



# OUR SAFE SPACES (OSS)

DEC. 2019 - NOV. 2022  
**PROJECT REPORT**

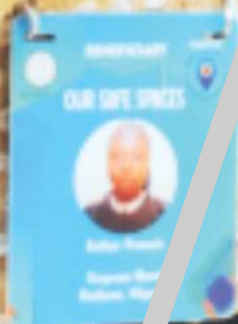


**November 2022**

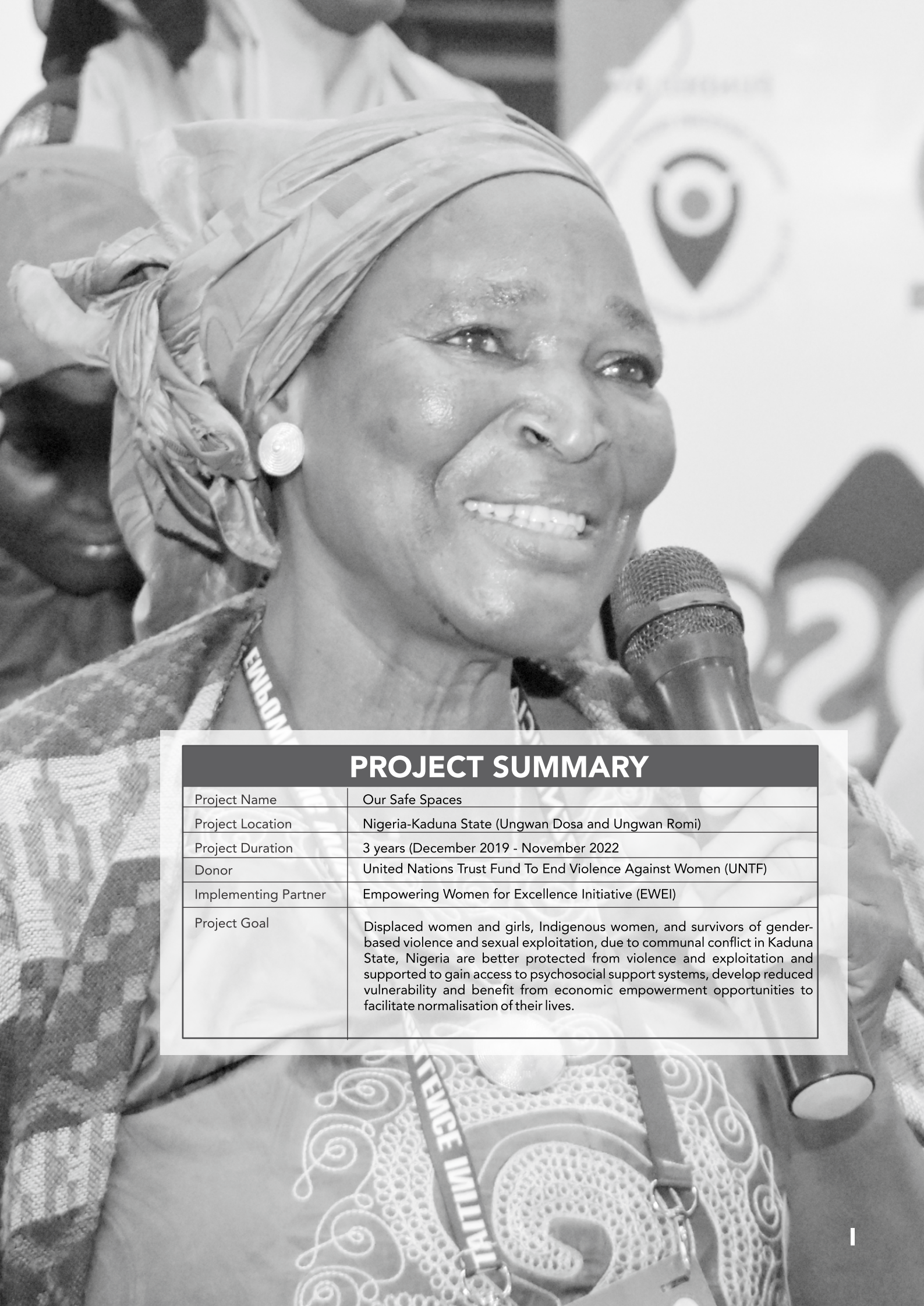


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## PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Name	Our Safe Spaces
Project Location	Nigeria-Kaduna State (Ungwan Dosa and Ungwan Romi)
Project Duration	3 years (December 2019 - November 2022)
Donor	United Nations Trust Fund To End Violence Against Women (UNTF)
Implementing Partner	Empowering Women for Excellence Initiative (EWEI)
Project Goal	Displaced women and girls, Indigenous women, and survivors of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation, due to communal conflict in Kaduna State, Nigeria are better protected from violence and exploitation and supported to gain access to psychosocial support systems, develop reduced vulnerability and benefit from economic empowerment opportunities to facilitate normalisation of their lives.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our Safe Spaces (OSS) project provides a non-existing intervention for women victims of violence in Kaduna State, where the only efforts being made are towards ending direct violence in a cycle of what seems to be an intractable conflict. There is no specific intervention organised for victims of communal violence who have now had to return to their communities or forcibly relocate without any options to restart their lives or heal. Nothing is being done to address the physical, psychological and economic losses suffered. Apart from the sharp physical polarisation in Kaduna state, breakdown of social cohesion and loss of lives and property, girls and women suffer the most from violence incidents and OSS provides beneficiaries support systems, a place to heal, receive economic support, and play a leading role in the calls for change.

Expected results include awareness and knowledge about the nature and impact of violence against women, providing professional support, rehabilitation activities, and facilitate healing and normalisation for women victims. We aim to provide beneficiaries a leading role in actions and engage with decision makers/influencers to highlight the multi-layered losses of VAWG.

