

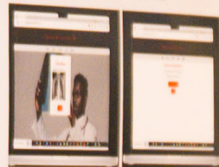
Book of Abstracts



... was deployed on a ... enabling healthcare ... to upload CXR images and receive ... instant diagnostic feedback

RESULTS

The CNN model achieved an accuracy of 52%, sensitivity 48%, specificity 44%, and precision 44% on the test dataset. While the performance was moderate compared to similar studies, results highlighted there was a need to use a more homogenous data set that can help improve the model's effectiveness



CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

This study shows the potential of AI in supporting pneumonia diagnosis for radiologists. Limitations include the need for more diverse data to improve model performance. Recommendations include further research on data augmentation and model interpretability.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design: The goal of the CNN-based model to classify chest X-rays as normal or pneumonia

Datasets: 5,863 CXRs from FMC Owerri (Nigeria) and Guangzhou Medical Center (China); split 80% training, 20% testing

Data Preprocessing: Normalization: Pixel values standardized across images; Augmentation: Rotation, flipping, and zooming applied to improve generalization and reduce overfitting

Model Development: The model was built using TensorFlow. It consisted of convolutional layers for feature extraction, max-pooling layers for dimensionality reduction, and fully connected layers for classification into normal or pneumonia

Model Training and Evaluation: The model was trained using categorical cross-entropy loss and Adam optimizer

GENDER AND INCLUSION SUMMIT 2025

New Voices & New Approaches
for Accelerating an Inclusive
Society

Book of Abstracts



Published by the Policy Innovation Centre, Abuja

Original material in this book of abstracts may be reproduced with the permission of the publisher, provided that (1) the material is not reproduced for sale or profitable gain, (2) the author is informed, and (3) the material is prominently identified as coming from the 2025 Gender and Inclusion Summit: The Book of Abstracts.

The authors are responsible for the content of their abstracts and warrant that their abstract is original. The views expressed in the abstracts in this publication are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily shared by the editor or the reviewers.

Editors:

Jessica Vakporaye, Research Associate
Oluwabusola Elizabeth Oni, Research Officer
Ajet Goodness Oluwadamilare, Research Assistant

Policy Innovation Centre

Partners & Sponsors

Gates
Foundation

Ford
Foundation

Luminate



dga | ALBRIGHT
STONEBRIDGE
GROUP

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

UN WOMEN



Self Help
AFRICA
beyond aid

International
Budget
Partnership

FP
2030

MADE
possible
By Family Planning

NIGERIA
GOVERNORS
SPOUSES' FORUM

PLAN
INTERNATIONAL
Until we are all equal

WEMA BANK

SARA

WOMEN IN
LEADERSHIP

SCIDAR
SOLINA CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH

NILE
NILE ONLINE
MEMBER UNITED UNIVERSITIES

access

IEH
Innovative Evidence & Impact Hub

MSI
NIGERIA
REPRODUCTIVE
CHOICES

tearfund

NOIPolls
POLLING | ANALYTICS | DATABASE | STRATEGY

AFRICA HUB FOR
INNOVATION &
DEVELOPMENT
VALUE :: IMPACT :: POSSIBILITIES

gtge
Integrated Services Group

UBA
United Bank for Africa

NIGERIA
HEALTH
WATCH
Advanced monitoring, intelligence and insights on the Nigerian health sector

XV
XAVIER VALKA CONCEPT

AXA

WRITHY

NIGERIA
NATIONAL PLASTIC
ACTION PARTNERSHIP

ecobarter

Table of Content

Rethinking Male Engagement in Ending Gender-Based Violence

Presenting Author: Eseoghene Adams

15

Characterizing e-Pharmacy Readiness for Family Planning Among Young Women in Lagos, Nigeria

Presenting Author: Mohammed M Alhaji

16

Education Builds Protection: Comparing SRHR Knowledge Between Scholarship Girls and Out-of-School Adolescents in Underserved Nigerian Communities

Presenting Author: Queen Ugwoeru

17

Visual Voices beyond entertainment; Leveraging Creative Media in Shaping Gender Discourse Through Community Screenings.

Presenting Author: Omileha Isaac

18

Project Agbebi: A blueprint for transforming maternal care in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Bamidele Oyewum

19

Invisible Labor, Visible Gains: Gendered Dimensions of Waste Reuse and Agricultural Sustainability

Presenting Author: Chibuzo Nwagboso

20

The Role of Women's Groups in Community Mobilization for Primary Health Services in Southern Nigeria: A Qualitative Study

Presenting Author: Victory Ekpın

21

The Impact of Menstrual Health Challenges and Inadequate Sanitation on School Attendance Among Adolescent Girls in Conflict-Affected Adamawa State.

Presenting Author: Praise Okoro

22

**Disrupting Harmful Gender Norms to End Child Marriage:
Insights from a Human-Centred Study with Stakeholders
in Oyo State, Nigeria**

Presenting Author: Seyi Anwo

23

**Effect of Mobile Phone-based Education on HIV Self- Testing
uptake by Female Sex Workers in Bayelsa State, Nigeria:
A Quasi-experimental Study**

Presenting Author: Oluwayemisi A. Adaka

24

**Mobilizing Male Allies for Community-Led Gender Justice:
Lessons from the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Champions
Project in Abuja.**

Presenting Author: Gladys Emmanuel

25

**Bridging the gap: leveraging AI technologies to reduce gender
inequality in the Nigerian educational sector**

Presenting Author: Onyinye Onuh

26

**Community-Led Interventions to Improve SRH Access and
Reduce SGBV among Adolescent Girls and Young Women in
Jos, Nigeria**

Presenting Author: Caroline Onwuezobe

27

**Nested Effects of Social Support on Gender-Based Violence
and School Engagement: A Large-Scale Multilevel Study
from Nigeria**

Presenting Author: Adewumi Adediran

28

**Leveraging SEMAs to Deliver Emergency Agricultural
Assistance to Women in Fragile AgriFood Systems in Nigeria**

Presenting Author: Karen Jay-Yina

29

**Collaborative Intervention On Food Security And Sustainable
Farming: Advancing Innovation, Policy, And Women's Empowerment
In Agriculture**

Presenting Author: Stephanie Mkpuefuna

30

**Towards Inclusive Mobility: An Assessment of Gender-Specific
Barriers to Public Transport Access in Ibadan**

Presenting Author: Julius Ajayi

31

Digital by Design, Not by Default: Inclusion Lessons from Edo State Civil Service

Presenting Author: Oladunni Adenuga

32

Comprehensive examination of the knowledge, perception, and intention of continuation of female genital mutilation among male proteges of traditional circumcisers.

Presenting Author: Olayinka Adebajo

33

Strengthening Food Security through Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships: A Gendered Analysis of Women's Participation in Sustainable Agriculture in Jos South, Plateau State, Nigeria.

Presenting Author: Oluwaseyi Adeolowu

34

A systematic literature review of strategies for advancing women's leadership in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Victoria Ajinomoh1

35

Advancing women's economic empowerment through community-driven WAG models: Lessons from the Nigeria for Women Project (NFWP)

Presenting Author: Chinedu Onuselogu

36

Amplifying Unheard Voices: Mothers' Knowledge and Agency as Catalysts for Inclusive Education and Gender Equity in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Basirat Rasag-Shuaib

37

Advancing Gender Equity and Lifelong Learning through CRoWN: A Community-Driven Approach to Reducing Zero-Dose Children in Northern Nigeria

Presenting Author: Halima Buba

38

Enhancing Adult Vaccine Uptake through Evidence-Based Social and Behavior Change Interventions in Nigeria: Insights from COVID-19

Presenting Author: Maryam Ado Haruna

39

Leveraging Hyper Local Seedling Hubs in Northern Nigeria to Improve Farmers Practice of Climate-Smart Agriculture

Presenting Author: Zainab Haruna

40

Strengthening Food Security through Gender Sensitive Community Engagement: Insights from a Cross-Country Study on Chicken Meat and Egg Consumption

Presenting Author: Fadila Jumare

41

Rooted in Confidence: Empowering Girls for Leadership from the School Level Up

Presenting Author: Osaretine Famous

42

Improving Access to Family Planning in Bauchi State: Designing a Locally Led Strategy to Strengthen Demand for Reproductive Health Services

Presenting Author: Afeez Olajire

43

Girls with Vision: Nurturing Leadership and Community through the National Head Girl Project

Presenting Author: Olamide Akin-Alabi

44

Assessing how public infrastructure marginalizes women with disabilities: A Study of Yola North and Yola South, Adamawa State

Presenting Author: Wesley Markus Kutte

45

Accessibility and Utilization of Sexual and Reproductive Health Services among Inmates in a Correctional Center, Southwest Nigeria

Presenting Author: Boluwatife Sofola

46

Unearthing Rural Resilience: Intersectional Approaches to Inclusive Climate Action and Sustainable Agricultural Practices for Food Security.

Presenting Author: Opeyemi Adelere

47

Bridging the skills-to-leadership gap: How community-driven education models can transform women's leadership development in Nigerian higher education

Presenting Author: Blessing Agbor

48

From Welfare To Work: Examining Barriers To Economic Inclusion For Persons With Disabilities In Lagos, Nigeria

Presenting Author: Deborah Enesi

49

Engaging Men as Allies in Legal Reform for Gender Justice

Presenting Author: Oluwanifemi Joweigha

50

Closing the Leadership Gender Gap from Within. Subtitle: How redesigning institutional systems can advance women's career prospects.

Presenting Author: Anjolaoluwa Ayodele

51

Beyond bystanders: Male legal practitioners as drivers of gender-responsive justice reform

Presenting Author: Peace Mary Abah

52

Advancing gender inclusive economic growth through integrated business and financial approaches

Presenting Author: Olubukola Olumuyiwa

53

Gendered Realities of Informal Waste Work Among Young Girls in Akure, Ondo State

Presenting Author: Adejoke Oke-Samuel

54

Leveraging Grassroots Narratives to Redefine Women's Leadership in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Ayomide Fasan Olanipekun

55

Changing the Narrative: Investing in Norms-Shifting Strategies to Improve Health Access for Adolescent Girls and Young Women in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Ernest Ezeogu

56

Sexual and Reproductive Health Awareness and Service-Seeking Behaviour Among Out-of-School Youth in Kurudu, Nigeria: Insights for Advancing Equitable Healthcare Access

Presenting Author: Salomey Isaiah

57

New Policy, Old Norms: Evaluating the Impact of Nigeria's Paternity Leave on Shared Care Responsibilities in North-East Nigeria

Presenting Author: Wesley Markus

58

Pathways to Engaging Men as Champions for Gender Equity and Justice: Insights from Men in Nigeria's Accounting Profession.

Presenting Author: Ceri Onyekwere

59

Rural Women Enterprise Accelerator Project

Presenting Author: Hamza Datti

60

Enhancing Adult Vaccine Uptake through Evidence-Based Social and Behavior Change Interventions in Nigeria: Insights from COVID 19

Presenting Author: Halima Buba

61

Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Presenting Author: Dorothea Fakrogha

62

Healthcare: A Pathway To Thriving Communities In Africa

Presenting Author: Angel Garba

63

Domestic Labour and the Path to Gender Equity

Presenting Author: Orifunke Lawal

64

Behind the scenes: Gender, inclusion and the creative economy in Mandoul, Sarrh region of Chad

Presenting Author: Bonidjita Noubadoumadji

65

Smart Scans: Using AI to Interpret Chest X-Rays for Pneumonia Diagnosis

Presenting Author: Monica Oijah

66

Bridging the Gaps: A Pilot for Inclusive, Affordable and Gender-Sensitive Urban Mobility in Abuja

Presenting Author: Oluwajuwon Oni

67

Bridging Implementation Gaps in Health Service Provision: Integrating Traditional Birth Attendants in PMTCT HIV Testing Services for pregnant women within the community across selected States in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Elizabeth Isah

68

Voices that Lead: Educating a nation to reimagine women's leadership

Presenting Author: Simbo Olatoregun

69

CycleEd: Advancing Inclusive Education for Muslim Girls with Disabilities in Northern Nigeria

Presenting Author: Zuliehat Ohunene Abdullahi

70

Empowering the marginalised: UNICEF's inclusive education strategies for children with disabilities in Nigeria (2015–2023)

Presenting Author: Shamsiyyah Umar

71

Gender and Inclusion in Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Learning Opportunities in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Rachael Okoronkwo

72

J Blood Match: bridging Nigeria's blood-supply gap

Presenting Author: Angela Omeiza

73

Safe, inclusive and Gender responsive Transportation

Presenting Author: Solomon Liman Ahore

74

From Tokenism to Transformation: Rethinking Women's Quotas in Political Parties

Presenting Author: Mary Bukola Taiwo

75

Invisible Trauma: Addressing Postpartum Depression Among Women in Underserved Nigerian Communities Through Community-Based Mental Health Integration

Presenting Author: Rukoyah Adedeji Temilade

76

Addressing Period Poverty and Shame in Nigerian Communities through Mobile Cinema.

Presenting Author: Ramatu Ada Ocheكليye

77

The Role of Digital Literacy in Reducing Gender Inequality: Evidence from Community-Based Interventions in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Irene Oluwashina

78

Boosting Equity in Family Planning Access Through the Gates-Funded Enhancement of the MSI Ladies Approach in Kano, Nigeria

Presenting Author: Aisha Ahmad¹

79

Overlapping Identities: The interplay of gender dynamics on food security outcomes in agrarian communities across Northern Nigeria

Presenting Author: Anwulika Onwudinjo

80

Beyond access: Redesigning inclusive digital futures to bridge the gender divide

Presenting Author: Mutinta Masowe

81

Engaging Farreach Theory and Farreach 1 Toolkit to Build Collaborative Strategies for Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Chijioke Dikeocha

82

Rethinking Gender Programming in Nigeria: Arguments for a Behavioural Insight-Driven Approach to Achieving SDG 5

Presenting Author: Chukwuemeka Onyimadu

83

Gender dynamics in Africa's creative economy: emerging voices and innovative approaches.

