in the health sector resulting from direct or indirect USAID support. Apply additional sex-disaggregation

HL.7.2-2 Number of USG-assisted community health workers (CHWs) providing Family Planning (FP) information, referrals, and/or services during the year, disaggregated by sex

Democracy and Governance

GNDR-1 Number of laws, policies, or regulations drafted, proposed or adopted with USG assistance designed to promote gender equality or non-discrimination against women or girls in all their diversity at the international, national or sub-national level

GNDR-8 Number of persons trained with USG assistance to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations

YOUTH 6 Number of youth who complete USG-assisted leadership programs, disaggregated by sex

DR.3.3-2 Number of USG-assisted political parties implementing initiatives to increase the number of candidates and/or members who are women, youth and from marginalized groups

DR.4-1 Number of USG-supported activities designed to promote or strengthen the civic participation of women

DR.4.2-1 Number of human rights organizations trained and supported, disaggregated by groups working on women's rights and LGBTQI+ rights

DR.4.2-2 Number of civil society organizations (CSOs) receiving USG assistance engaged in advocacy interventions, disaggregated by groups working on LGBTQI+ issues, women's rights, indigenous people's rights, disability rights, and religious freedom

DR.4.3-1 Number of USG-assisted civil society organizations (CSOs) that participate in legislative proceedings and/or engage in advocacy with national legislature and its committees, disaggregated by groups working on women's rights, LGBTQI+ rights, disability rights, and religious freedom

DR.6.1-2 Number of human rights defenders trained and supported, disaggregated by sex, participants self-identifying as a member of the LGBTQI+ community, youth, persons with disabilities, ethnic minority, and religious minority

DR.6.3-1 Number of individuals from low-income or marginalized communities who received legal aid or victim's assistance with USG support

Peace and Conflict

GNDR-9 Number of training and capacity-building activities conducted with USG assistance that are designed to promote the participation of women or the integration of gender perspectives in security sector institutions or activities

GNDR-10 Number of local women participating in a substantive role or position in a peacebuilding process supported with USG assistance

DR.3.1-1 Number of USG-assisted consensus-building processes resulting in an agreement, disaggregated by women's rights issues, LGBTQI+ issues, and religious freedoms

DR.3.1-2 Number of groups trained in conflict mediation/resolution skills or consensus-building techniques with USG assistance, disaggregated by women's groups, groups working with LGBTQI+ issues, and indigenous groups

PS.5.1-24 Number of service providers that receive training, technical assistance, or capacity building in victim-centered and trauma-informed services for victims of human trafficking

PS.5.1-25 Number of victims of human trafficking receiving services (medical, repatriation, legal, transportation, etc.)

PS.6.2-1 Number of new groups or initiatives created through USG funding, dedicated to resolving the conflict or the drivers of the conflict. Add additional disaggregation for if the group or initiative is led by women or includes a focus on increasing the role of women

PS.6.2-4 Number of people who participated in USG-supported events, trainings, or activities designed to build mass support for peace and reconciliation, disaggregated by sex

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ANNEX G: ENDNOTES

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