Our strategies include; unearthing evidence for our work through consultations, monitoring, engaging victims through capacity building, counseling, empowerment, advocacy, and community mobilisation activities. In addition, we engage decision makers, and influencers in our mobilisation drives using media and storytelling. The activities are be participatory and closely monitored to help us adapt when necessary.

OSS was implemented in two semi-urban communities; Kaduna North LGA (Ungwan Dosa) and Kaduna South LGA (Ungwan Romi) Kaduna State, Nigeria. The OSS project was designed to work with 80 Primary Beneficiaries: 30 female refugees, 20 indigenous women from minority ethnic groups and 30 women/girl survivors of GBV aged between 20 to 59 years affected by violence in the family, violence in the community and violence perpetrated/condoned by the State.

OSS was implemented over a period of three years benefiting 80 primary beneficiaries and over 3.7 million secondary and indirect beneficiaries cutting across community members, government officials, and community based groups.





## ABOUT EWEI

Empowering Women for Excellence Initiative (EWEI) is a Non-Governmental Organisation founded in April 2008. EWEI was officially registered by the Corporate Affairs Commission of Nigeria in June 2008 and has been actively working to achieve her aims and objectives.



EWEI is also registered with the Kaduna State Government and its relevant ministries. In addition, EWEI sustains strong partnerships with agencies and organisations that include: African Women Development Fund (AWDF), Generations For Peace (GFP), International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Obama Foundation's Girls Opportunity Alliance (GOA), Salama Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women and Girls (UNTF) among others.

## MISSION

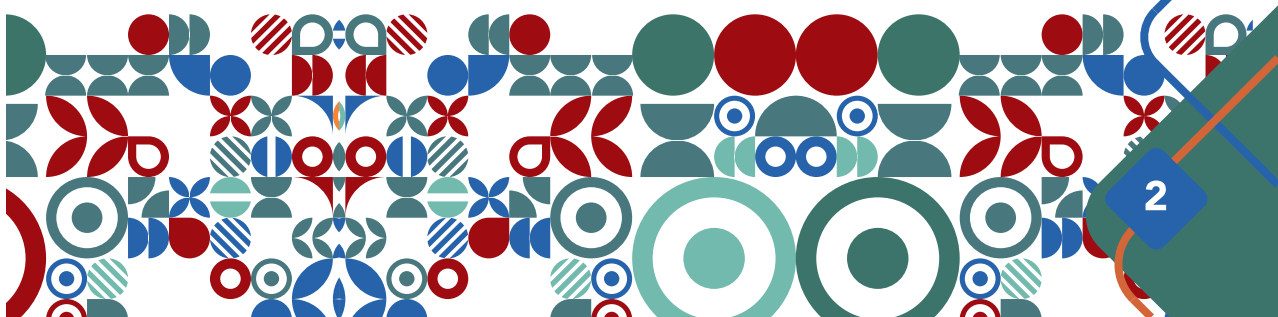
Provide multi-sectoral interventions towards the empowerment of girls and women.

## VISION

To achieve empowerment through enlightenment.

## CORE VALUES

- Excellence in service beyond business as usual
- Generous in sharing knowledge and resources to enhance learning
- Investing in and grooming leaders of change and impact





# ABOUT THE UN TRUST FUND TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (UNTF)



The UN Trust Fund is the only global grant-making mechanism that is dedicated exclusively to addressing all forms of violence against women and girls. The Fund is managed by UN Women on behalf of the UN System. The funds raised support initiatives by grantees that have a tangible and sustainable impact.

The UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) awards grants to initiatives that demonstrate that violence against women and girls can be systematically addressed, reduced and, with persistence, eliminated.

[www.untf.unwomen.org](http://www.untf.unwomen.org)



## BACKGROUND

In today's world, it is essential to support refugees and internally displaced women and girls who have experienced violence as well as to prevent and end violence against them. Statistics indicate that one in three women will experience physical or sexual abuse in their lifetimes, with one in three Nigerian women having done so by the age of 15 (NDHS 2013). In northern Nigeria, these incidents are more common because of some cultural practices and norms as well as the region's rising insurgency rate.

These horrifying figures demand action to safeguard the rights of women and girls in these communities.

Two semi-urban areas, Ungwan Romi and Ungwan Dosa, can be found in Kaduna State, which is in Nigeria's northwest geopolitical region. An estimated 50,000 individuals live in these settlements, with roughly 60% of them being women and 40% being men. Despite this, these communities' decision-making structures do not adequately reflect women.

In contrast to Ungwan Dosa, where there is only one woman leader who is not a direct member of the local council of 11 males, Ungwan Romi has just one woman leader in its local council of seven men.

These rural settlements are home to traders, government employees, and artisans. The majority of the women's income comes from the processing, cooking, and sale of food, clothing, leftovers, pots, medications, vegetable oils, and other small items.



These rural settlements are home to traders, government employees, and artisans. The majority of the women's income comes from the processing, cooking, and sale of food, clothing, leftovers, pots, medications, vegetable oils, and other small items.

Periodically, violent intercommunal conflict breaks out in Ungwan Romi and Ungwan Dosa, usually between farmers and herders. Women and girls are frequently the direct targets of these disputes or caught in the middle of them, suffering from eviction, property damage, or the loss of family breadwinners. Additionally, they are subjected to abuse in their families and communities, including sexual assault.

The employees of the non-governmental organization Empowering Women for Excellence Initiative (EWEI), which offers multi-sectoral interventions for the empowerment of women and girls, identified the culture of silence in Ungwan Dosa and Ungwan Romi during fieldwork. The data collected during this fieldwork revealed that these communities know very little to nothing about the types of gender-based violence, where to report it or who to report it to, what to do in that situation, and how it might be averted.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Due to this knowledge and talent gap, the Our Safe Spaces (OSS) project was launched by the Empowering Women for Excellence Initiative (EWEI) in collaboration with the United Nations Trust Fund (UNTF). The goal of this project was to aid women and girls in Kaduna state, Nigeria, who had experienced economic violence, sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, displacement, and gender-based violence. In order to help recipients' lives become more normal, Our Safe Spaces promotes their access to psychosocial support networks and chances for economic empowerment. By utilizing community-based and participatory methods, Our Safe Spaces also strives to strengthen community support for addressing violence against women and girls.