Presenting Author: Keturah Adeniji

84

Educate Her, Elevate All: Empowering Women Across Generations Through Inclusive Education

Presenting Author: Becky Dike

85

Women in traditional governance: Bridging indigenous practices and modern leadership

Presenting Author: Comfort Fatimoh Sheidu

86

Farm-to-Table Heritage: Women-Led Agri-Cultural Tourism for Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Habiba Sharon Yakubu

87

Multi-Stakeholder Strategies For Advancing Inclusive And Sustainable Food Systems

Presenting Author: Jamaldeen Oluwasegun Akanbi

88

Framing Inclusion: Perceptions of Media Representation and Policy Visibility among Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Wakilat Zakariyau

89

Reimagining Support for the Boy Child: Insights on Values, Safe Spaces, and Tailored Interventions

Presenting Author: Hannah John

90

Multi-stakeholder partnerships for food security and sustainable agriculture through women's leadership in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Oluwaseyi Adeolowu

91

Rethinking Gender Financing in Agriculture: Moving Beyond Tick-Box Investment

Presenting Author: Sekinat Ojeniyi

92

Exploring Strategies to Close the Gender Gap in Education and Promote Lifelong Learning through Gender-Inclusive SRHR Interventions in IDP Camps

Presenting Author: Mathew Andrew Acheme

93



Rethinking Male Engagement in Ending Gender-Based Violence

Presenting Author: Eseoghene Adams¹

Contributing Authors: Samuel Nwaokomah¹, Akinwumi Akinola¹, Osasuyi Dirisu¹

Organization: ¹Policy Innovation Centre

Summit Track 9: Men as champions in strengthening Legal Frameworks for Gender Justice & Protection

Abstract

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a critical public health and human rights concern in Nigeria, disproportionately affecting women and girls. According to UNFPA, nearly 30% of Nigerian women aged 15–49 have experienced physical or sexual violence. With far-reaching social and economic consequences, GBV undermines individual well-being, family stability, and community cohesion, highlighting the need for culturally responsive prevention strategies. This project sought to explore the use of religious and traditional leaders (RTLs) to engage men and boys in GBV prevention in Gombe and Enugu States. Recognizing the significant influence of RTLs as community gatekeepers, they were carefully selected to participate in a co-creation workshop, delivered in two stages (1) capacity-building sessions covering gender roles, GBV dynamics, healthy masculinity, and Nigeria's GBV-related laws; and (2) participatory strategy design for problem identification (using problem tree analysis to identify GBV forms and root causes) and solutioning (Use of "Success trees" to ideate context-specific interventions which were prioritized through the APEASE framework - Acceptability, Practicability, Effectiveness, Affordability, Spill-over effects, and Equity). Community dialogues emerged as the preferred intervention, and RTLs were supported to hold sessions at least twice monthly with purposively selected men and boys. The Most Significant Change (MSC) method was applied to assess outcomes. Personal stories of transformation were collected through one-on-one interviews with participants who provided verbal consent. Narratives were documented and collaboratively reviewed with RTL facilitators to identify recurring themes. Early successes include increased awareness of GBV-related laws, stronger understanding of GBV's root causes, and participants' commitment to rejecting harmful masculinities. Participants expressed a desire to act as positive role models, with willing participants signing commitments as GBV champions. The dialogues created ongoing spaces for reflection, peer-to-peer accountability, allowing men and boys to question entrenched norms, share experiences, and reinforce positive attitudes. We recommend integrating community dialogue frameworks into GBV prevention strategies, leveraging the credibility, messenger effect and moral authority of RTLs to strengthen male engagement and promote inclusive, gender-equitable communities.

Keywords: Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Men and Boys Engagement, Community Dialogues, Gender Norms, and Masculinity

Characterizing e-Pharmacy Readiness for Family Planning Among Young Women in Lagos, Nigeria

Presenting Author: Mohammed M Alhaji

Contributing Authors: Edel Koki¹, Salamatu Abdulrahman¹, Uchenna Okafor²

Organization: ¹Busara Center for Behavioral Economics; ²Society for Family Health

Summit Track 4: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

Contraceptive uptake in Nigeria remains low (unmet need among both married and unmarried sexually active women remains between 21–36%). We used behavioural models to segment Lagos women by their motivation and ability to adopt e-pharmacies and other digital FP channels to inform engagement strategies. We conducted a multistage-cluster survey of sexually active young women aged 18–24 years across 20 LGAs in Lagos (n=1,687) between May–July 2025. Six wards and 14 streets per LGA were randomly selected, with limited interviews per street. The questionnaire captured demographics, digital access, reproductive history, contraceptive behavior, and digital-FP familiarity and intent. We scored 9 Motivation and 12 Ability indicators (Fogg), mapped all variables to COM-B domains, and used 75-percentile cutoffs to generate personas. The respondents' mean age was 21.2 years (SD=2.0); and 58% had completed secondary and 22% tertiary education. Forty-two per cent were single and 38% in unmarried relationships. Thirty-eight percent were self-employed and 24% students; 38% earned NGN 20–50k monthly and 21% had no income. Thirty per cent had ever been pregnant, of whom only 36% were exclusively planned. Phone ownership was 93% (81% smartphones). On digital awareness, 23% knew of digital health services, 14% of e-pharmacies, and 6% of digital FP channels. Short- and long-term FP intent was 27–29%. Four personas emerged: Ready Adopters (11%), largely in Shomolu, Island, and Kosofe; Willing but Constrained (4%), mainly in Epe, Eti Osa, and Apapa; Able but Unmotivated (46%), mostly in Shomolu, Ikeja, and Agege; and Unaware & Constrained (39%), chiefly in Epe, Badagry, and Ibeju-Lekki. Motivation correlated most strongly with Conscious Motivation ($r=0.73$); Ability aligned very closely with Physical Opportunity ($r=0.87$) and substantially with Social Opportunity ($r=0.63$), suggesting that the Fogg composites map neatly onto their complementary COM-B domains. Conclusion: Sexually active young women in Lagos demonstrated moderate digital FP awareness and fit into four persons. Tailored uptake strategies include reminders for Ready Adopters; training and lowering delivery barriers for Willing but Constrained; persuasive messaging for Able but Unmotivated; community education and intuitive tools for Unaware & Constrained. Findings support e-pharmacy FP scale-up and equitable access.

Keywords: Digital family planning, e pharmacy, User segmentation, Fogg Behavior Model, COM B framework

Education Builds Protection: Comparing SRHR Knowledge Between Scholarship Girls and Out-of-School Adolescents in Underserved Nigerian Communities

Presenting Author: Queen Ugwoeru

Contributing Authors: Salomey Isaiah¹, Oluwatosin Omiyale¹

Organization: ¹Strong Enough Girls' Empowerment Initiative

Summit Track 1: Empowering Voices: Advancing Gender Equity Through Education

Abstract

Adolescent girls in underserved Nigerian communities face heightened risks related to sexual and reproductive health (SRH), stemming from limited access to accurate information and services. Out-of-school girls are especially vulnerable due to their exclusion from structured learning environments where sexuality education can be delivered. To address this gap, Strong Enough Girls Empowerment Initiative (SEGEI) implemented a scholarship program that combines academic support with regular, structured SRHR education and mentorship. This abstract presents findings from a comparative analysis of SRHR knowledge, confidence, and health-seeking behavior between 43 scholarship-supported girls and 43 out-of-school girls in Kurudu, Abuja. A quasi-experimental, matched comparison study was conducted from 2020 to 2025 in Lagos, Waru, and Kurudu. The evaluation used a mixed-methods design. The scholarship group was compared to out-of-school peers matched by age and socioeconomic background. Data collection included longitudinal tracking, qualitative feedback from parents and staff, and a 2025 community-based survey using structured questionnaires (Google Forms and in-person facilitation for low-literacy respondents). Key indicators assessed included SRHR knowledge, self-protection confidence, exposure to misinformation, and help-seeking behavior. Informed consent was secured from participants. Findings reveal stark differences: 81.4% of scholarship girls could name at least three pregnancy prevention methods, compared to just 37.2% among out-of-school girls. Among the comparison group, only 37.2% could identify any prevention option, while 44.2% and 34.9% could not state what STIs and HIV stand for. Scholarship girls expressed high confidence in their ability to avoid unintended pregnancy –“I know how to avoid getting pregnant because we were taught different topics on sexual and reproductive health”, reinforced through education and mentorship. Only 27.9% of out-of-school girls said they felt confident protecting themselves; 48.8% said “no,” and 23.3% were unsure. Conclusion/Next Steps: This study reinforces the protective power of education when integrated with SRHR programming. For future interventions, SEGEI recommends expanding school- and community-based SRHR education, strengthening peer-led models, and engaging parents as allies. Scaling such integrated approaches across Nigeria could transform the SRH landscape for adolescent girls in low-resource settings.

Keywords: Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), Girls, Out-of-School

Visual Voices beyond entertainment; Leveraging Creative Media in Shaping Gender Discourse Through Community Screenings.

Presenting Author: Omileha Isaac¹

Contributing Authors: Nnamdi Anosike¹, Endurance Ehimare¹, Jennifer Anyanti¹

Organization: ¹Society for Family Health

Summit Track 8: Behind the Scenes: Gender, Inclusion, and the Creative Economy

Abstract

Despite national and global commitments to gender equality, Nigerian women and girls still face deep-rooted structural and social barriers, especially in economic participation and decision-making. Cultural norms that confine women to domestic roles continue to limit their personal agency. "Afele", a short film from the MTV Staying Alive Foundation (SAF) INBLOOM series, challenges these beliefs through the story of a woman forced to abandon her career for unpaid caregiving. The film powerfully exposes the emotional and economic cost of gendered sacrifice and normalised domestic labour. From April to May 2025, Society for Family Health (SFH), in partnership with the MTV SAF, facilitated community screenings of "Afele" across eight LGAs in Lagos and Kano States. The initiative reached 394 participants, including adolescents and youth 94%, and norm holders (30 years and above), in both urban and rural settings. The film was translated into local languages to ease comprehension. Participants were engaged in pre-/post-screening surveys, used emoji tools for emotional responses, and joined group discussions and in-depth interviews.

Lessons Learned: Findings from the community screening in Kano State highlighted the power of creative media to challenge societal norms and foster gender-transformative dialogue. The survey showed participants' agreement for female financial independence rose from 50% to 67%, while support for dual income households increased from 45% to 63%. Men endorsed shared domestic roles and inclusive decision-making, with over 98% recommending wider dissemination of Afele film. Scenes of career sacrifice evoked strong emotions, with 61% expressing sadness. These shifts underscore the potential of storytelling to influence attitudes and promote gender equity at the grassroots level. "Afele" presents a replicable model for harnessing creative media to drive grassroots transformation of gender norms. Through its localised storytelling approach, grounded in behavioural insights and facilitated dialogues, this initiative demonstrated measurable shifts in attitudes across diverse demographic groups. Future programming will deepen collaboration with grassroots creatives with expanded use of digital platforms to ignite conversations around gender stereotypes and norms that reinforce inequality. By embedding culturally resonant and inclusive narratives within Nigeria's creative economy, we can drive gender equity and elevate underrepresented voices.

Keywords: gendered-sacrifice, Norms, storytelling, social change, inclusive-media.

Project Agbebi: A blueprint for transforming maternal care in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Bamidele Oyewumi

Contributing Authors: Damilola Oyetunji¹

Organization: ¹HACEY

Summit Track 4: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

Project Agbebi was initiated to reduce Nigeria's persistently high maternal mortality ratio by improving equitable access to safe, respectful delivery care for underserved pregnant women. The programme set out to enhance frontline clinical competency, empower women with health and financial knowledge, and remove cost barriers that deter facility births, thereby accelerating progress toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3.1 targets. Implemented from 2023 to 2024, the project covered 210 low-resource communities across eighteen states in Nigeria. HACEY led a tripartite structure: (1) provider up-skilling of 510 nurses, midwives, community health officers, and traditional birth attendants through a detailed emergency obstetric and newborn-care curriculum; (2) women-centred empowerment for 24,837 pregnant women via eight-week group sessions on nutrition, danger-sign recognition, postpartum family planning, and mobile-savings schemes, reinforced by forty-two peer-support circles; and (3) commodity and referral support, distributing 33,000 clean delivery kits that reduce financial burden for the women. Post-intervention assessments recorded a sixty-three-per cent increase in women's knowledge of danger signs and birth-preparedness planning, while average dedicated savings reached ₦ 7,500 per participant, contributing to an eighteen-per cent reduction in out-of-pocket delivery expenses. Skilled birth attendance rose from forty-six to seventy-two per cent within three months, with the sharpest gains in rural wards. Synchronising provider competency, women's agency, and cost mitigation can rapidly narrow maternal-health inequities. Scaling Project Agbebi statewide should prioritise integrating the curriculum into continuous professional-development platforms, institutionalising birth-kit procurement within primary-health budgets and expanding mobile-savings circles through micro-finance partnerships. A twelve-month follow-up study capturing maternal and perinatal mortality endpoints is recommended to strengthen the evidence base for national replication.

Keywords: Maternal health equity, capacity building, clean birthing kits, women empowerment, financial sustainability.

Invisible Labor, Visible Gains: Gendered Dimensions of Waste Reuse and Agricultural Sustainability

Presenting Author: Chibuzo Nwagboso¹

Contributing Authors: Jessica Heckert¹, Emily Myers¹, Olufemi Popoola¹

Organization: ¹International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)

Summit Track 10: Collaborative Strategies for Achieving Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Abstract

Despite growing recognition of circular agricultural practices as pathways to sustainability and climate resilience, little attention has been paid to how gender shapes labor and benefit-sharing within these systems. In Nigeria, where women comprise 60-79% of the agricultural workforce yet face significant resource constraints, understanding these dynamics is critical. This study investigates gender dimensions of waste reuse for agricultural production in northern Nigeria, through informal, community-based practices, and identifies opportunities for women across agricultural value chains. We collected qualitative data across five states (Adamawa, Borno, Yobe, Kano, and Sokoto) between May and July 2024, using purposive sampling to ensure diverse representation. Data included 61 semi-structured interviews, 47 key informant interviews, and 51 focus group discussions with young women and men (aged 15-35) and value chain actors. Drawing on gender and livelihoods frameworks, we used thematic analysis with triangulation across methods to identify patterns in gendered agricultural waste practices. Preliminary findings show that rural communities, through community-based practices and gendered labour systems, are able to transform organic waste into fertiliser and other vital agricultural resources, revealing both circular economy promise and persistent inequitable dynamics. While young men typically control and monetise waste as farming inputs, young women perform labour-intensive collection, sorting, drying, and pre-processing tasks without commensurate economic reward. Men dominate transportation, accessing formal and informal payments, unlike women, who, in many of these communities, face mobility constraints due to restrictive norms. Based on the study findings, women can transform their invisible labor in waste management into visible economic and leadership gains, directly boosting food security. By leveraging their expertise, women can establish waste-to-fertiliser enterprises, like composting businesses or cooperatives. These initiatives capture currently uncompensated value, fostering gender-transformative social enterprises that redistribute labour and benefits equitably. This shift from individual effort to collective action needs credit, training, market access, advocacy, and technology. Achieving sustainable food security demands multi-stakeholder partnerships involving women's cooperatives, financial institutions, and local governments to restructure benefit-sharing. Integrating gender-transformative approaches into sustainability policies is crucial, not just for equity, but as a prerequisite for resilient food systems in climate-vulnerable regions.

Keywords: Gender dynamics, sustainable agriculture, food security, agricultural waste management, climate resilience

The Role of Women's Groups in Community Mobilization for Primary Health Services in Southern Nigeria: A Qualitative Study

Presenting Author: Victory Ekpini¹

Contributing Authors: Deborah Ukejie¹, Afeez Olajire¹, Abutalib Abdulsalam¹, Mohammed-Faosy Adeniran²

Organization: ¹ACE Strategy and Consults Ltd, ²eHealth Africa

Summit Track 2: Equitable Futures: New voices and strategies for promoting women in leadership

Abstract

Despite sustained healthcare investments, routine immunisation (RI) uptake across southern Nigeria remains below the national goal of 80%. Coverage stands at 56% in the South-East, 60.2% in the South-South, and 72.7% in the South-West. Community influencers are recognised as critical actors in shaping health-seeking behaviours, yet evidence of their influence pathways and strategic potential remains limited. This study aimed to identify and characterise influencers across southern Nigeria and assess how they can contribute to health service uptake. Findings informed the development of context-responsive engagement strategies. A qualitative landscape assessment was conducted across all 17 states in southern Nigeria. Ninety-one interviews were conducted using standardised guides between January and March 2025, comprising 45 key informant interviews (KIs) with state health managers, implementing partners, and traditional and religious leaders, and 46 focus group discussions (FGDs) with members of cultural/ethnic and trade associations. KIs were selected to capture institutional and programmatic insight, while FGDs explored shared experiences, and perceived enablers or constraints to healthcare access. Data were audio-recorded, transcribed, and thematically analysed using a hybrid inductive–deductive coding approach. Respondents identified geographic access, out-of-pocket costs, mistrust of government services, and gendered power imbalances as key barriers to PHC and RI uptake. Informational barriers, such as health misinformation, low literacy, and limited awareness, were particularly highlighted by women groups and cited by over two-thirds of FGDs. Across all zones, women's groups emerged as trusted and influential actors within communities, third to traditional and religious leaders. Their role in health-seeking behaviour included informal counselling, peer referral, and dissemination of culturally contextual information. However, formal engagement with these groups in state-led health programs was limited or absent. Existing platforms lacked coordination and structured entry points for their participation in service delivery. Findings highlight the centrality of women's groups in influencing community-level healthcare decisions, particularly in contexts where gender norms restrict individual autonomy. Based on these, a zonally adaptable engagement strategy was developed to formalise the role of women's groups. The model proposes the establishment of a State Women's Health Committee (SWHC) in each state to coordinate peer-led, household-level health education and mobilization.

Keywords: Community influencers, Women's groups, Community mobilization, Primary healthcare

The Impact of Menstrual Health Challenges and Inadequate Sanitation on School Attendance Among Adolescent Girls in Conflict-Affected Adamawa State.

Presenting Author: Praise Okoro

Contributing Authors: Wesley Markus Kutte¹

Organization: ¹Today for Tomorrow Initiative (TFT)

Summit Track 1: Empowering Voices: Advancing Gender Equity Through Education.

Abstract

Across Nigeria, menstrual health is a silent but significant barrier to girls' education, especially in rural, conflict-affected and displaced communities. Many adolescent girls struggle to manage their periods in schools that lack basic water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure. In North-East Nigeria, the intersection of poverty, displacement, stigma, and inadequate school facilities leaves many girls missing school or dropping out altogether. This study investigates how menstrual health challenges, inadequate WASH facilities, and menstruation-related stigma affect school attendance among adolescent girls in Adamawa State. A mixed-method study was conducted between January and March 2025 across four public secondary schools and two IDP camp learning centres in Yola South and Fufore LGAs. Structured surveys were administered to 278 adolescent girls aged 11 to 17. Key informant interviews were conducted with 12 teachers, 6 healthcare workers, and 10 parents. Data collected covered menstrual-related absenteeism, access to menstrual products, availability and condition of school WASH infrastructure, and community perceptions. Both descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were applied. 64% of girls reported missing 2–5 school days each month due to menstruation. Only 22% had regular access to sanitary pads. Regarding school infrastructure, 71% said their schools lacked clean or private toilets, 68% reported no access to water for washing, and 81% had no space to change menstrual materials. Girls cited embarrassment, fear of staining, and teasing as reasons for staying home. Teachers confirmed that many schools had broken or shared toilets with no water or disposal bins. Healthcare workers reported recurrent infections from unhygienic practices, while parents expressed concern over girls' safety and often kept them home during menstruation. These combined factors contributed to absenteeism and increased dropout, especially in IDP settings. Menstrual health challenges and poor WASH facilities significantly undermine school attendance among girls in conflict-affected communities. Addressing these issues through menstrual health education, improved school infrastructure, and access to menstrual products is essential. Multi-sector collaboration across education, health, and community actors is needed to create inclusive, girl-friendly learning environments. Future efforts should prioritize integrating menstrual health into national education and health policies, with sustained investment in girl-friendly WASH infrastructure, especially in humanitarian settings.

Keywords: Menstrual Health, School Absenteeism, Adolescent Girls, Sanitation Access, Conflict-affected Areas

Disrupting Harmful Gender Norms to End Child Marriage: Insights from a Human-Centred Study with Stakeholders in Oyo State, Nigeria

Presenting Author: Seyi Anwo¹

Contributing Authors: Emmanuel Nwala¹

Organization: ¹Policy Innovation Centre

Summit Track 4: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

Child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM) remains a significant concern in Oyo State, Nigeria, thriving in deeply rooted, entrenched gender norms, despite the presence of an existing legal framework intended to eliminate the practice. A key contributing factor, among others, is the way very young adolescent girls (VYAs) between 9 and 14 years are socialised into stereotypical gender roles that promote economic dependency on male partners, undermining their self-efficacy and limiting their abilities to make independent life choices, such as who and when to marry. This study sought to examine the influence of gender norms on CEFM and identify locally relevant strategies for change. A human-centred design approach, underpinned by the socio-ecological model, was used to explore the drivers of CEFM in Oyo State. A participatory consultation workshop was conducted with purposefully selected stakeholders. Participants (35) spread across policymakers (state and federal MDAs), civil society organisations, religious and cultural organisations. A structured, dialogue-based group session was designed to elicit participants' insights on the behaviours, social norms, and lived experiences influencing CEFM among VYA girls, guiding the discussions using an open-ended qualitative tool. The tool was designed to facilitate reflective dialogue, narrative sharing, and collaborative problem identification among participants. The notes taken and transcripts from the audio recordings were qualitatively analysed to identify patterns and themes. The study found that an interplay of economic, cultural, and institutional factors drives CEFM. Household poverty is the core economic driver, often compelling families to see the female child as an economic asset and view early marriage as a means of reducing poverty. Additionally, VYA girls are often socialised to view marriage as a primary survival path rather than through work, education, or entrepreneurship. There is also an unwritten, however pronounced expectation that VYA girls who get pregnant, regardless of age, must be married off immediately to protect the family reputation. Moreover, cultural practices that prioritise tradition over formal laws also play a role, allowing the practice of CEFM to continue unchallenged. At the same time, weak enforcement of protective laws and the absence of safe spaces or mentorship programmes leave girls with few alternatives or support systems. Collectively, these drivers sustain behaviours and social norms that normalise early marriage and limit the life choices of adolescent girls. CEFM in Oyo state is sustained by poverty, harmful gender norms, weak legal enforcement, and limited opportunities for girls, all of which restrict their agency and reinforce early marriage as a socially accepted pathway.

Keywords: Gender Norms, Very Young Adolescents, Child & Early Forced Marriage.

Effect of Mobile Phone-based Education on HIV Self- Testing uptake by Female Sex Workers in Bayelsa State, Nigeria: A Quasi-experimental Study

Presenting Author: Oluwayemisi A. Adaka

Contributing Authors: Owoaje E. T², Tella A. O¹, Mariere U. I³

Organization: ¹Department of Preventive and Social Medicine, School of Public Health, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria; ²Department of Community Medicine, College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria; ³Department of Community Medicine & Public Health, Federal Medical Centre, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

Summit Track 3: Bridging the Digital Gender Divide: Inclusive Technology for All

Abstract

Nigeria is the third highest in HIV burden in the world, with over 1.9 million people living with HIV. HIV prevalence remains alarmingly high among female sex workers (FSWs), yet testing uptake is suboptimal due to stigma, confidentiality concerns, and poor access. HIV self-testing (HIVST) has proven effective in increasing recent and repeated testing among FSWs. This study evaluates the effect of mobile phone-based education on HIV and HIVST knowledge and HIVST uptake among FSWs in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. This was a quasi-experimental study with a mobile-based HIV/HIVST education intervention among consenting brothel-based FSWs. Eligible participants owned and actively used internet-enabled phones with WhatsApp. The intervention comprised health education information in the form of pictorial information guides and videos presented in both English and pidgin over a 5-week period. Baseline and post-intervention assessments measured HIV/HIVST knowledge and HIVST uptake. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, chi-square, and t-tests (significance at $p < 0.05$). Multivariable logistic regression was used to determine predictors of HIVST uptake at post-intervention. The study population had a median age of 25 years (IQR: 22–27), and 256 (77.6%) had at least secondary education. Post-intervention analysis revealed statistically significant improvements in mean knowledge scores for both HIV (14.78 ± 2.29 to 19.99 ± 1.05 ; $p < 0.001$) and HIV self-testing (0.19 ± 0.9 to 10.3 ± 1.3 ; $p < 0.001$). HIVST uptake increased from 2.4% at baseline to 74.5% post-intervention ($p < 0.001$) in the intervention group. Multivariate analysis identified predictors of HIVST uptake as educational attainment, previous HIV testing, and recent utilization of HIV/STD services. Mobile phone-based education effectively enhanced HIV/HIVST knowledge and increased HIVST uptake among FSWs in Bayelsa State. This approach offers a high-impact strategy for this high-risk group. There is a need for adopting scalable and tech-driven interventions to accelerate HIV testing in key populations. Efforts should be made to integrate mobile health education into existing HIV programs for FSWs to fast-track testing and linkage to care.

Keywords: HIV, Self-Testing, Uptake, Phone-based education, Female Sex Workers

Mobilizing Male Allies for Community-Led Gender Justice: Lessons from the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Champions Project in Abuja.

Presenting Author: Gladys Emmanuel

Contributing Authors: Christina Uzo-Okamgba¹, Gladys Matthew¹

Organization: ¹Tabitha Empowerment Centre (TEC)

Summit Track 9: Men as champions in strengthening Legal Frameworks for Gender Justice & Protection

Abstract

In Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory (FCT), gender-based violence (GBV) remains a critical barrier to justice and equality, particularly in rural communities where patriarchal traditions and inadequate legal protections converge. In response, Tabitha Empowerment Centre (TEC), with initial support from AIDS Healthcare Foundation in 2022, launched the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Community Champions Project to establish a sustained network of trained male and female frontline responders at Jikwoyi, Angwan Gede, Gidan Mangoro, and Dafara communities. The project aims to foster male allyship, escalate gender-based violence cases for legal redress, and amplify community-led advocacy that integrates both informal and formal justice systems. From its inception, 50 champions (20 male and 30 female) aged 12 to 50 have been trained and certified in collaboration with government agencies such as the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, civil society partners such as Men Engage Nigeria, and legal institutions. These champions have carried out sensitisation campaigns, responded to survivor needs, and actively contributed to public dialogue—including a recent high-level engagement organised by the Gender department with Nigeria's Minister for Youth and Development. TEC's approach localised justice through consistent community presence, norm-shifting outreach, and strategic partnerships with law enforcement and traditional leaders. Traditional punitive methods like banishment are now giving way to more rights-based, restorative approaches. Interest from new communities and traditional gatekeepers continues to grow, marking a significant behavioral shift. Key lessons include the effectiveness of male-led peer sensitization, the critical need for survivor-centered messaging in community structures, and the importance of embedding local champions into national advocacy spaces. Moving forward, Tabitha Empowerment Centre aims to scale up engagement between male allies and policymakers by leveraging the HeForShe model and advancing policy advocacy that bridges grassroots experience with legal reform. This project underscores the transformative potential of male engagement in strengthening legal frameworks and community protection systems, offering a replicable model that aligns with international human rights instruments and local realities.

Keywords: Male allyship, GBV prevention, community champions, legal justice, grassroots advocacy

Bridging the gap: leveraging AI technologies to reduce gender inequality in the Nigerian educational sector

Presenting Author: Onyinye Onuh¹

Organization: ¹Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA)

Summit Track: Empowering Voices: Advancing Gender Equity Through Education

Abstract

Gender inequality remains a major challenge in developing countries due to poor governance and weak social institutions. Nigeria, home to one in every five of the world's out-of-school children, persistent gender disparities in education hinder equitable development, with 50% of girls still out of school at the basic education level. This study explores the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in narrowing gender gaps in education, particularly in enhancing female participation in STEM and addressing gender bias in AI development. It also assesses Nigeria's readiness to harness AI for inclusive learning. Using a qualitative comparative case study approach, the study analysed national ICT in education and AI strategy documents from Nigeria, Kenya, and Rwanda. Key data sources included government policy reports, ministries of women and gender affairs, and ministries of education, as well as triangulation of insights from organisations like UNICEF and UNESCO. Through a desk review, the study focused on gender-disaggregated out-of-school rates, the presence and effectiveness of gender-responsive education policies, infrastructure funding, and AI integration in education systems. Findings reveal significant variations in AI adoption and gender-responsive education policies across the three countries. Kenya and Rwanda demonstrate stronger policy alignment between AI and education, with clear strategies to use technology in addressing gender disparities. Targeted initiatives in Rwanda have yielded modest gains in girls' enrolment and participation in STEM. In contrast, Nigeria, though increasingly interested in AI, lacks the infrastructure and cohesive frameworks needed to align AI integration with gender equity and education goals. Limited funding and infrastructural gaps remain cross-cutting challenges in all countries. The study recommends that the Nigerian government require agencies like UBEC and NCCE to incorporate gender-responsive AI and digital learning standards into national curricula and teacher training. State-level SUBEBs and UBEC-supported projects, including those backed by development partners such as UNICEF, should be required to set measurable gender equity goals with clear reporting systems, budgets, and community engagement strategies. For Nigeria, embedding gender considerations into AI and education policy not only enhances learning outcomes but also ensures the long-term fairness and inclusivity of AI systems.

Keywords: Gender inequality, Artificial intelligence, Inclusive education, Nigeria education policy

Community-Led Interventions to Improve SRH Access and Reduce SGBV among Adolescent Girls and Young Women in Jos, Nigeria

Presenting Author: Caroline Onwuezobe

Organization: Tearfund

Summit Track 7: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) living with HIV in Nigeria face profound structural barriers to their health and well-being. Unmet Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) needs, pervasive social norms, low socio-economic status, inadequate adolescent-friendly services, and deep-rooted gender inequality perpetuate a cycle of vulnerability and repeated Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), particularly among adolescent mothers who lack empowerment to speak out/ seek justice. Tearfund and its partners have implemented “My Health, My Right; Empowering Adolescent Mothers, Fathers and the Community” in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria, from June 2021 to November 2024. This multi-faceted approach aims to improve SRH access and reduce SGBV risks among AGYW through four primary components: a) Shifting harmful social norms via evidence/faith-based gender transformative models like Transforming Masculinities (TM) and Journey to Healing (J2H), which support trauma healing, b) Strengthening healthcare providers and addressing service-related stigma; c) Community HIV testing and comprehensive SRH knowledge dissemination, d) Providing access support (livelihood, transport, kits) for those testing positive. 5,199 AGYW have been reached with sustainable livelihood programs, and 77,386 community members have been directly engaged in information dissemination and norm-shifting activities. Quantitative data shows an increase in access to SRH services from 28% to 83%. Qualitative data reinforces these shifts: an AGYW, once a school dropout due to pregnancy, now pays her children’s fees and saves for her own education through livelihood support. A faith leader, transformed by TM training, advocated successfully for a widow’s land inheritance against cultural norms, and actively promoted gender equality in his congregation, supporting survivors and handing over perpetrators to the police. Key lessons learned underscore that sustainable SRH improvement for AGYW requires integrating livelihood support and empowerment to navigate gender inequalities, alongside service provision. Furthermore, creating structured, peer-led support groups is highly effective for knowledge dissemination. The intervention has demonstrated measurable and meaningful shifts in norms, behaviours and access to services, underscoring its potential for replication in other communities across Nigeria and beyond.

Keywords: Adolescent, gender equality, health, access, community

Nested Effects of Social Support on Gender-Based Violence and School Engagement: A Large-Scale Multilevel Study from Nigeria

Presenting Author: Adewumi Adediran¹

Contributing Authors: Ebuka Orjiakor², Wisdom Chidiebere Obioha³

Organization: ¹University of Ibadan; ²African School of Economics; ³Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, USA

Summit Track: Empowering Voices: Advancing Gender Equity Through Education

Abstract

School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) poses a particularly serious challenge for adolescent girls, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Despite the theorised buffering role of social support, limited empirical research has examined whether support from family, peers, or other adults can mitigate the effects of SRGBV on educational engagement. This study investigates the relationship between SRGBV, specifically bullying and sexual violence, and school engagement among adolescent girls in northern Nigeria. It also explores whether perceived social support moderates these effects. We use baseline data from the World Bank's AGILE project, which includes responses from 5,910 students across 269 schools in Kaduna, Kano, and Katsina States. Multilevel modelling techniques were employed to account for the nested structure of the data and to estimate both direct and moderating effects. Results show that both bullying ($\beta = -0.143, p < 0.001$) and sexual violence ($\beta = -0.178, p < 0.001$) are significantly associated with reduced school engagement. However, perceived social support significantly moderated the negative effects of bullying, particularly support from family ($\beta = 0.028, p < 0.01$) and a special person ($\beta = 0.017, p < 0.05$). No significant moderation was observed for sexual violence, indicating its more severe and unbuffered impact. These findings highlight the critical need for interventions that strengthen family and adult support systems to buffer the effects of bullying, and point to the importance of specialised, trauma-informed responses to address the consequences of sexual violence in school settings.