## PERSONS OF CONCERN (BENEFICIARIES)

With approximately 3.7 million indirect beneficiaries, Our Safe Spaces has directly benefited 80 women, 40 of whom come from each of the project communities of Ungwan Dosa and Ungwan Romi.

A diversity of ethnic groups, including Gbagyi, Jaba, Atyap, Bajju, Kagoma, Koro, Okun, Idoma, Kagoro, Hausa, Meriyan, Adara, Burah, and Marghi, are represented among the beneficiaries of the OSS project in these areas. The beneficiaries in these communities have dealt with a variety of forms of violence, including gender-based violence, economic violence, discrimination against ethnic minorities, and housing for internally displaced people from other communities that have dealt with banditry, communal violence, and farmers/herders crises.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The project team was able to carry out the project's activities thanks to the assistance of three technical experts and four project partners with backgrounds in working with women GBV survivors, empowering women, legal procedures, and psychosocial support. The critical path for the project was developed from the needs assessments that were carried out in these communities to address issues, impart knowledge, and assist with the identification of solutions within their communities.

The project held 11 seminars with its direct project beneficiaries between November 2019 and November 2022. It also held a seminar with community stakeholders, family members, security organizations, group leaders, and men and boys living in project communities. Additionally, there were four community mobilization activities, in which all project direct and indirect beneficiaries, community stakeholders, local residents, and other MDAs participated.



# COVID-19 INTERVENTION

During the Covid-19 pandemic, relief materials in the form of care-packages consisting of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) which included antiseptic soaps, face masks, disposable gloves, disinfectants and hand sanitisers, alongside staple food items, were distributed to all 80 primary beneficiaries in 3 consecutive phases. With the ease of lockdowns during the pandemic, the authorities enforced the use of PPE and social distancing for public gathering. OSS project activities were carried on with strict adherence to those standards to break the chain of the disease and ensure safety of staff and beneficiaries.



“The Covid-19 period was really hard for me and my family, my husband's work place was closed down so we couldn't feed well. Thanks to OSS, we had enough food and even helped other people. May god bless you.

- Beneficiary, Ung. Romi



# CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES

Four (4) Cooperative societies were launched in March 2021, 2 in each of the project communities, Cigaban Al'umma and Nasarallahi Women Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society Limited for Ungwan Dosa, Taimakon Juna and Unity Women Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society Limited for Ungwan Romi. Each cooperative society has 20 primary beneficiaries as members. The cooperative enhances the women's financial level, as they were also given capital to carry out businesses and gain income that they share to improve their finances. The cooperative office also serves as a Safe Space Centre within the communities, cases reported to the center are being referred to EWEI or any project partners for further investigations.



PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE TO CIGABAN AL'UMMA MULTI-PURPOSE COOPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD.



PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE TO UNITY WOMEN MULTI-PURPOSE COOPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD.



LAUNCHING OF UNGUWAN DOSA OSS OFFICE



LAUNCHING OF UNGUWAN ROMI OSS OFFICE



CROSS SECTION OF UNGUWAN ROMI OSS OFFICE



CROSS SECTION OF UNGUWAN DOSA OSS OFFICE



## THE IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

Through the Our Safe Spaces project, internally displaced women and girls, indigenous women and survivors of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation due to communal conflict in Ungwan Romi and Ungwan Dosa have been able to get the support they need.

Through seminars, OSS project beneficiaries are equipped with the capacity to create and facilitate peer support for women and girls in their communities, access psychosocial services, understanding and inclusion in community life, increase knowledge of rights and developing reduced vulnerability to violence/build resilience. Community mobilisation seminars were also held to sensitise the community members on reporting any form of GBV, to ensure community leaders and/or key decision makers and authorities advocate for changes in behaviors, attitudes or practices and take action to prevent and end VAW/G. During the community mobilization seminars, community stakeholders and beneficiaries came up with declarations and signed, showing ownership of the project and the need to EVAWG.





**EMPOWERING WOMEN FOR  
EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE (EWEI)**  
www.eweing.org



## UNGWAN DOSA COMMUNITY DECLARATION

**We the People of Ungwan Dosa Community (Traditional Leaders, Youth, Religious Leaders, Security Agencies, Women, and Community Members) Unanimously Agree That:**

- We will continue to support the “Our Safe Spaces” programme in our community – the beneficiaries shall be given support in handling GBV/VAWG and the OSS Cooperatives
- We will not condone anyone who abandons his family – Every family man must be responsible for his family, failure to do that, such a person will be reported to the Joint Task Force (JTF) and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC)
- We will report all cases of Gender-Based Violence/Violence against Women and Girls to the Joint Task Force (JTF) and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC)
- We will not stigmatise survivors of GBV in our community
- We will continue to sensitise our community members on the dangers of Violence Against Women and Girls
- We will not entertain sentiments while reporting any Gender-Based Violence case and in supporting our Local security (Joint Task Force) to follow-up with suspected perpetrator who refuses to cooperate
- Our Traditional Leaders will always be notified on Gender-Based Violence cases and shall be an integral actor in resolving Family related Violence.
- We will actively monitor and secure schools in our community to ensure that teachers and students are not violated
- Rape cases will be forwarded to the State authorities through Joint Task Force to Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) after hospital diagnosis and when we see cases of GBV, we will inform Joint Task Force (JTF) Personnel
- We will follow up with the JTF Personnel to ensure they prosecute the abusers of women and children
- Men should not just only allow their wives with responsibility for taking care of their home and children
- Parent and teachers especially English and Islamic school teachers will also engage actively in children's upbringing.
- School administrators should know the kind of teachers they employ so that they will not end up abusing the children or not caring about the children's good upbringing.
- Hawking by young girls will not be allowed because perpetrators take advantage of these vulnerable girls.
- Parents and or Guardian should not give out their children as domestic workers – this will be treated as child labour