Keywords: School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV), Bullying, Sexual violence, School engagement, social support, Adolescent girls.

Leveraging SEMAs to Deliver Emergency Agricultural Assistance to Women in Fragile AgriFood Systems in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Karen Jay-Yina

Contributing Authors: Dr Christopher Sako Kato¹

Organization: ¹Office for Strategic Preparedness and Resilience (OSPRe) - Nigeria's National Early Warning Centre
Summit Track 10: Collaborative Strategies for Achieving Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Abstract

Women, particularly in fragile and displacement-affected settings, are not only central to food systems but also hold unique knowledge and agency that remain under-recognised in formal emergency responses. Despite sustaining food production under increasingly difficult conditions, they face persistent structural barriers to land, inputs, and decision-making power. In Nigeria, compounding shocks from climate change, insecurity, and displacement have strained local food systems and deepened reliance on aid. The country's three-tier disaster management architecture, including State Emergency Management Agencies (SEMAs), is designed for subnational response, yet SEMAs are underutilised in supporting anticipatory agricultural and livelihood interventions. This project repositions SEMAs as coordination hubs for delivering emergency agricultural assistance, anchoring the leadership and rights of displaced women at its core. It links humanitarian action to inclusive, food system-sensitive recovery. Running from August 2025 to August 2026, this pilot initiative led by the Office for Strategic Preparedness and Resilience (OSPRe) targets sixteen high-risk states identified through national flood and vulnerability mapping. It embeds a participatory, mixed-methods research design from the outset, starting with a baseline assessment of food production, land access, and women's participation in food systems. SEMAs, in partnership with Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs), will coordinate land access negotiations and deliver time-sensitive agricultural inputs, seeds, fertiliser, and tools alongside training in climate-smart practices. Women's cooperatives and youth-led logistics actors will serve as implementing partners to foster local ownership and accountability. Localised early warning data will guide targeting, prioritisation, and prepositioning of inputs. A gender-responsive monitoring and learning framework will track uptake, productivity, and shifts in women's decision-making power. The project will also assess and strengthen SEMAs' capacity to engage women equitably in emergency agriculture planning and implementation. The model aims to generate insights on bridging humanitarian response with food system recovery through feminist accountability and multi-level coordination. By embedding a research-for-development lens into anticipatory agriculture, the project contributes to national strategies for food security, disaster preparedness, and gender-responsive governance.

Keywords: Emergency agriculture, SEMAs, anticipatory action, gender-responsive recovery, displaced women

Collaborative Intervention on Food Security And Sustainable Farming: Advancing Innovation, Policy, and Women's Empowerment in Agriculture

Presenting Author: Stephanie Mkpuefuna¹

Organization: ¹Xage Academic Writing Services

Summit Track 10: Collaborative Strategies for Achieving Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Abstract

Food security remains one of the most critical issues, and is intensified by climate change, population growth, and socio-economic disparities. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation, about 820 million people globally, suffer from hunger, with millions more facing food insecurity as a result of unstable supply chains and economic volatility. Nigeria's ranking of 110th out of 125 countries on the Global Hunger Index. Addressing food insecurity in Nigeria requires a diverse, joint approach combining innovation, policy reform, and women's empowerment within sustainable agriculture. This study employed a mixed-methods approach to examine collaborative strategies for promoting food security and sustainable farming. Quantitative data were collected through structured surveys administered to 150 smallholder farmers and agricultural stakeholders across three geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Qualitative insights were gathered through key informant interviews (KIs) with policymakers, donors, corporate foundation leaders, and sustainable finance experts, as well as focus group discussions (FGDs) with women farmers and local community leaders. Data analysis combined multinomial logistic regression for quantitative data and thematic analysis using NVivo software for qualitative insights. Findings show that multi-stakeholder partnerships; engaging government agencies, the private sector, international organisations, NGOs, and local communities, are important for developing and implementing inclusive interventions. Sustainable agriculture projects that incorporate gender inclusion, such as targeted training and resource access for women, significantly enhance productivity and resilience. However, persistent barriers, including restrictive cultural norms, unequal resource distribution, and limited representation of women in decision-making, continue to undermine progress. Empowering women in agriculture, as supported by FAO data, could increase productivity by 2.5–4%, contributing significantly to hunger reduction. This study highlights successful collaborative models, such as HarvestPlus, New Vision for Agriculture, which show the transformative potential of coordinated action in addressing malnutrition and promoting sustainable food systems. By promoting innovation, equal distribution of resources, and alignment with global targets like SDG 2: Zero Hunger, Nigeria can build resilient food systems that ensure equitable access to nutritious food for all.

Keywords: School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV), Bullying, Sexual violence, School engagement, social support, Adolescent girls.

Towards Inclusive Mobility: An Assessment of Gender-Specific Barriers to Public Transport Access in Ibadan

Presenting Author: Julius Ajayi¹

Contributing Authors: Prof. Christopher A. Wojuade²

Organization: ¹Centre for Economic Policy and Development Research, ²Ladoke Akintola University of Technology Centre

Summit Track 6: Safe, Inclusive, and Gender-Responsive Transportation

Abstract

Access to safe and convenient urban mobility options has become increasingly challenging and inequitable in Nigeria due to an inadequate public transport system and its supporting infrastructure. This disproportionately affects women and other vulnerable population groups, limiting their mobility and potentially excluding them from essential socioeconomic activities. However, there is insufficient empirical evidence to delineate the challenges faced by commuters in accessing the existing public transport provisions. This study, therefore, examined how limited access to public transport impacts mobility (with emphasis on gender-specific experiences), while defining latent and nuanced dimensions of factors limiting access to public transportation.

A survey was conducted within five working days using a structured questionnaire to collect cross-sectional data from 375 randomly selected commuters representing the gender groups across 10 major transit stops in Ibadan, one of Africa's largest and fastest-growing cities. Descriptive statistics were used to explain the impacts of limited access to public transport on mobility, and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was employed to identify the underlying structure of factors affecting access to mobility. Over 58% of respondents reported lacking access to public transportation within 10 minutes' walking distance. Among them, 63.8% of women (laden by pregnancy, children, and/or freight) experienced longer travel times and heightened safety concerns compared to men. This shifts reliance on mobility to ride-hailing services that are less affordable for low-income earners. Consequently, most commuters spend an average of 35% of their income on transportation. Further, Exploratory Factor Analysis revealed that across the gender groups, commuters experience significant safety concerns, incur time and financial costs, and endure physical and mental stress while accessing public transport.

Developing inclusive transport policies that prioritize access to urban mobility is essential for vulnerable gender groups. Improving access to public transport requires enhanced safety measures to mitigate risks, minimize stress, and reduce financial burdens on commuters. Existing formal public transport services can integrate digital platforms that provide updates on transit schedules, delays, and service disruptions. Future interventions should leverage technology solutions that provide real-time safety information, such as the identity of informal public transport operators and emergency contact details.

Keywords: Accessibility, Commuters, Gender Groups, Public Transport, Urban Mobility

Digital by Design, Not by Default: Inclusion Lessons from Edo State Civil Service

Presenting Author: Oladunni Adenuga¹

Contributing Authors: Emmanuel Nwala¹, Adetayo Adetunji¹, Oluwaseyi Anwo¹, Osasuyi Dirisu¹

Organization: Policy Innovation Centre

Summit Track 10: Bridging the Digital Gender Divide; Inclusive Technology for All

Abstract

Digital transformation is very beneficial and has become a driver of economic growth, equity in governance and public service delivery. However, despite the increased rate of digital transformation, significant gender disparities in digital literacy and access persist, suggesting that without intentional inclusion, such shifts may reinforce existing inequalities. This abstract presents findings from a larger cross-sectional endline study conducted to evaluate digital readiness and inclusion among Edo State civil servants, and inform more inclusive digital interventions and investments in Edo State and Nigeria at large. The study builds on a baseline conducted one year prior, enabling a comparative analysis of progress and persistent gaps. Data was collected from 2,965 government workers across state and local government levels using multistage probability sampling. The analysis focused on gender-disaggregated indicators of digital access, skills, troubleshooting confidence, internet safety awareness, and workplace infrastructure, providing critical insights into the effectiveness and equity of the state's digital transformation efforts. Descriptive statistics and chi-square tests were used to assess gender differences in digital literacy within the Edo State public service. The results revealed persistent gender disparities: while smartphone ownership was generally high (89.2%), women reported lower confidence and proficiency in basic digital tasks like email use, software operation, and troubleshooting. In addition, fewer women had exclusive access to work on computers (26.7% vs. 46.3% for men), and more women fell into the "poor" or "fair" digital skill categories, while men were more likely to report "good" or "excellent" proficiency. These gender gaps were statistically significant across several domains, including hardware use ($\chi^2 = 41.426$, $p < 0.001$), software operation ($\chi^2 = 27.67$, $p < 0.001$), and troubleshooting skills ($\chi^2 = 33.71$, $p < 0.001$). These findings highlight the persistent gender divide in digital literacy within public institutions, and underscore the need to embed "digital by design" approaches into inclusion policies; going beyond device access and the assumption that digital transformation will occur by default, towards strategies that prioritise skill-building, workplace support, and systemic change.

Keywords: Digital Transformation, Gender Equity, Public Service, Digital Literacy.

Comprehensive examination of the knowledge, perception, and intention of continuation of female genital mutilation among male protegees of traditional circumcisers.

Presenting Author: Olayinka Adebajo

Contributing Authors: Susan Kebu¹, Kolawole Ilesanmi¹, Adeola Adebayo¹

Organization: ¹One Voice Initiative for Women and Children Emancipation (OVIWCE)

Summit Track 1: Empowering Voices: Advancing Gender Equity Through Education

Abstract

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) affects over 200 million women and girls globally, including communities in Oyo State, Nigeria. Despite international efforts to eliminate the practice, FGM persists, often sustained by traditional circumcisers and their male protegees. This study examined the knowledge, perceptions, and intentions of these protegees regarding FGM, with a focus on the cultural beliefs and social factors that influence their views. Using a mixed-method approach, 20 male protegees in the Ibadan North Local Government Area were surveyed to assess their knowledge and intentions regarding FGM. A structured 18-item questionnaire was administered, alongside focus group discussions. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 25, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. Participants reported that their knowledge of FGM was shaped by family (41.7%), community (29.2%), traditional circumcisers (16.7%), media (8.3%), and school (4.2%). While 66.7% perceived FGM as harmful to women, 61.1% reported cultural or social factors as key to its continuation in their community. Although 72.2% were unaware of the role traditional circumcisers play in FGM extinction, 50% expressed intention to discontinue the practice, and one-third (33.3%) considered health implications and legal consequences (33.3%) as factors influencing their intention. A paired sample T-test revealed a significantly positive mean difference in attitudes pre- and post-test at a 95% confidence interval ($\Delta x = 0.178$, $CI = 0.021-0.335$, $p < 0.05$). While male protegees demonstrated awareness of the cultural and health aspects of FGM, many lacked understanding of the influence of education. Strengthening targeted educational interventions is essential to addressing FGM practices.

Keywords: Female genital mutilation, Traditional circumcisers, Circumcision, Education, Male circumcisers

Strengthening Food Security through Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships: A Gendered Analysis of Women's Participation in Sustainable Agriculture in Jos South, Plateau State, Nigeria.

Presenting Author: Oluwaseyi Adeolowu¹

Contributing Authors: Oluwaseyi Ibuoye²

Organization: ¹Women's Initiative for Stability, Health and Empowerment (WISE-H), ²Pataki Legacy Foundation

Summit Track 10: Bridging the Digital Gender Divide; Inclusive Technology for All

Abstract

Achieving food security and sustainable agriculture in Nigeria requires a gender-responsive and inclusive approach, especially in conflict-affected regions such as Jos South Local Government Area (LGA) in Plateau State. In this context, women face entrenched barriers in accessing land, agricultural inputs, and decision-making spaces. This study explores the role and impact of multi-stakeholder partnerships in promoting food security and sustainable agricultural practices through women's participation and leadership in Jos South. Using a mixed-methods approach, primary data were collected through focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews with women farmers and agricultural cooperative members, alongside key informant interviews with local government officials, women farmers' association, and civil society stakeholders. The research is grounded in the framework of SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), emphasizing the relevance of localised, collaborative interventions. Findings highlight several impactful initiatives, including the Agricultural Extension Service Delivery Bill piloted by the Women Farmers Advancement Network (WOFAN), which has expanded women's access to climate-smart training and digital extension services in Plateau State. The SWITCH Foundation's empowerment of over 5,000 women across Plateau, including Jos South, through training and input distribution enhanced seasonal land use and encouraged community-level participation. The Jos Agro-Innovation Makerspace, a partnership between the UNDP and Plateau State Government, provides women with access to technology and value-addition resources, equipping them to lead in agro-processing. Furthermore, the Plateau chapter of the Nigerian Women in Agricultural Business (NiWAB) has improved access to market linkages and processing tools for over 1,000 local women. Free mechanized farming support across 6,000 hectares and micro-credit services from the Development Exchange Centre (DEC) have also contributed to improved productivity and land access for women. Despite these achievements, persistent challenges remain. These include limited long-term land tenure security, limited access to loans, and inadequate gender-disaggregated data for planning. The study recommends scaling successful partnership models, strengthening women-led cooperatives, and integrating gender-responsive policy instruments to build inclusive, resilient food systems in Jos South and similar contexts.

Keywords: Women in agriculture, food security, land access, multi-stakeholder partnerships

A systematic literature review of strategies for advancing women's leadership in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Victoria Ajinomoh¹

Contributing Authors: Olori Rejoice²

Organization: ¹Think Positive Live Positive Support Initiative, ²African University of Science and Technology, Abuja, Nigeria

Summit Track 2: Equitable Futures: New voices and strategies for promoting women in leadership

Abstract

Despite ongoing advocacy and policy reforms, Nigerian women remain underrepresented in leadership across varying sectors. While various initiatives and programs have been introduced to address this gap, the transformative potential of these strategies remains limited without addressing the institutional frameworks through which these initiatives are implemented. This study systematically reviews literature to assess the barriers to women in leadership and to critically examine the strategies employed to promote women's leadership in Nigeria. A systematic literature review was conducted following PRISMA guidelines. The review covered peer-reviewed articles and grey literature published between 2010 and 2024. Data sources included Taylor and Francis, PubMed Central, Scopus, AJOL, and Google Scholar for grey literature. The key search terms, which were combined using the Boolean words "AND" and "OR" included "women in leadership," "gender equity," "policy," "feminist leadership," "women," "barriers to women's leadership," "women's representation," and "Nigeria". Inclusion criteria focused on Nigerian-context studies addressing leadership strategies, barriers, or gender policy. A total of 10 core studies were selected from an initial pool of 38 studies. Data extraction focused on key information: author(s) names, year of publication, and key findings (barriers and intervention strategies). Three categories of strategies emerged from the analysis of the results: (1) Institutional approaches (gender quotas and affirmative action), (2) Capacity-building interventions (mentorship and training), and (3) Transformative feminist models (care-based and inclusive leadership paradigms). Key barriers included entrenched patriarchal norms, institutional discrimination, elite capture of leadership programs, and weak policy implementation. The review found that most interventions disproportionately benefit urban, educated women while excluding rural, young adults, and women with disabilities. Feminist models, though less implemented, offered the most potential for inclusive and systemic change. Current efforts to promote women's leadership in Nigeria largely emphasize numeric representation without challenging the structures that reproduce inequality. To move beyond tokenism, leadership strategies must be grounded in feminist and intersectional principles that prioritise diverse voices, lived experiences, and systemic transformation. Future policy and practice must aim to dismantle institutional barriers and support community-rooted, inclusive leadership pathways that reflect the multiplicity of Nigerian women's realities.

Keywords: Leadership, women, Nigeria, gender, barrier.

Advancing women's economic empowerment through community-driven WAG models: Lessons from the Nigeria for Women Project (NFWP)

Presenting Author: Chinedu Onuselogu

Contributing Authors: Mr. Bamidele Osibo¹, Mr. Chukwuebuka Nwokoro¹, Dr. Anthony Ehon¹

Organization: ¹Diadem Consult initiative (NGO)

Summit Track 10: Economic Empowerment, Affordable Housing & Sustainable Livelihoods

Abstract

In Nigeria, women face significantly greater barriers than men in accessing economic opportunities and social welfare services due to entrenched gender norms, unequal access to resources, and limited decision-making power. To bridge this gap, the Government of Nigeria, with support from the World Bank, launched the Nigeria for Women Project (NFWP). The project aims to enhance women's economic empowerment through Women Affinity Groups (WAGs), community-driven, women-only platforms that support financial inclusion, social cohesion, and collective agency. The pilot phase of NFWP ran from 2018 to July 2024 across six Nigerian states. This phase aimed to implement and evaluate the WAG model by training women in business skills, savings and loans, and financial literacy. Secondary data from the project's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Results Framework and Iterative Beneficiary Monitoring (IBM) system were analyzed to assess outcomes. Activities focused on creating sustainable community-based groups, enhancing access to financial services, and building local capacity. The project reached 226,845 women, surpassing its target of 155,000. WAG members received comprehensive training that led to significant improvements in livelihood activities, financial literacy, and access to digital financial services. Bank account ownership among women increased, enabling participation in digital economies. Credit access rose to 31%, exceeding the 20% target. According to IBM data, 53.11% of women now contribute to household income, and more than half reported substantial progress in their economic status. These results underscore the model's effectiveness in enhancing women's economic resilience. The NFWP's WAG model offers a scalable, impactful approach to promoting women's economic empowerment in low-resource settings. For sustainability, it is recommended that the model be institutionalized within national gender and development frameworks. Future efforts should expand digital financial literacy, improve market access, and establish robust gender-sensitive monitoring systems. Strategic partnerships with government agencies, financial institutions, and civil society will be key to replicating the model nationally and across similar contexts.

Keywords: : Women's empowerment, financial inclusion, community-driven models, Nigeria, livelihoods

Amplifying Unheard Voices: Mothers' Knowledge and Agency as Catalysts for Inclusive Education and Gender Equity in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Basirat Rasaq-Shuaib¹

Organization: ¹The Winford Centre for Children and Women

Summit Track 2: Empowering Voices: Advancing Gender Equity Through Education

Abstract

Nigeria's legal framework enshrines the educational rights of children with disabilities. Yet, due to persistent systemic and attitudinal barriers, children with disabilities, especially those with neurodevelopmental disorders (ND) such as Autism and ADHD, remain largely excluded from education. This exclusion places mothers, as primary caregivers, in a constant state of struggle. The absence of resources, support, and social security forces them to continuously renegotiate exclusionary spaces, resulting in fragmented educational journeys. Additionally, navigating this difficult education and care terrain significantly and negatively impacts mothers' careers, finances, and psychological well-being, further widening existing gender gaps. Despite these realities, their roles remain under-acknowledged in policy, practice, and academic discourse. Drawing on diagnosed with Autism and/or ADHD in Lagos, Nigeria, this presentation discusses how mothers are advancing inclusive education and challenging knowledge boundaries through acts of resilience and strategic resistance. Findings reveal that mothers operated simultaneously as caregivers, education providers, and advocates. Leveraging their tacit and situated maternal knowledge, they developed contextualised strategies to secure diagnosis, access, and continuity in their children's educational journeys. Their actions challenged dominant understandings of the purpose of education, where education should happen, and the legitimacy of "expert" knowledge, resulting in transformative and joyful learning for their children. This study moves beyond deficit narratives to illuminate what can be achieved through commitment, improvisation, and maternal insights, even in low-resource settings. It also demonstrates that tacit and situated maternal knowledge plays a critical role in shaping inclusive education systems and should be leveraged. The findings call for better recognition of mothers of children with ND beyond their caregiving role, as co-creators of context-relevant policies and practices. They also call for robust and responsive support systems, as defined by mothers themselves, to achieve quality, inclusive education and close current gender gaps.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Mothers' Agency, Unpaid Care Work, Disability, Gender Equity.

Advancing Gender Equity and Lifelong Learning through CRoWN: A Community-Driven Approach to Reducing Zero-Dose Children in Northern Nigeria

Presenting Author: Halima Buba

Contributing Authors: Raihanah Ibrahim¹, Ahmed Iya², Monica Ojiah¹

Organization: ¹Solina Centre for International Development and Research (SCIDaR); ²Aliko Dangote Foundation

Summit Track 4: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

In Northern Nigeria, persistent gender disparities significantly limit women's and children's access to essential health services, especially in remote and underserved areas where socio-cultural norms and structural barriers often exclude women from decision-making, contributing to low immunisation coverage and high rates of zero-dose children. Bauchi state has the second-highest proportion of zero-dose children (MICS, 2021). Challenges to immunisation include population estimate inaccuracies, weak tracking mechanisms, and low demand due to caregiver knowledge gaps. The Community Reorientation Women Network (CRoWN) is a grassroots initiative which aims to address these socio-cultural gaps by mobilising respected women within communities to drive health and education advocacy. Before implementation, a series of focus group discussions (FGD) was conducted with over 200 caregivers from rural communities to gather insights and inform the design of the CRoWN strategy. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure representation of key groups- caregivers of different age groups, socioeconomic status, literacy status, and immunisation status. The FGD explored themes like barriers to immunisation, perception of hospital visits, communication channels and trust in community members. Subsequently, a quasi-experimental quantitative study using a non-randomised controlled design to assess the impact of female ambassadors' household identification, home-based counselling sessions, referral of eligible women and children using tokens on child immunisation rate was undertaken over a course of 6 months. Referral tokens were counted and reconciled with health facility immunisation registers and child immunisation cards using Excel-based analysis tools to confirm the number of children immunised following referral via the initiative. Preliminary findings from Konkiyel, Bauchi state, revealed that CRoWN achieved the full immunisation of 87% (430) of identified zero-dose children and 78% (346) of under-immunised children through the efforts of 200 women who were identified, trained and engaged to refer these children for health services. Verification against the child immunisation register and child immunisation cards confirmed the accuracy of these figures. These findings highlight the potential of community volunteers to drive behaviour change and promote lifelong learning when supported by inclusive, sustainable systems.

Keywords: Community engagement, Gender equity, Northern Nigeria, Routine immunisation, Zero-dose reduction.

Enhancing Adult Vaccine Uptake through Evidence-Based Social and Behavior Change Interventions in Nigeria: Insights from COVID-19

Presenting Author: Maryam Ado Haruna¹

Contributing Authors: Dr Abiola Oyeбанjo¹, Akinwumi Akinola¹, Niya Adekanla¹, Chris Agbajogu¹, Busola Oni¹, Maryam Ado Haruna¹, Osasuyi Dirisu¹

Organization: : ¹Policy Innovation Centre

Summit Track 3: Bridging the Digital Gender Divide: Inclusive Technology for All

Abstract

Does trust in digital systems increase when platforms adopt more transparent practices and make key policy components such as privacy and data-use more salient to users? This study examines that question through what is likely the first policy test of its kind in Nigeria, conducted under the 2024 Edo State Digital Policy (EDPP), which was recently introduced to promote transparency and trust in digital governance. Although the EDPP emphasizes transparency and data protection, little empirical evidence exists on how specific design and communication features of digital policies influence user behaviour in real-world conditions. Trust is essential for effective and inclusive public service delivery, especially as digital public infrastructure (DPI) expands across Nigeria and other low- and middle-income countries. This study employed an innovative randomized design in a controlled lab setting using DiCert, Edo State's digital certificate platform. Students interacting with the platform were randomly assigned to one of three privacy message formats: a basic message, a visually enhanced version to improve salience, and a combined message that included both layout enhancements and an explanation of how sensitive data may be made publicly available under Nigeria's Data Protection Act (salience plus transparency). In a separate experimental arm, participants were shown either a specific or vague timeline for correcting certificate errors to assess how perceived responsiveness influences trust. Quantitative results showed that users receiving the combined salience and transparency message were 18 percentage points more likely to say they would share their data compared to the basic message group ($p = 0.026$). This message also strengthened the link between prior and endline trust scores ($p = 0.017$), suggesting transparency reinforces existing attitudes. Qualitative analysis via the Think Aloud method found that most students did not detect certificate errors without prompting, and some who noticed errors chose not to report them. Students exposed to indefinite correction timelines expressed greater frustration, expecting timely institutional responses. These findings underscore the importance of transparent communication and thoughtful presentation of policy components in fostering trust in digital public systems. It offers valuable insights for policymakers and platform developers seeking to strengthen governance through digital infrastructure. Future research should examine how these design principles can be scaled across diverse contexts and sustained to promote long-term user trust and engagement.

Keywords: Digital Trust, Transparency, Policy Test, Data Privacy, Digital Policy

Leveraging Hyper Local Seedling Hubs in Northern Nigeria to Improve Farmers Practice of Climate-Smart Agriculture

Presenting Author: Zainab Haruna¹

Contributing Authors: Fatima Bima¹ Fred Xorla Adzoyi¹, Jennifer Ahonle¹

Organization: ¹One Acre Fund

Summit Track 10: Collaborative Strategies for Achieving Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Abstract

Climate change poses a significant threat to Nigeria's food security, manifested either through low/erratic rainfall patterns, rising temperatures, desertification, soil degradation, or increased pest occurrence. Although smallholder farmers account for 80% of food production in Nigeria, they are hardest hit by the effects of climate change. Unfavourable weather events impact farm yield, produce quality, livelihoods of farmers, and lead to resource-driven conflicts which directly affect farming communities in Northern Nigeria. Agroforestry, the practice of integrating trees with crops, is a climate-smart approach for tackling the effects of climate change. Trees act as natural barriers against adverse weather conditions, including floods and strong winds, while also providing shade to crops, improving soil structure, and acting as carbon sinks to trap atmospheric carbon. One Acre Fund leverages farmer-centred design to deliver programming in rural communities. Between 2023 and 2024, data from household-level surveys by One Acre Fund showed that energy needs represented the top two use cases of trees, and 62% of farmers identified firewood as the dominant priority for tree usage in rural households. The research further confirmed that women are primarily responsible for providing household energy requirements, with more than 70% travelling for distances of up to 1km in search of firewood. This paper highlights how One Acre Fund, through its multi-year Trees program, has adapted inclusivity and gender responsiveness as guiding frameworks to design large-scale community afforestation campaigns in three states across North Central Nigeria. By operating decentralised local nurseries for last-mile seedling production, the program supports smallholder farmers with tree seedlings to support the practice of agroforestry, provides rural women with more reliable access to energy, improves farmers' livelihoods, and enhances soil health. The paper summarises that to sustainably advance climate-smart agriculture, policymakers and development practitioners should prioritise inclusive, gender-responsive design and implementation that reflects diverse household needs.

Keywords: Smallholder farmers, Climate-smart agriculture.

Strengthening Food Security through Gender Sensitive Community Engagement: Insights from a Cross-Country Study on Chicken Meat and Egg Consumption

Presenting Author: Fadila Jumare¹

Contributing Authors: Juhi Jain¹

Organization: ¹Busara Center for Behavioral Economics

Summit Track 10: Collaborative Strategies for Achieving Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Abstract

Women are central to food systems as caregivers, consumers, and decision-makers, yet undernutrition remains prevalent among women and children in low- and middle-income countries. Although poultry products offer high-quality protein and essential nutrients, consumption remains low. Per capita chicken intake stands at 2.06 kg in Kenya, 1.59 kg in Nigeria, and 3.47 kg in India far below global averages according to the World Population Review. This study examined current patterns in chicken and egg consumption, behavioral barriers and enablers and identified opportunities for gender-responsive, behaviorally informed strategies to improve food and nutrition security through multi-stakeholder collaboration. Between June and September 2023, a cross-sectional mixed-methods study was conducted in Kenya (n=398), Nigeria (n=384), India (n=401), and the Philippines (n=404). Adults from low-income urban and peri-urban areas, particularly household nutrition decision-makers, were targeted. Quantitative data from structured surveys and food diaries captured demographics and consumption patterns. Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews provided qualitative insights. Purposive sampling ensured gender, age, and income diversity. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic coding to generate practical, gender-sensitive recommendations. Across all four countries, eggs were consumed more frequently than chicken due to affordability, ease of preparation, and perceived nutritional value, especially for children and the elderly. Weekly egg consumption was 3–5 times in Kenya and India, and 1–3 times in Nigeria and the Philippines. Chicken meat was typically reserved for weekends or special occasions. Barriers included cost, safety concerns, rural access, and misinformation, particularly around egg safety. Although women played a central role in purchasing and preparing food, their own consumption of chicken meat and eggs was lower compared to other household members. Affordability and cost constraints, myths and misconceptions, food safety and hygiene concerns, gender dynamics, limited nutritional awareness, limited availability or seasonal constraints, and preparation challenges shaped consumption. The study highlights the potential of gender-responsive, community-led strategies, including tailored messaging, vendor training, and policy recommendations implemented through partnerships with grassroots organisations, private sector actors, and government. Empowering women and amplifying local voices are vital to increasing poultry consumption and achieving equitable food and nutrition outcomes."

Keywords: Gender-responsive nutrition, Poultry consumption, Behavioral barriers, Food security, Community engagement.

Rooted in Confidence: Empowering Girls for Leadership from the School Level Up

Presenting Author: Osaretine Famous

Organization: ¹Society for Family Health (SFH)

Summit Track 2: Equitable Futures: New voices and strategies for promoting women in leadership

Abstract

Despite growing advocacy for gender parity in leadership, girls in Nigerian schools remain underrepresented in student governance. This grassroots initiative examines how early leadership disparities develop and identifies strategies to foster confidence, opportunities, and support for girls in student leadership. The project focused on surfacing lived experiences and actionable insights that can help dismantle deep-seated stereotypes and practical barriers starting at the school level. A mixed-methods approach was adopted over two weeks. A digital survey collected responses from 78 female students across secondary and tertiary institutions in Nigeria. In-depth interviews were conducted to draw a roadmap for childhood leadership experience. Only 33% of girls surveyed had ever contested for or held a leadership role. The remaining 67% cited lack of confidence, lack of encouragement, fear of failure, and belief that girls are less likely to win. One respondent noted, "Even if no girl has done it before, you can be the first." Encouragement levels were evenly split between 'strong', 'mild', and 'none'. Roughly 70% reported that boys usually hold top student roles. Interviewees echoed these findings, highlighting a psychological and cultural gap rather than a policy barrier. The mentor credited church mentors; the teacher noted that girls only pursue leadership when it boosts their academic profiles. Findings show that most barriers to female leadership in schools are not policy-based but psychological and cultural. Change begins by normalizing girls' leadership, providing targeted mentorship and training, and embedding leadership development into school curricula. Girls are not short on ambition; they are short on institutional and interpersonal backing. Recommendations for policy and programming include scaling this study, launching school-based leadership clubs, and developing teacher guides for inclusive encouragement. If we want women in national leadership, we must start by believing in the girl raising her hand in class.