[illegible]



## UNGWAN ROMI COMMUNITY DECLARATION

**We the People of Ungwan Romi Community (Traditional Leaders, Youth, Religious Leaders, Security Agencies, Women, and Community Members)**

**Unanimously Agree That:**

- We will continue to actively support the OSS-led Cooperative activities and Safe Space Centre to End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG).
- Once any Gender-Based Violence (GBV) perpetrator is caught, the perpetrator will be made to face the full wrath of the law.
- Our Traditional Leaders will not interfere with the process of justice or cover up any suspected perpetrator regardless of their social class.
- We agree not to allow sentiments deter us from reporting and following up GBV cases.
- The community shall ensure that health facilities within the community attend to survivors of Violence Against Women and Girls.
- We will provide support for survivors of GBV ensuring that survivors get justice and perpetrators of all forms of GBV/VAWG are prosecuted.
- We will not be afraid to report any case of GBV.
- We will not discriminate against the reporters of GBV.
- We will continue to promote good behaviours among community members on the prevention of violence against women and girls.
- We will continue to create awareness in the community on the effect of violence against women and girls and penalties.



*Handwritten signatures of community members in blue ink, arranged in several rows below the group photo.*

# CRITICAL PATH



DECEMBER 2020

Session One | Business Conceptualisation

## MAIN SESSION

Beneficiaries understand what economic violence means and how financial literacy can help solve that problem. They also gain knowledge of what business, how to be an entrepreneurs, who their target market should be and how to do a feasibility study.

## CONFIDENCE BUILDING SESSION

Beneficiaries understand what economic violence means and how financial literacy can help solve that problem. They also gain knowledge of what business, how to be an entrepreneurs, who their target market should be and how to do a feasibility study.



JANUARY 2021

Session One | Business Management

## MAIN SESSION

Beneficiaries to have basic knowledge of SWOT analysis, Understand leadership aspect of human resource, Understand personal branding and Marketing strategies. They also learn how Financial independence can end Violence against Women and Girls.

## CONFIDENCE BUILDING SESSION

Storytelling: beneficiaries learn how to share their stories.



DECEMBER 2020

Session One | Business Conceptualisation

## MAIN SESSION

Beneficiaries understand how to source for capital, learn proper saving culture and the basics of return on investment (ROI)

## CONFIDENCE BUILDING SESSION

Beneficiaries learn effective communication skills: Advocacy



# KEY FINDINGS

## EXPECTED RESULTS:

The expected changes are beneficiaries' knowledge of their rights, improved economic status, improved capacity to cope with and become reconciled to everyday life, and enhanced competence to provide peer support to other victims of violence against girls and women. In addition, the expected changes are increased levels of inclusion in community life; awareness to facilitate their access to community resources and the reduction of vulnerability to exploitation and/or violence.

## OUTCOME 1

Improved beneficiary access to psychosocial support and develop their capacities on economic empowerment, awareness on GBV and response and prevention of GBV.

67% of 78 project beneficiaries indicated an increased level of awareness on accessing psychosocial support systems while 48% of project beneficiaries benefited from psychosocial support system (counseling) 67% of 78 project beneficiaries provided Level 1 psychosocial support to their peers in the communities.

71% of 78 project beneficiaries during mentoring and monitoring visits indicated an increased levels of understanding and identifying inappropriate conducts that exposes women and girls to exploitation and vulnerability to violence.

The beneficiaries have developed improved capacities in the business management. During the monitoring visits, 91% of the 78 beneficiaries visited said they were more cautious on savings and investment and were able to remain committed to the cooperative.

## OUTCOME 3

Increase the availability of evidence to strengthen advocacy and programme interventions aimed at ending violence against women and gender-based violence.

34.67% of 300 community members during the endline surveys indicated that at least 1 – 9 incidents of violence against girls/women and gender-based violence do have occurred over the past six months in their communities

37% of 78 project primary beneficiaries have increased level of confidence to share personal stories.

## OUTCOME 2

Supportive attitudes and behaviours among communities and institutions towards the prevention of GBV and ending violence against women is improved

Through the community mobilisation activities, community members and institutions demonstrated improved supportive attitudes and behaviours towards the prevention of GBV and ending violence against women by signing the declaration on VAWG. 86% of 176 Community members strongly agree that stigmatisation of survivors should not be accommodated in their communities while nonchalant attitude especially with family should be reported. 90% of 176 community members strongly agreed to support survivors and take appropriate actions against perpetrators.

53% of 300 community members during the endline surveys are aware of the existence of any kind of community support network(s) that address VAWG/GBV and can now make referrals to survivors or lodge in complains.

Only 6.67% of 300 community members during the endline surveys reported that they will walk away from a man who is beating his wife on the street, meaning 93.33% will take different form of actions to support the survivor.

## OUTCOME 4

Empowering Women for Excellence Initiative is institutionally strengthened to sustainably respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises whilst maintaining or adapting existing interventions to EVAW/G with a focus on the most vulnerable women and girls.

Project staff members trained on the operation of GBV toll-free helpline are more confident in addressing VAWG via phone calls.

A GBV toll-free helpline (08003934000) was established

Recruited two Outreach and Fundraising Specialists

Project staff members trained on the 58% of 24 staff and management had increased levels of resiliency to crises including COVID-19

70% of 7 senior staff members have increased capacity in institutional risk mitigation and contingency planning.