Keywords: Girls in leadership, Student governance, Gender equity, School inclusion, Early leadership.

Improving Access to Family Planning in Bauchi State: Designing a Locally Led Strategy to Strengthen Demand for Reproductive Health Services

Presenting Author: Afeez Olajire

Contributing Authors: Victory Ekpın¹, Ms Joy Uzoho², Patricia Doherty³

Organization: ¹ACE Strategy and Consults

Summit Track 4: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

In Bauchi State, Nigeria, gender and cultural barriers significantly hinder access to family planning (FP), contributing to a modern contraceptive prevalence rate (mCPR) of just 6.5% and a maternal mortality rate of 1,540 per 100,000 live births. Women of reproductive age, comprising 22% of the population, face unique challenges ranging from spousal disapproval and low autonomy to inadequate awareness and limited access to female-friendly services. There was an obvious need for a demand generation strategy that promotes equitable FP access through a locally owned, gender-inclusive framework. Description: Between August and December 2022, a structured two-phased approach was used to develop the Demand Generation Strategy. First, a landscape analysis was conducted thorough desk reviews of over 15 national and state-level FP/SRH documents, complemented by 12 semi-structured key informant interviews with stakeholders from the State Ministry of Health, State Primary Health Care Development Agency, and partners such as Marie Stopes International Nigeria. This phase identified contextual barriers, gaps in existing approaches, and opportunities for locally driven solutions. The design process emphasized gender inclusion, and findings were synthesized to co-develop a draft strategy. Our analysis showed that socio-cultural norms, spousal disapproval, fear of side effects, and poor awareness were major demand-side barriers. These were compounded by supply-side issues, including frequent stock-outs and a lack of privacy at service delivery points. Ongoing strategies, like tea vendor outreach, community dialogues, and media events, were donor-dependent, inconsistently implemented, and limited in inclusivity and reach. Our revised strategy prioritizes gender-equitable access by integrating community influencers (including women leaders and mai unguwas), training local mobilisers (including female artisans), and fostering inclusive dialogues at household and community levels. Activities such as door-to-door campaigns, religiously contextualised community workshops, and targeted mass media (radio dramas, IEC materials) aim to dismantle myths and encourage shared decision-making on FP. The strategy also established a monitoring framework with disaggregated indicators tracking FP uptake, exposure to mobilization, and referral success. This locally led, gender-responsive approach offers a replicable model for other northern Nigerian states seeking to strengthen FP demand through inclusive, culturally grounded strategies.

Keywords: Family Planning, Gender Equity, Social Mobilisation, Demand Generation, Bauchi State

Girls with Vision: Nurturing Leadership and Community through the National Head Girl Project

Presenting Author: Olamide Akin-Alabi

Presenting Author: Simbo Olatoregun¹

Organization: ¹Women in Leadership Advancement Network (WILAN)

Summit Track 1: Empowering Voices: Advancing Gender Equity Through Education

Abstract

The National Head Girl Project (NHGP), a flagship initiative of Women in Leadership Advancement Network (WILAN), is changing the way young people in Nigerian secondary schools envision leadership. Designed to strengthen the voices and confidence of young girls while also encouraging boys to support gender equity, the programme provides a platform for students to learn, connect, and take meaningful action in their communities. In 2024, the project reached over 70,000 students across 15 states and directly impacted more than 2,000 student leaders through a nationwide competition, a leadership conference, and student-led community projects. The 2024 National Head Girl Conference, themed “Girls’ Vision for the Future-Young Voices: Big Impact”, brought together 130 students from 30 public and private schools for a day of learning, dialogue, and shared purpose. Held annually to commemorate the International Day of the Girl Child, it created a safe and encouraging environment where students felt heard and inspired. Feedback from 94 per cent of participating students and 91 per cent of teachers confirmed that the programme was deeply relevant and met their expectations for addressing leadership gaps among adolescents. Many participants described the experience as eye-opening and energising. Through the competition and follow-up mentorship, students designed and implemented community projects that addressed real challenges. These included the production of reusable sanitary pads from banana trunks, a campaign against sextortion, an initiative to upcycle plastic waste into useful items, and a school-wide project to promote self-worth and tackle bullying. Each of these projects responded to critical Sustainable Development Goals and demonstrated the creativity, empathy, and commitment of Nigeria’s young leaders. These projects created a visible impact in their communities and left a lasting impression on the students who led them. Teachers recommended that the programme be expanded to more schools, and many students expressed a renewed sense of confidence and responsibility. The National Head Girl Project continues to grow as a space where students learn to lead, take action, and imagine a future where their voices are heard and their contributions make a difference. With 2025 on the horizon, a new chapter of deeper reach and greater impact is unfolding.

Keywords: Girls’ leadership, Student empowerment, Civic education, Gender equity, SDG

Assessing how public infrastructure marginalizes women with disabilities: A Study of Yola North and Yola South, Adamawa State

Presenting Author: Wesley Markus Kutte¹

Contributing Authors: Praise Ebube Okoro¹, Matthew Andrew Acheme¹

Organization: ¹Today for Tomorrow Initiative

Summit Track 6: Safe, Inclusive, and Gender-Responsive Transportation

Abstract

Despite increased attention to inclusive development, public infrastructure and transportation across Nigeria remains largely inaccessible to persons with disabilities. In markets, health centers, and transport hubs, features such as ramps, tactile signage, accessible restrooms, or elevators are often absent. For women with physical or visual disabilities, these exclusions translate into daily struggles and limits their access to essential services, limiting autonomy, and reinforcing economic and social marginalization. This study aims at investigating how infrastructure design contributes to the exclusion of women with disabilities in Adamawa State. This study was conducted from January to March 2025 in Yola North and Yola South of Adamawa State. Accessibility audits were carried out on 50 public buildings and 12 transport points. Interviews were held with 30 women with disabilities, 10 caregivers, 15 transport workers, and 5 urban planners. Participants were purposely selected through local disability networks. Audit findings were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while interview data were thematically analyzed. Ethical approval was obtained, and informed consent was secured from all participants. Only 14% of public buildings had functional ramps; none had elevators, tactile signage, or accessible restrooms. About 72% of the women reported avoiding health centers or markets due to infrastructure challenges. Many described a reliance on others for mobility, leading to reduced independence and missed economic opportunities. Public transportation was uniformly inaccessible. Caregivers noted increased physical and emotional burdens due to their constant support roles. Transport workers admitted to lacking training or incentives to support disabled passengers, while urban planners cited limited funding and poor enforcement of inclusive design policies as persistent barriers.

This study shows that inaccessible infrastructure reinforces structural violence against women with disabilities, limiting their autonomy and access to services. The findings highlight the need for urgent reforms such as stricter enforcement of building codes, professional training, and adoption of universal design. These changes are critical for advancing inclusive development. Going forward, policies and buildings must prioritize accessibility, include women with disabilities in planning processes, and support further research to guide more equitable urban development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Women with disabilities, infrastructure accessibility, inclusive development, structural violence

Accessibility and Utilization of Sexual and Reproductive Health Services among Inmates in a Correctional Center, Southwest Nigeria

Presenting Author: Boluwatife Sofola¹

Presenting Author: : M.O. Balogun², E. Asemadahun²

Organization: ¹Researcher, Department of Community Medicine, University of Ibadan; ²Lecturer, Department of Community Medicine, University of Ibadan

Summit Track 4: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

Inmates in correctional centers often face significant barriers to accessing essential sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services. Limited research exists on the accessibility and utilization of these services among incarcerated individuals in Nigeria. This study assessed the accessibility and utilization of SRH services among inmates in a correctional center in Ibadan, Nigeria. A cross-sectional study was conducted among 190 inmates, using a structured self-administered questionnaire to collect quantitative data on socio-demographics, incarceration status, knowledge, accessibility, and utilization of SRH services. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, Chi-square tests, and logistic regression at a 5% significance level. The majority (90%) of respondents were aged 20–29 years, with a mean age of 32 ± 8.0 years. Most inmates (91.1%) had an average sentence duration of 26.1 months. Knowledge of SRH services was good among 70.0% of inmates, while accessibility (45.3%) and utilization (28.9%) were lower. The most commonly used SRH service was information and communication (40%), while antenatal care was the least utilized (1.1%). Factors significantly associated with SRH service utilization included age, gender, occupation before incarceration, length of incarceration, access to visitors, and accessibility of SRH services. Inmates with good accessibility were 9 times more likely to utilize SRH services than those without access (OR=9.395, 95% CI= 3.384–26.085, $P<0.001$). Accessibility and utilization of SRH services among inmates remain lacking. Interventions to improve access and utilization of SRH services in correctional centers are necessary to safeguard the reproductive health of incarcerated populations.

Keywords: Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), Accessibility, Utilization, Incarcerated, Correctional Facility

Unearthing Rural Resilience: Intersectional Approaches to Inclusive Climate Action and Sustainable Agricultural Practices for Food Security.

Presenting Author: Opeyemi Adelere

Organization: : ¹University of Abuja, Nigeria

Summit Track 10: Collaborative Strategies for Achieving Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Abstract

Climate change is redefining the farming landscape in terms of what, when and how to produce. As climate change continues to disrupt optimal food production and rural livelihoods, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where rain-fed agriculture is dominant, disparities in access and control of productive resources heighten vulnerability and adaptive capacity of men and women to climate change. Women, though, key drivers behind local actions designed to tackle climate change, have limited opportunities to make independent decisions in response to climate stressors due to sociocultural roles, rules and norms, which have restricted women's livelihoods. However, policies on adaptation have failed to give attention to wider structural and historical inequalities that impede an individual's capacity to adjust and cope with variability in climate, and unique experiences of farmers. This study explores the gendered dimensions of vulnerability and adaptation to climate change among rice farmers in North-Central, Nigeria. Multistage sampling was used to select 364 respondents from two states in North-Central Nigeria. Data collected from the sample respondents were subjected to descriptive statistics, vulnerability index analysis, Poisson regression analysis, and factor analysis. Using gender-lens, the study challenges the conventional top-down approaches to climate adaptation by integrating local knowledge and lived experiences, particularly of rural women farmers, thereby introducing the new voices from the margins into the global climate discourse. The research reveals that while both men and women face climate-induced risks, the nature and intensity of their experiences differ. Women farmers, constrained by limited access to land, finance, and extension services, were more vulnerable but also deployed distinct and often overlooked coping mechanisms rooted in local knowledge, social networks, and indigenous practices. The differential vulnerability and adaptation to climate change resulted from non-climatic drivers, including social, economic, institutional, and environmental factors that influenced varied access and control over productive resources. The study highlights how climate adaptation, when informed by diverse context-specific and local realities, can accelerate social inclusion, empower marginalised voices, drive equitable rural transformation, and climate-resilient agricultural system. Considering the complex interplay between climatic and non-climatic drivers of vulnerability, the study recommends intersectional approaches as successful strategies for advancing climate action.

Keywords: Climate-Resilience, Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security.

Bridging the skills-to-leadership gap: How community-driven education models can transform women's leadership development in Nigerian higher education

Presenting Author: Blessing Agbor

Organization: ¹Obafemi Awolowo University

Summit Track 1: Empowering Voices: Advancing Gender Equity Through Education.

Abstract

Nigerian higher education faces a dual challenge: women remain underrepresented in leadership positions despite comprising nearly half of the student population, and graduates across genders struggle with essential life and professional skills, including teamwork, problem-solving, and solution execution. Traditional academic programs emphasize theoretical knowledge but often neglect the practical leadership capabilities and real-world application skills needed for career readiness. In contrast, alternative tech communities like Cybergirls have shown success in cultivating both technical competence and leadership confidence through community-driven models that prioritize mentorship, collaboration, and experiential learning. This study analyzes the differences in leadership development outcomes between traditional university education and community-based learning environments. Focusing on a major Nigerian university and the pan-African Cybergirls community, we adopted a mixed-methods approach: a survey of 150 female students explored educational gaps, leadership aspirations, and practical skills, while in-depth interviews with student leaders, faculty, and alternative community participants offered qualitative insights. Over a six-month period, we examined how different environments influence women's growth in technical and leadership capacities, particularly through mentorship, project-based learning, and collaborative problem-solving. Findings reveal that community-driven models provide four key enablers: the integration of practical skill-building with academic learning; access to hands-on leadership through projects; peer mentorship that connects theory with real-world application; and learning environments that foster both technical and soft skills simultaneously. Notably, 78% of women in these communities reported increased confidence in leadership and technical execution, compared to just 34% in university settings. University respondents cited gaps in practical application, collaboration training, and problem-solving experience, alongside a disconnect between curriculum and real-world challenges. We conclude that Nigerian universities can improve women's educational and leadership outcomes by adopting community-driven approaches. Recommendations include embedding project-based learning, partnering with industry and grassroots communities for mentorship, and designing programs that jointly develop technical skills and leadership potential. These interventions can bridge the skills-to-leadership gap, foster gender equity, and build a stronger pipeline of women leaders ready to drive societal and professional change.

Keywords: Women's leadership, higher education, practical skills, community-driven education, gender equity

From Welfare to Work: Examining Barriers To Economic Inclusion For Persons with Disabilities In Lagos, Nigeria

Presenting Author: Deborah Enesi

Organization: : ¹Intellectual Nexus

Summit Track 5: Economic Empowerment, Affordable Housing & Sustainable Livelihoods

Abstract

The experiences of exclusion in employment and businesses by persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Nigeria are persisting despite legislations such as the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act (2018) and the Lagos State Special People Law 2011 that are supposed to safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities. This paper discusses the actual issues which the PWDs are confronted with to earn a living and progress out of welfare into the working place. It is concentrated on how the gaps between written policies and daily experiences influence their possibilities to be included. The research employed a qualitative approach. A total of ten virtual interviews with individuals with various forms of disabilities in Lagos were undertaken between June and July 2025. Participants for this shared their experiences of work, business and accessibility. The study is supported by the Social Model of Disability and the Capability Approach. The results showed that many participants experience discrimination in searching for employment opportunities, even in cases where they are competent. Others attempt to operate small enterprises, and fail in access to finance, the use of technology and support. It even becomes more difficult to succeed when roads, buildings, and transport systems are inaccessible. Despite the policies that are intended to facilitate inclusion, the majority indicated that they were not aware of them, or these policies were rendered nonfunctional in practice. People perceived that inclusion initiatives are just mere symbolism that cannot make a significant difference. The research finds that the lack of economic inclusion among all populations is not rooted in disabilities themselves, but in the systems and environments that cannot assist PWDs. To work the welfare-to-work transition, Nigeria must do more than write the laws and invest in access, support, and accountability. With the urbanisation of cities such as Lagos, it is high time that promises on policy should be implemented by engaging PWDs in planning processes, enhancing the infrastructural allocations and making inclusion programs operational. This research contributes greatly to the field by offering grassroots evidence of the gap between disability policies and lived realities, while providing practical, people-centred solutions for inclusive development.

Keywords: Disability inclusion, economic barriers, accessibility, policy gaps, empowerment

Engaging Men as Allies in Legal Reform for Gender Justice

Presenting Author: Oluwanifemi Joweigha¹

Contributing Author: Joan Lesley Sanni²

Organization: ¹Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, ²Rural Access and Agricultural Marketing Project

Summit Track 9: Men as champions in strengthening Legal Frameworks for Gender Justice & Protection

Abstract

In the pursuit of gender justice, men's engagement in legal reform remains an underutilized strategy. While feminist movements have made critical strides in advocating for gender-equitable laws, patriarchal legal cultures and enforcement gaps persist especially in contexts like Nigeria. This abstract presents a project that seeks to reposition men as allies in strengthening legal frameworks to address gender-based violence and support gender-responsive justice systems. The programme targets young male professionals in law enforcement, judiciary, and legal education by equipping them with the tools to challenge harmful gender norms and institutional bias. The initiative will be implemented over a 12-month pilot phase in urban and peri-urban areas, combining legal literacy dialogues, mentorship schemes, educational interventions, and survivor-centered advocacy. Through structured workshops and strategic partnerships with feminist legal networks, participants will engage in legal review, policy advocacy, and storytelling campaigns that highlight their transformation from passive enforcers to active allies. Findings from pre-engagement assessments show that men are more likely to adopt gender-equitable attitudes when trained alongside women in intersectional and rights-based settings. Lessons learned from similar efforts in both countries point to the importance of co-ownership, long-term mentorship, and community accountability in shifting institutional cultures. This project offers a replicable model for engaging men within the justice sector, one that foregrounds empathy, evidence-based training, and cross-sector collaboration. By turning male power holders into champions of equity, the programme aims to foster inclusive legal reforms and ultimately reduce systemic barriers to protection and justice for all genders.

Keywords: Gender justice, legal reform, male allies, institutional change, gender-based violence

Closing the Leadership Gender Gap from Within.

Subtitle: How redesigning institutional systems can advance women's career prospects.

Presenting Author: Anjolaoluwa Ayodele

Contributing Authors: Raihanah Ibrahim¹, Khadija Zubair¹, Omolola Akinola¹

Organization: ¹Solina Centre for International Development and Research (SCIDaR)

Summit Track 2: Equitable Futures: New voices and strategies for promoting women in leadership

Abstract

Despite incremental progress, women remain underrepresented in leadership across Nigeria's private sector, holding 22% of decision-making roles (UN). SCIDaR also faced similar challenges with significant underrepresentation of women in senior management positions. Mid-career attrition, missed appraisals due to maternity leave, and the absence of supportive reintegration structures are the key barriers limiting women's career development. Recognising the importance of gender mainstreaming for effective operations and driving its mandate, SCIDaR launched a five-year strategic plan to advance gender balance in senior leadership and embed gender equity across operations and programs. The SCIDaR W-Initiative is a whole-of-institution effort to advance gender equity across institutional, programs, and personnel domains. Co-created and data-driven, the initiative is backed by a five-year leadership strategy and a board-ratified gender action plan. Design of context-specific interventions was informed by a gender audit, staff surveys, participation in industry surveys (McKinsey's Women in the Workplace study), and focused listening sessions with female staff. Findings from these efforts shaped several key interventions, including on-site creche and careers, extended maternity leave, fully expensed travel for infants of female staff, post maternity reintegration support, a women's support group, a structured mentorship program for mid-level female managers, and a Life Stage Career Toolkit to support women through career-life transitions. Our intervention applied a holistic approach to advancing women's leadership by putting in supportive structures. Currently, SCIDaR has parity at entry and mid-level, and has also equalised female representation on its Board from 20% to 50%. Female representation in managerial cadres also increased from 9% to 36%. Also, there's targeted gender sensitive hiring and application of a gender lens in staffing decisions. Structural change is most effective when informed by lived experience and championed by leadership. Institutional strategies should target creating enabling environments and addressing women's pain points. This representation benefits female staff and optimises organisational efficiency in delivering its mandates. SCIDaR's experience shows how a targeted gender mainstreaming initiative nested within broader institutional transformation can accelerate women's leadership and promote inclusive systems. The W-initiative model offers a practical, scalable approach for organisations aiming to embed gender equity across domains and improve parity in leadership levels.

Keywords: Gender, leadership, Institution, Career, systems

Beyond bystanders: Male legal practitioners as drivers of gender-responsive justice reform

Presenting Author: Peace Mary Abah

Organization: ¹Independent Gender and Development Researcher

Summit Track 9: Men as champions in strengthening Legal Frameworks for Gender Justice & Protection

Abstract

This project was initiated in response to persistent gender-based violence and legal barriers in Nigeria, which continue to hinder inclusive development. While much attention has been placed on women-led advocacy, the strategic involvement of men, particularly those within the legal and justice systems, remains underutilised. Aligned with the theme “New Voices and New Approaches for Accelerating an Inclusive Society,” the research aimed to empower male legal actors to become active participants in reforming gender justice frameworks. Implemented in selected communities across Nigeria, the programme targeted male lawyers, magistrates, police officers, and traditional justice actors. Activities included stakeholder dialogues, legal advocacy campaigns, and capacity-building workshops focused on interpreting and applying gender-responsive legislation. The initiative was carried out in collaboration with civil society organisations and legal institutions to promote survivor-centred justice practices and accountability within local systems. Key outcomes revealed the importance of male empowerment within legal reform. Involving men in policy advocacy and legal interpretation reduced resistance to gender-sensitive approaches and improved the enforcement of protective laws. Participants reported greater awareness of their role in addressing gender-based violence and demonstrated increased willingness to integrate gender equity principles in their work. In several jurisdictions, procedural changes were adopted to support survivor-focused case handling. Additionally, male-led advocacy networks emerged to continue pushing for legislative reforms beyond the project period. The findings demonstrate that inclusive justice reform cannot succeed without engaging male legal professionals as allies and co-leaders. The project model has proven adaptable and replicable in various local contexts. Future plans include expanding the programme to additional West African regions, integrating gender equity modules into legal education curricula, and advocating for broader institutional reforms. Empowering men to lead alongside women is essential for building sustainable, inclusive legal systems across Africa.

Keywords: Gender justice, male allyship, legal reform, inclusive development, Nigeria

Advancing gender inclusive economic growth through integrated business and financial approaches

Presenting Author: Olubukola Olumuyiwa¹

Contributing Authors: Rhoda Robinson¹, Isaiah Owolabi¹

Organization: ¹HACEY

Summit Track 5: Economic Empowerment, Affordable Housing & Sustainable Livelihoods

Abstract

Women entrepreneurs and micro-business owners make up a large part of Nigeria's informal economy. They face barriers like limited access to finance, education, and healthcare. The 2024 EFINA survey shows that only 47% of women have formal financial services, affecting their ability to secure insurance, savings, and stable funding. This project aimed to empower women through business development, financial inclusion, and digital literacy, enhancing their socioeconomic resilience. The Empowering Society Through Investment in Women project offered comprehensive support to 150 women from local communities in Ikeja, Lagos. Through integrated business training, digital and financial literacy, and micro-loan access, the project empowered women business owners, particularly those running nano and micro enterprises, with practical business skills, financial management skills and mobile finance tools. Using a group-based guarantee model, the project facilitated access to micro-loans to support business sustainability and expansion, ranging from 20,000 naira to 500,000 naira with an interest rate of 2% per month for 6 months. This project empowered women, enabling them to unlock their full economic potential, improve their livelihoods, and contribute to the overall development of their communities. Providing training before loans are given is crucial, as it helps establish a foundation for proper fund management and effective use. Out of the 150 women who completed the programme, over 85% reported a better understanding of financial planning, including separating business and personal expenses, setting profit margins, and keeping daily sales records. Among the participants, 69 women applied for loans, with 29 having already received funds and 40 in the final stage of disbursement. An additional 81 are anticipated to submit their forms and start the loan process. The group-based guarantee model encourages a sense of responsibility among members, increasing women's accountability and reducing the likelihood of defaulting on repayments. This pilot shows how integrated, community-driven models boost women's economic empowerment. The success in Ikeja confirms community structures as scalable platforms for underserved women entrepreneurs. Building on this, the project will expand across Nigeria to reach 500,000 women in two years. The strategy will adapt the model to both rural and urban areas, focusing on simplifying loan eligibility.

Keywords: Women's economic empowerment, financial inclusion, micro-loans, business training

Gendered Realities of Informal Waste Work Among Young Girls in Akure, Ondo State

Presenting Author: Adejoke Oke-Samuel

Organization: ¹Adeyemi Federal University of Education

Summit Track 5: Economic Empowerment, Affordable Housing & Sustainable Livelihoods

Sub-Track 8: Behind the Scenes: Gender, Inclusion, and the Creative Economy

Abstract

For many urban poor in Nigeria, informal waste work remains a critical survival strategy. The recent trend of the inclusion of young migrant girls in informal waste work depicts the socioeconomic hardship they face. Child labour in the form of scavenging in the capital of Ondo State, Akure, is increasingly becoming gendered. This exposes young girls to various risks, which include environmental, physical, and social risks. Despite the growing visibility of this child labour, which is shaped by societal norms, marginalisation and poverty, there remains a dearth in the study of this trend. This study hereby investigates the lived experiences, coping strategies, and challenges faced by young girls engaged in informal waste scavenging in Akure. This study adopts the qualitative research method. It made use of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Thirty (30) girls between the ages of six (6) and twelve (12) who were engaged in scavenging activities along 4 major streets of Akure were orally interviewed. Interviews were conducted with key informants, which included community leaders, waste collectors, and officials from the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development. The data were thematically analysed, focusing on gender-specific patterns, vulnerabilities, and survival tactics. The findings of the study revealed that economic deprivation, migration, lack of education, and family breakdown are major drivers of young girls' entry into the work of scavenging. Reports of frequent experiences of harassment, social stigma, and inadequate protection in waste zones were given by the girls. The girls have devised and adopted some coping mechanisms, such as group scavenging, avoidance of isolated areas, and alliance-building with older female waste workers. Despite the short-term income scavenging offers, it reinforces gender inequality, educational exclusion and cycles of poverty. A lack of institutional support further exacerbates their vulnerability, with most respondents unaware of existing child protection services. Child labour and scavenging, particularly among young girls in Akure, is not simply a poverty-induced activity but a manifestation of more profound gendered socio-economic inequalities. To address this issue, there is a need for gender-sensitive interventions that combine stronger child protection policies, family support and education access. There is an urgent need for directed programs that highlight the safety, empowerment, and long-term well-being of these girls.

Keywords: Akure, Scavenging, Child labour, Informal waste work

Leveraging Grassroots Narratives to Redefine Women's Leadership in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Ayomide Fasan Olanipekun

Contributing Authors: Chike Nwangwu¹, Maryam Abdulsalam-Anibilowo¹, Zeblon Oluwayomi¹

Organization: ¹NOIPolls

Summit Track 2: Equitable Futures: New voices and strategies for promoting women in leadership

Abstract

Despite growing global advocacy for gender equity, gender inequality remains deeply entrenched across Nigeria, particularly in political participation and economic access. While structural barriers continue to limit women's advancement, findings from a recent International Women's Day Poll by NOIPolls reveal strong public belief in the leadership potential of women across diverse sectors. This study explores how everyday narratives drawn from the perspectives of ordinary Nigerians can help redefine dominant frameworks of leadership and inform inclusive, community-rooted strategies. It argues that bridging the gap between societal support and actual representation requires not only policy reform but also a reimagining of what leadership looks like in Nigeria's social and cultural contexts. A nationwide cross-sectional study was conducted using computer-assisted telephone interviews to collect data from a representative sample of 1,084 respondents over five days. Responses were gathered using a structured questionnaire administered by 18 trained research analysts, and data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and percentages, were used to summarize findings. Findings revealed that 86% of the respondents believe that gender inequality persists across the country. Among the six geopolitical zones, the North West recorded the highest perception of gender inequality in Nigeria at (27.1%), followed by the South South (16.9%), South West (16.2%), North Central (15.1%), North East (13.9%), and South East (10.8%). Key barriers cited included limited access to political roles, unequal job opportunities, inadequate education for girls, and gender-based violence. However, 93% of respondents expressed confidence in women's ability to succeed economically, and 84% supported women's potential in politics if given equal opportunities. The study concludes that addressing gender inequality in Nigeria requires targeted, localized strategies such as leadership training, policy reforms, and anti-discrimination campaigns that amplify grassroots voices and convert public support into measurable progress for women.

Keywords: Gender inequality, Women leadership, Grassroots

Changing the Narrative: Investing in Norms-Shifting Strategies to Improve Health Access for Adolescent Girls and Young Women in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Ernest Ezeogu

Organization: Raihanah Ibrahim¹, Haishat Olufadi-Ahmed¹, Oluwafunmilayo Raheem¹

Summit Track 5: ¹Solina Centre for International Development and Research (SCIDaR)

Sub-Track 4: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

Due to harmful social norms, adolescent girls and young women in Nigeria face inequitable access to healthcare services. Harmful norms surrounding Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and child marriage prevent access to care and undermine overall well-being, contributing to cycles of health-related poverty. This review evaluated strategic interventions that utilized entertainment media (EM) and faith and cultural champions (FCC) to tackle these critical social determinants of health. Between October 2024 and January 2025, we conducted a desk review of 105 publications to assess norms-shifting interventions that used faith and cultural champions (FCC) and entertainment media (EM). Our sources included technical reports, published articles, conference papers, and institutional repositories. Focus group discussions with social norms experts and programme implementers supplemented this review. The review identified 21 interventions that aimed to shift norms around SRH, GBV, CEFM and WEE among AGYW. Twelve of these interventions employed FCC while nine utilized EM. We found that shifting harmful social norms is critical for improving uptake of health services. Integrating Entertainment Media (EM) with the influence of Faith and Cultural Champions (FCCs) is a powerful strategy to achieve sustainable norms change. For example, the Breakthrough ACTION program successfully engaged faith leaders to advocate for child spacing, transforming them into powerful advocates for SRH services uptake by increasing community acceptance of essential health services. Interventions targeting GBV, such as the "What She Wore" digital campaign, challenged norms that create barriers to rape survivors seeking health and psychosocial support. Achieving equitable healthcare and reducing health-related poverty is not just a matter of service delivery. The evidence shows that the success of health initiatives for marginalised groups depends on a dual approach: combining quality services with dedicated, long-term interventions that shift social norms. The most successful norms-shifting interventions combine the broad reach of entertainment media with the deep trust of faith leaders to create this change. To be effective, health policy and programming must invest in these norm-shifting strategies, prioritizing genuine community engagement and adaptive implementation to ensure women and girls can safely access and benefit from the care they need.

Keywords: Social Norms, SRH, GBV, AGYW.