# CHALLENGES

- The COVID 19 pandemic lockdown halted the progress of the project. The 24-hour lockdown forced both beneficiaries and staff to remain indoors for 4 months thereby stopping all project activities. In view of this, bigger venues had to be gotten to adhere to COVID 19 measures.
- The shock of the Nigerian government's June 4, 2021 banning of Twitter still reverberates. The Nigerian government banned the social media platform after Twitter deemed harmful and deleted a tweet by President Muhammadu Buhari which suggested that the state would use violence against the Igbo ethnic group. Since then, many have speculated that the government's suspension of the microblogging platform was also in retaliation for Twitter's support for the youth-led October 2020 #ENDSARS movement against police brutality. The ban affected our already started campaign with the Hashtags #TalkTheTalk #Everybodysbusiness #UNTF as most of the key audience like the youths, activists and government officials that would have helped us amplify their voices using the microblogging platform was suspended. The ban on Twitter means that about 40 million users in Nigeria who are mostly young people (our major target audience) would be unable to access the service through local service providers. The ban means Nigeria's government is afraid of listening to its own citizens, especially the young ones.
- According to NOI Polls in November 2019, "Twitter users in Nigeria said that it is most effective in gaining attention for an issue or trending topic like #EVAWG #StopGBV #EndGBV
- The shutdown of telecommunication services in parts of the state by the Government as a critical measure towards crushing bandits in their identified hideouts. The shutdown of telecommunication services In our community of project Implementation posed the problem of no access to Internet connectivity and also people were unable to reach us via our GBV toll-free helplines In areas where the telecommunication services were cut off.
- The successes from the OSS Cooperative among project beneficiaries necessitated the need to check in with their spouses and fathers to ascertain their level of acceptance to the beneficiaries' improved economic status.
- Within the period we lost a project beneficiary from Ungwan Dosa in the person of Zulaihat Muhammed on 20/04/2022, after child delivery.



## ACTIONS TAKEN

A Flash survey was conducted by OSS staff on the beneficiaries to ensure their safety by understanding their situation during the lockdown. OSS staff gained an official pass as essential workers and also adhered to strict COVID-19 precautionary measures during the survey period. The OSS project team planned for a bigger venue for further OSS seminars as well as provision of PPEs for all attendees which has been proposed under the Spotlight Initiative Additional Funding for COVID-19.

The ban on Twitter did not deter us, although our carefully selected Social Media Influencers are seasoned professionals in advocacy on not just Twitter but Facebook, they kept on tweeting using VPN on their personal Twitter handles with their audience which helps them in amplifying their voices and were still engaging with few of their followers who were mostly not Nigerians. We leveraged on Facebook, knowing it's a great tool for amplifying messages and visibility. The influencers had to turn all the lukewarm "Likes" into advocacy action, lickety-split. They worked daily with the goal to engage a larger audience to act using all the above hashtags and tagging stakeholders involved

We leveraged more on the jingle which was aired on two radio stations with good coverage. The jingles were aired in both English and Hausa Languages respectively. Aside from the jingle passing the message of our GBV Toll-free helpline, it also gave the audience our address so when there was the report of cases and the ban on telecommunication that limit people to report cases. They were able to trace our offices which serve as both the cooperative for the 80 beneficiaries. The two offices are situated in both communities.

We were able to conduct a one-on-one field visit to the identified spouses and fathers of the project beneficiaries. They expressed their gratitude to the project, stating that the current economic situation in the country has created so much pressure on them but that pressure has been lessened with the support they get from their spouses through the OSS cooperative.

A condolence visit was paid to the family at the time of her demise.

### **Expected situation of targeted beneficiaries at project's end.**

Main changes include reduction in participation in VAWG and commitment to action to address VAWG

Secondary beneficiaries: 31.25% community members have very high willingness to support the prevention of GBV and EVAW, 43.75% have high, 21.25% have medium and 3.75% have low.

# ACHIEVEMENT

- 1) Conducted 12 Quarterly technical meetings with project partners and EVAWG/GBV experts with staff to review project activities for the successful implementation of the project.
- 2) Conducted two introductory visits with community leaders and influencers; one in each project communities
- 3) Selected 80 primary beneficiaries; 40 each from the project communities
- 4) Conducted data collection in Unguwan Romi and Unguwan Dosa communities to confirm the context and issues and conducted baseline surveys.
- 5) Held Two one day orientation seminars with Unguwan Dosa and Unguwan Romi to introduce project and objectives.
- 6) Engaged two outreach and fundraising specialists.
- 7) Provided, and distributed Care Packages to 80 OSS beneficiaries, and in other to adhere to the COVID 19 preventive measures, we provided bigger venues for 6 out of the 8 seminars we held.
- 8) Successfully conducted eleven OSS seminars; Knowledge of rights, Access to Psychosocial support systems, Vulnerability and its Effects, Developing Reduced Vulnerability to violence and build Resilience, Understanding Our Community, Inclusion in Community Life, Providing Peer support and Creating and Facilitating Peer Support, Business Conceptualization, Business Management and Financial Management. There was also a confidence-building session incorporated in each seminar which includes Communications skills, Advocacy skills and Storytelling skills all in the context of EVAWG.
- 9) All the Seminars conducted were delivered based on adult learning principles that were facilitator-led, but utilised various interactive facilitation methods like Group review, Meta planning, Multi-voting, Ranking, Reverse brainstorming, Storytelling, three stars and Working In Pairs and Trios.
- 10) One reflection seminar for staff, partners, and technical experts
- 11) Conducted our Social media campaign tagged "Make We Talk The Talk" season one to raise awareness and advocate to EVAWG. This activity achieved the outcome 2 which is "Supportive attitudes and behaviours among communities and institutions towards the prevention of GBV and ending violence against women is improved".
- 12) Conducted a capacity building on facilitation methodology for project partners, EVAWG/GBV experts and project staff.
- 13) Conducted fourteen mentoring and monitoring visits.
- 14) Conducted one monitoring visit with spouses and relatives of project beneficiaries to ascertain their levels of comfort with the economic improvement of the beneficiaries from the OSS cooperatives.
- 15) Marked International Women's Day and Inaugurated four OSS women's cooperatives.
- 16) Commissioned the OSS cooperative offices in both communities-each office space is for two cooperatives and it serves as a safe space for project beneficiaries to have meetings on the progress of the cooperatives and also provide support to themselves and other women in their various communities
- 17) One of the beneficiaries in Unguwan Dosa community who happens to be the secretary of Cigaban Al'umma OSS cooperative utilized the cooperative office to train other women who have no skill and are not into any business art of knitting clothing in order to empower them.
- 18) Conducted two community mobilisation planning meetings (one in each project community with project beneficiaries) where project beneficiaries identified community members who will be relevant to support EVAWG
- 19) Conducted Men's sensitisation seminar for hundred and nine men and boys who are relatives of the 80 project beneficiaries, community and religious leaders, youth groups, community members, and three women leaders.
- 20) Provision of telecommuting equipment - Five MiFi was provided alongside its internet subscription. Each department in EWEI was given one to enable effective work while working remotely.
- 21) Provision of equipment for helplines- Five smartphone devices were given to project staff who were trained on operating the helpline. One unique toll-free number (+234 8003934000) was activated to route through the five devices whereby, survivors could call in without bearing the cost for any call.
- 22) Successfully conducted a Two Days training on Institutional Risk Mitigation and Contingency Planning for senior management team members.
- 23) Conducted One Day Step-down training on institutional risk mitigation and contingency planning for 7 non-profit women's groups and organisations.
- 24) Conducted one self-care retreat and reflection seminar with project staff, experts and partners
- 25) Conducted four community mobilisation activities (two at each project location)
- 26) Developed and produced a short project documentary
- 27) Conducted and developed endline report
- 28) To date 66 incidence of GBV have been recorded within this period



# Success stories



“  
I learnt a lot from these seminars. This programme has given me the opportunity to speak out more, especially at home. I do not have any GBV experience but I feel confident enough to take up GBV cases and fight for GBV survivors. We have a serious case of substance abuse in my area. I think I'll try to make a change in my society by influencing them positively. - **Beneficiary, Ung. Dosa**

A major issue that has been disturbing me has been survivor blaming/shaming after rape. I have now understood that such act is equally damaging to the victim and also wrong. I have taken it upon myself to help with GBV helpline contacts by making referrals and also contact such centers in confidentiality whenever people try to cover up rape cases. This programme has improved my ethno-religious tolerance, team work and collaboration. I have improved my public speaking skills and my knowledge and experience about GBV has increased.

**Beneficiary, Ung. Romi**

“  
I learnt my full rights as a woman from these seminars. I understand that I can fight for my rights for free. I am a medical personnel and I am happy to know that free medical services exists for SGBV survivors. I used to mediate between my friend and her husband who was a survivor of domestic violence. Things have changed for them and the violence has reduced.

**Beneficiary, Ung. Romi**

I never knew taking up legal action against rape was free. I always heard people tell rape survivors to leave it to God. Rape was always kept a secret in my community. Learning about free legal and health services for rape survivors and punishment for perpetrators has given me the confidence to advocate against GBV and inform people to stop stigmatising and shaming the victims. Whenever I come for this seminar, I go home and teach the people I live with. I try to get them to be more vigilant about their children's whereabouts. I make them understand that sometimes, underage rape doesn't happen at once. These perpetrators secretly teach their victims sex by forming a bond with them. Most times, it is not forceful rape but leveraging on a child's vulnerability. My house is a compound house with several families living together. Some of them complain and get irritated by my advocacy. I wish we could be taught how to properly advocate against GBV.

- **Beneficiary, Ung. Dosa**

Before the creation of this OSS cooperative office in our community, GBV cases were played down by family members but the presence of the office now provides us with an option to report such case." -

“ **Secondary beneficiary**

We are happy about this project, it is really helping our women. The safe space within our community has helped to raise awareness of GBV and people now know that they will be punished for any form of GBV perpetrated"

- Elder, Ung. Romi

I want to appreciate UNTF for the support they are giving through this project, it has really helped our women that are involved to be more independent and pay close attention to GBV issues. It has also helped their income level as well, which helps them to contribute in their homes"

- Secondary beneficiary, Ung. Romi

## THE MAIN LESSONS LEARNED

The main lessons learned include;

- We realised that there was no pre-existing evidence of knowledge of GBV in target communities; Ungwan Romi and Ungwan Dosa communities.

- During the beneficiary selection process, we noticed that there were a lot of GBV survivors within Ungwan Romi and Ungwan Dosa communities.

- Partnership with experts made the planning process and referrals of cases easier through the sharing of knowledge with project partner organisations.

- Most of the beneficiaries were willing to open up, share the experiences and engage more in activities after the first enlightenment seminar.

- The diversity of our beneficiaries ( about 15 ethnicities and 2 religions) indicated that GBV is not peculiar to a single ethnicity or religion.

- From the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, we have learned to plan for emergencies like crises and possible pandemic during risk identification process for future project activities.

- Financial independence is key to the reduction of GBV as spouses of project beneficiaries expressed gratitude for the support they get from their spouse likewise the project beneficiaries are now less dependent thereby having less confrontation with their spouse. It is important to incorporate economic empowerment in the programming of EVAWG.

- Partnership with experts made the planning process and referrals of cases easier through the sharing of knowledge with project partner organisations, this made the sessions with beneficiaries easier to access.

- The counselling sessions were made easy because the beneficiaries were willing to open up, share their experiences and engage

The key lessons learned that can feed into learning and planning of new projects/ initiatives include;

- The flow of the critical path for the eight OSS seminar is tailored towards the achievement of the overall project goals.

- Most beneficiaries understood messages in the Hausa language better than in English and also communicated effectively in Hausa. This was identified during the engagement with beneficiaries as their educational level was not a criterion for beneficiary selection.

- The accountability boxes placed at the seminar venue shortly after the lockdown proved to be helpful, as beneficiaries were able to communicate effectively via messages dropped in the box, this messages gave rise to some activities that will be implemented from year two and also some energisers to improve participation of beneficiaries.

- The simplicity of our Pre and post surveys during the seminars shortly after the lockdown provided our intended results for carrying out the surveys.

- Towards the end of the seminar, we noticed that beneficiaries were time conscious and this helped with finishing each activity on time.

- As a result of our open communication channel, Our beneficiaries were able to reach out and enquire about certain aspects of the projects that they find difficult or enquire about non-related project issues.

- The first tranche of care packages distributed to the 80 beneficiaries was a huge relief as it to some extent cushioned the effect of the hardship and low income revenue that came about as a result of the COVID 19 lockdown which crippled many business activities.

- The stakeholders were willing to discuss issues that linger within their communities and find possible solutions.

- During mentoring and monitoring visits/sessions at SARC, project beneficiaries showed togetherness in their interactions with one another, this shows an increased level of acceptance amongst them.



# AWARDS

Empowering Women for Excellence Initiative (EWEI), also emerged the winner of the Hajiya Gambo Sawaba Community Impact Award (Company) in the 2020 Community Engagement and Human Rights (CAHR) Awards following a rigorous nomination and voting process with a final review by the Awards Jury.

## **SOME OF THE SUCCESSES ACHIEVED INCLUDES;**

- A case of a lady who was gang rape, gagged, tied up, beaten, drugged and abandoned in an uncompleted building within one of our project locations. Workers at the site found her in the morning and raised an alarm, a project beneficiary was notified about the incident and called through the helpline. We were able to take the lady to Salama Sexual Assault and Referral Center for medicals and psychosocial services. Unfortunately, perpetrators are yet to be identified, investigation is ongoing.
- We have also recorded fifteen domestic violence report via the GBV toll-free helpline and have made referrals to our legal partners.
- The civilian Joint task force (JTF) in Ungwan dosa unexpectedly offering an office for the OSS project to report GBV/EVAW cases. This gesture signifies to an extent, the positive impact of the orientation seminar on these secondary beneficiaries.
- One of the traditional Male leaders in Ungwan Dosa recounted a GBV case that the parent of the survivors tried to cover up, but he took up the case and referred to the security agencies. This happened during the orientation seminar which created a safe atmosphere for the secondary beneficiaries to share past GBV experiences with OSS project staff.
- The buddy system introduced during the first OSS seminar Ice- breaker created a bond among the 80 beneficiaries. The ungwan Dosa- Ungwan-Romi pairing helped to promote ethnic and religious tolerance and provide a support system for these beneficiaries. We received a call from one of the beneficiaries in Ungwan Romi during the COVID-19 lockdown who excitedly expressed how her buddy has helped her cope during the lockdown and how she is looking forward to the continuation of project activities.
- During the flash survey within the COVID-19 lockdown period, a beneficiary in Ungwan Romi reported a GBV case experienced by her friend which we followed up and made referrals to our project partner; International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA). This indicates that the beneficiary understood the importance of psychosocial support and access to its systems.
- As a result of our Social media campaign and also online advocacies via social media like the 16Days of Activism to EVAWG we had some notable partnership calls from both local and international women led organisations whose aim are also towards tackling VAWG.
- A beneficiary referred her family member who was a survivor of an economic form of violence and exploitation; we were able to take up the case and referred the woman in question to our project partner; International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) who are currently working to see that she gets a fair hearing. We have also recorded drastic progress judging from the surveys and the ability of beneficiaries to recall and know what to do per time in EVAWG, this is in line with our project goal which is " Displaced women and girls, indigenous women and survivors of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation, due to communal conflict in Kaduna State, Nigeria are better protected from violence and exploitation, and supported to gain access to psychosocial support systems, develop reduced vulnerability and benefit from economic empowerment opportunities to facilitate normalisation of their lives.

# THE PROJECT TEAM

The project team was made up of eight project staff, supported by three technical experts and four project partners with experiences of working with women GBV survivors, women empowerment, legal practices and psychosocial support. These project staff with the support of experts and partners were able to implement the project activities. A critical path was developed from the needs assessments which was conducted in these project communities to address issues, pass on knowledge and identify solutions for issues faced within the communities.



## SUSTAINABILITY

The OSS project has successfully built the resiliency of primary beneficiaries and their confidence in both preventive and responsive approaches to addressing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in their local communities through the OSS seminars. These capacities are critical to sustaining community advocacy, campaign, and response to VAWG.

The GBV toll-free helpline will continue to provide real-time response to VAWG thereby combating incidence of GBV in communities.

The community declaration to fight against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and support to survivors, demands stakeholders, community members, and community groups to be committed in the fight against SGBV.

The OSS women cooperatives will continue to support the primary beneficiaries economically, and is open to women and girls within these communities.

The safe space center in both communities serves as a point of convergence for the OSS women cooperative and survivors.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Endline survey conducted indicates that there is a high percentage of spousal abuse recorded in these communities. Thus, we are calling on State actors to expedite actions to strengthen mechanism for the functionality of family courts in addressing this form of violence, as well as continuous sensitisation of citizens about the existence of these courts.

Economic empowerment programmes for women and girls should be holistic. These programmes should not end at skill acquisition but there should be start-up resources provided to facilitate the financial independence of women and girls.

The State Government should deploy more social welfare officers to LGAs, at least, one per ward. This will aid in rapid and efficient response to survivors.

There is need for more safe space centers in communities. These centers should have designated psychologists, counselors, and security personnel.

SGBV call center should be created to harness the various helplines available in the State and aid coordination of referral systems to provide quick response to survivors.

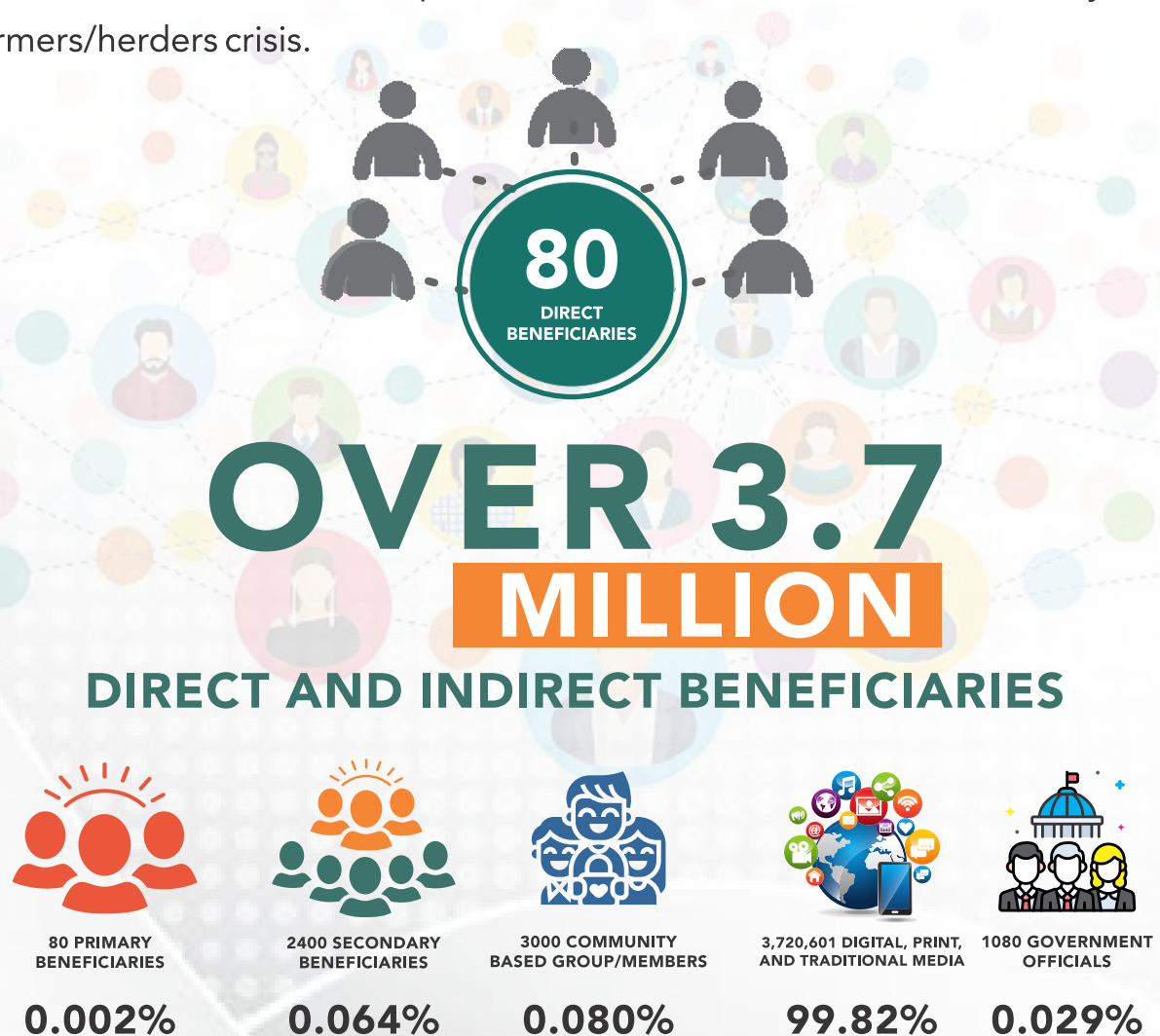
Working with men and boys as allies is essential to ending VAWG. There should be increased engagement of men and boys in programme design to prevent and respond to VAWG.



# TOTAL REACH

OSS has directly engaged 80 women, 40 from each of the project communities of Ungwan Dosa and Ungwan Romi, with the project also indirectly benefiting over 3,727,161 beneficiaries.

The Our Safe Spaces project beneficiaries in these communities are from various ethnic groups, including Gbagyi, Jaba, Atyap, Bajju, Kagoma, Koro, Okun, Idoma, Kagoro, Meriyan, Adara, Burah and Marghi. The beneficiaries in these communities have experienced different categories of violence- from Gender-Based Violence, economic violence, ethnic minority discrimination and have also accommodated internally displaced persons from other communities that have experienced communal violence, banditry and farmers/herders crisis.



## GBV TOLL FREE HELPLINE

EWEI launched a Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Toll-Free helpline to enable persons call in to report cases of GBV at a no-cost tariff. Project staff members were trained to use the GBV toll-free helpline to proffer solutions to individuals who call to report GBV incidents. Dissemination of the GBV toll-free helpline was done using social media influencers, online posts, radio jingles, stickers and fliers, and through the community members who served as vanguards for this cause. With the help of the Toll-free helpline, several GBV cases have been received, and justice has been brought for these women.



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**0800 393 4000**



# GALLERY

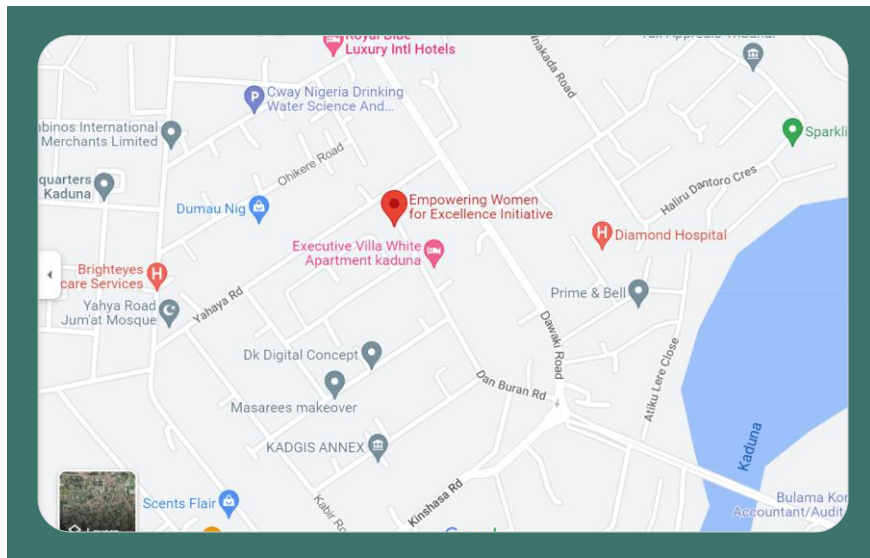









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