Sexual and Reproductive Health Awareness and Service-Seeking Behaviour Among Out-of-School Youth in Kurudu, Nigeria: Insights for Advancing Equitable Healthcare Access

Presenting Author: Salomey Isaiah

Contributing Authors: Queen Ugwoeru¹

Organization: ¹Strong Enough Girls' Empowerment Initiative

Summit Track 4: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

Adolescence and young adulthood are marked by critical changes that heighten vulnerability to risky sexual behaviours. Equitable access to healthcare is essential for improving health outcomes among marginalised adolescents, yet out-of-school youth in peri-urban Nigerian communities often remain overlooked in sexual and reproductive health (SRH) interventions. Poor SRH knowledge, coupled with limited-service access, exposes these youth to preventable health risks. To address these gaps, Strong Enough Girls' Empowerment Initiative (SEGEI) conducted a baseline survey in March 2025 to assess SRH awareness, help-seeking behaviours, and barriers to equitable healthcare access among out-of-school youth in Kurudu, Abuja. The cross-sectional survey engaged 81 out-of-school youth aged 15–35 years, the majority being female (61.7%), with varied educational attainment. The assessment explored their knowledge of pregnancy and STI prevention, sources of SRH information, and experiences accessing services. Findings showed that while 74.1% had heard of pregnancy or STI prevention, only 22.2% felt sufficiently informed to protect themselves. Nearly half (46.9%) had ever sought help for SRH issues, primarily from government clinics and pharmacies. However, a significant proportion reported difficulties accessing care due to distance (27.7%), lack of money (27.7%), and fear of judgment (18.5%). Preferred safe spaces for accessing SRH services included youth-friendly centers (50.6%) and clinics (25.9%). Participants emphasized the need for affordable services and respectful, non-judgmental health workers to improve access. This indicates that while basic SRH awareness exists, it does not consistently translate into healthcare-seeking behaviours. Critical gaps persist in service access and utilization, with social stigma, financial constraints, and limited youth-friendly health service environments remaining barriers to equitable access. However, youth also identified opportunities for improving healthcare reach, including the use of community-based youth centers and mobile phone platforms to expand service information and referrals. Addressing healthcare access inequities among marginalised youth requires integrated strategies that combine SRH education with the expansion of affordable, youth-centered services. SEGEI will leverage these insights to advocate for community-based interventions, train providers on youth-friendly service delivery, and foster partnerships that strengthen equitable healthcare access in peri-urban Nigerian communities.

Keywords: Equitable healthcare, SRH awareness and access, out-of-school youth, marginalised adolescents, healthcare service barriers

New Policy, Old Norms: Evaluating the Impact of Nigeria's Paternity Leave on Shared Care Responsibilities in North-East Nigeria

Presenting Author: Wesley Markus

Contributing Authors: Praise Ebube Okoro¹

Organisation: ¹Today for Tomorrow Initiative

Summit Track 7: Shared care, Shared Power: Rethinking roles for a fairer future for all

Abstract

In 2022, Nigeria approved a 14-day paternity leave policy for male civil servants, marking progress toward gender-equitable caregiving. However, its impact remains limited in North-East Nigeria. Many men are unaware of the policy or do not access it, while care responsibilities continue to fall disproportionately on women. This study explores the implementation, awareness, and socio-cultural reception of paternity leave in Adamawa State and how it affects domestic role-sharing and women's well-being. This mixed-method study was conducted from January to February 2025 in Yola North, Yola South, and Girei LGAs of Adamawa State. The quantitative survey covered 312 households with children under age five, while 27 in-depth interviews were held with fathers, mothers, employers, and community leaders. Data collection focused on paternity leave awareness, caregiving roles, and maternal return-to-work patterns. A policy review and case comparison between civil servants and informal workers were also conducted. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS, and qualitative interviews were thematically analysed with NVivo. Only 19% of fathers surveyed had heard of the paternity leave policy, and just 6% had accessed it. 74% of men in the informal sector expressed interest in paternity leave if offered, but cited job insecurity and employer resistance as barriers. Across all households, women performed nearly 5x more caregiving hours than men daily. Families where men accessed or supported shared care practices saw earlier maternal return to economic activities and reported better emotional health for both parents. Cultural expectations remain strong: 68% of respondents (men and women) still viewed child-rearing as primarily the mother's duty, despite acknowledging the benefits of male involvement. Nigeria's paternity leave policy is a step toward gender-equitable caregiving, but its impact in North-East Nigeria is limited by low awareness, restricted access, and strong cultural norms. This study highlights how caregiving remains largely women's responsibility, despite the benefits of shared roles. Expanding policy coverage to include informal workers, increasing public awareness, and promoting workplace support are key. Future efforts should focus on inclusive reforms and community advocacy to shift norms, with ongoing monitoring to assess long-term impacts on family well-being and gender equality.

Keywords: paternity leave, parental care, gender roles, policy implementation

Pathways to Engaging Men as Champions for Gender Equity and Justice: Insights from Men in Nigeria's Accounting Profession.

Presenting Author: ¹Ceri Onyekwere

Organization: ¹Leeds Beckett University

Summit Track 9: Men as Champions in Strengthening Legal Frameworks for Gender Justice & Protection

Abstract

In many professional and organisational contexts, gender equity efforts often prioritise empowering women and increasing their representation, while overlooking the importance of engaging men in addressing patriarchal norms that reinforce inequality. This study focuses on men in Nigeria's accounting profession to explore how they engage with efforts to address gender inequities to promote gender justice and equity, offering insights into the roles, possibilities, and challenges of involving men as champions of inclusion within professional and societal contexts. A qualitative constructivist grounded theory methodology guided this study, which involved semi-structured interviews with 13 male and 5 female accountants from Nigeria's professional accounting bodies (ICAN and ANAN). Data were analysed iteratively to construct a substantive theory of Nigerian men's engagement in gender equity and justice efforts. Findings reveal Nigerian men's engagement with gender equity and justice is shaped by cultural, religious, and institutional forces that both enable and constrain participation. The analysis identified two broad patterns of male engagement: Male Advocates are men who support gender policies and initiatives and call for structural reforms to promote inclusion, highlighting gaps in national and organisational frameworks such as weak enforcement and poor alignment with workplace and societal realities; and Male Observers are men hesitant towards gender policies and reforms, often invoking cultural and religious norms to justify their resistance. The findings emphasise the need for stronger national and organisational gender policies, underpinned by legal reforms to challenge cultural and religious barriers to men's engagement in gender equity and justice initiatives. Such reforms should ensure accountability mechanisms and enforcement measures that align with workplace and societal realities. Alongside legal frameworks, strategies must engage community leaders, institutional gatekeepers, and professional bodies to create spaces for men to critically reflect on their roles in sustaining or disrupting inequality. Embedding gender responsiveness into workplace practices and leadership development can move beyond symbolic commitments and foster meaningful male participation. These insights extend beyond Nigeria's accounting profession, offering relevance to broader efforts to mobilise men as allies and champions for dismantling systems of inequality and advancing gender justice.

Keywords: Gender Equity, Gender Justice, Male Engagement in Nigeria

Rural Women Enterprise Accelerator Project

Presenting Author: Hamza Datti

Contributing Authors: Dorcas Ngoyem Kwamande¹, Joy Obiageli Aderele¹

Organisation: ¹Self Help Africa

Summit Track 8: Behind the Scenes: Gender, Inclusion, and the Creative Economy

Abstract

The Rural Women Enterprise Accelerator Project empowers rural women in Vandeikya LGA (Benue) and Obanliku LGA (Cross River), Nigeria, by addressing key barriers to entrepreneurship: limited financial access, digital exclusion, weak market linkages, and restrictive gender norms. Central to the project is the establishment of Women's Business Centres (WBCs), a women-led social enterprise model that promotes sustainable development and supports women's economic, social, political, and environmental empowerment. Implemented from January 2023 to December 2025, the project targets rural women, youth, and vulnerable groups engaged in agri-processing, informal trade, crafts, and services. Led by Self Help Africa (SHA) Nigeria and local partners, the initiative combines community-based training in business, financial, and digital literacy with the creation of 50 WBCs and 34 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs). It also includes gender norm dialogues, health promotion sessions, market linkage activities, and identification of trafficking cases reported to the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP). Using mobile technologies, digital platforms, and gender-sensitive, participatory methods, the project fosters community ownership and safeguarding. To date, it has supported 2,087 women and trained 200 WBC facilitators. It has improved financial and digital literacy, enhanced business capacity, and expanded market access. The WBC model has proven scalable and cost-effective, while community dialogues have helped shift restrictive gender norms. Low digital literacy was managed through phased training. Household tensions linked to women's growing income were mitigated through conflict-sensitive approaches, including joint sessions with men and women that fostered dialogue, trust-building, and equitable role-sharing within families. This project demonstrates the potential of women-led social enterprise models to foster inclusive rural development. Future efforts will focus on scaling the WBC model, advocating gender-responsive financial practices, embedding norm change into enterprise support systems, and expanding digital inclusion. An endline evaluation is planned for October 2025.

Keywords: Gender, Inclusion, Empowerment, Entrepreneurship, Technoliteracy

Enhancing Adult Vaccine Uptake through Evidence-Based Social and Behavior Change Interventions in Nigeria: Insights from COVID 19

Presenting Author: Halima Buba

Contributing Authors: Raihanah Ibrahim¹, Uchenna Igbokwe¹, Mohammed M. Abubakar¹

Organization: ¹Solina Centre for International Development and Research (SCIDaR)

Summit Track 4: : Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

As Nigeria transitions from emergency COVID-19 response to long-term immunisation planning, the integration of Social and Behavior Change (SBC) strategies is critical to sustaining vaccine demand, especially for vaccines outside the Routine Immunisation (RI) schedule, such as COVID-19 and HPV. Understanding behavioral drivers and barriers remains vital to shaping future uptake. To address persistent demand-side challenges, the Solina-Busara consortium provided targeted SBC technical assistance in Bayelsa, Benue, Ebonyi, and Taraba states to understand and inform behavioral and social change strategies to tackle health inequities. From February 2023 to March 2024, a phased technical assistance approach was adopted. A concurrent mixed-methods research design guided the intervention. Quantitative data were collected via structured household surveys (N = 1,358), while qualitative data were derived from 175 in-depth interviews (IDIs) with community members, influencers, and health officials. Offline social listening tools captured 213 unique vaccine-related rumours; identified prevalent vaccine-related rumours. Data was analysed thematically and triangulated to inform an evidence-based SBC and Community Engagement (CE) framework. Multi-level co-creation workshops guided iterative message design and testing, stakeholder validation, and prototype refinement. The study revealed significant demand-side barriers, including limited vaccine risk perception (42%), distrust in vaccine safety (28%), and misinformation linked to religious and cultural beliefs (noted in 63% of IDIs). Only 36% of survey respondents recalled exposure to any vaccine communication in the past three months. The intervention produced a suite of SBC tools, including seven contextualised communication interventions, 30+ message prototypes, and a multichannel dissemination roadmap. Over 150 stakeholders engaged across four states, with state and national-level dissemination workshops leading to the adoption of final materials. SBC-informed approaches are essential to driving uptake of non-RI vaccines in Nigeria. This model demonstrates the effectiveness of behaviorally grounded, community-validated interventions and offers a replicable pathway for broader immunisation programming in low-resource, high-hesitancy contexts.

Keywords: : Community engagement, social listening, Adult immunisation, COVID-19, Social Behaviour Change

Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Presenting Author: Dorothea Fakrogha

Organisation: ¹Centre for Democracy and Development

Summit Track 4: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

This study explores how equitable healthcare services can reduce health-related poverty and improve overall well-being, focusing on women and marginalised groups in Benue State, Nigeria. Health-related poverty, as defined by the WHO, arises from catastrophic health spending that forces households to forgo essential needs, pushing them into or deeper into poverty. The International Labour Organisation estimates that over 1.3 billion people globally are affected, with more than 150 million in Africa alone. Nigeria contributes significantly, with 77% of its health expenditure coming from out-of-pocket payments, the highest in West Africa, resulting in an estimated one million people falling into poverty annually. Women and marginalised groups bear the greatest burden due to limited income, cultural restrictions, and economic dependency. Notably, 52% of Nigerian women identify healthcare costs as their biggest barrier to access. Benue State is selected for its representation of Nigeria's socio-economic and cultural diversity. Despite being a major agricultural hub, Benue suffers from weak healthcare infrastructure and persistent poverty, especially among women in rural communities. The study addresses the gap in research and policy concerning equitable healthcare access in such underserved regions. A mixed-methods approach will be employed. Quantitative surveys will assess the scale and impact of health-related poverty among women and marginalised populations, while qualitative interviews with 15 women leaders from local organisations, faith-based groups, and health institutions will provide expert and grassroots perspectives. The study aims to identify systemic barriers to equitable healthcare, quantify financial burdens on vulnerable groups, and propose targeted interventions. By centering on Benue, it contributes context-specific evidence to broader national and continental discussions on healthcare reform and poverty reduction. Ultimately, the findings are expected to support policies promoting healthcare equity, universal coverage, and gender-sensitive reforms, with implications for sustainable development in Nigeria and across Africa.

Keywords: Equitable Healthcare, Marginalised Groups, Health-Related Poverty

Healthcare: A Pathway To Thriving Communities In Africa

Presenting Author: Angel Garba¹

Contributing Authors: Mardiya Mustapha¹

Organization: ¹Nile University

Summit Track 4: : Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

Health is a foundational driver of human development and productivity, central to the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals. The healthcare system in sub-Saharan Africa remains highly complex and strained by historical inequities, under-resourced infrastructure, and limited access to essential services. This study addresses the persistent healthcare challenges in the region and investigates the potential for sustainable improvement through strategic investment and policy reform. The objective is to examine systemic barriers to health access and identify transformative opportunities to improve outcomes and equity. Using secondary data from WHO, the United Nations, and regional health indicators between 2015 and 2023, the study evaluates maternal health metrics, disease burdens, financial access, and healthcare coverage across low- and middle-income countries, with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa. The data collection involved analysis of demographic health surveys and comparative benchmarks with high-income countries. The study population includes both rural and urban populations across the sub-Saharan region, with an emphasis on vulnerable groups, including women and the economically disadvantaged. Key findings reveal that over 400 million people worldwide lack access to basic health services, and 6% of people in low- and middle-income countries fall into extreme poverty due to direct payment for healthcare. In sub-Saharan Africa, only 43% of pregnant women attend four recommended prenatal visits, and just 49% of births are attended by skilled personnel, compared to global averages of 55% and 70%, respectively. The burden of both infectious and rising non-communicable diseases is intensified by an undertrained workforce, financial barriers, and rapid urban migration that strains already fragile systems. In conclusion, emphasis that healthcare must be recognized as a human right, requiring robust financing, improved government frameworks, and expanded access to technology using artificial intelligence and infrastructure. Multisectoral collaboration among governments, international organisations, and local communities is critical to achieving accountable, accessible, and innovative healthcare systems. Investment in healthcare today will lead to measurable improvements in population health, economic resilience, and sustainable development throughout the region.

Keywords: Sub-Saharan healthcare, Health system reform, Maternal health access, Health equity, Sustainable development.

Domestic Labour and the Path to Gender Equity

Presenting Author: Orifunke Lawal

Organisation: ¹Winning Ladies Circle

Summit Track 7: Shared care, Shared Power: Rethinking roles for a fairer future for all

Abstract

Unpaid care and domestic work remain one of the most invisible drivers of gender inequality in Nigerian households. This research explores how domestic responsibilities are distributed among adults in Nigeria, and how this distribution affects access to opportunities, decision-making power, and overall wellbeing, particularly for women. An anonymous online survey was distributed across Nigeria to adults aged 18 and above, with 31 respondents completing the form. Questions covered task distribution, time spent on care work, perceptions of fairness, policy solutions, and personal impact. Responses were analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis of open-ended responses. 87% of respondents were female, and 90% were aged 25–34. While 58% of respondents reported that caregiving duties were distributed, 71% had actively discussed care-sharing at home, revealing a culture of negotiation and shifting expectations. Most care-related tasks (especially cooking and childcare) were still overwhelmingly performed by women, while tasks like laundry and school runs showed slightly more balance or outsourcing. Over 60% of respondents spend at least 1–3 hours daily on care work, and nearly 25% report 4–6 hours. Though 61% indicated no professional limitation due to care work, others missed opportunities for promotions, networking, and personal development. Qualitative responses revealed that shared care fostered emotional wellbeing and household harmony, while lack of support contributed to burnout, resentment, and in one case, marital breakdown. An overwhelming 96.8% believe that shared caregiving responsibilities can improve gender equity. Respondents cited key solutions including household-level conversations (27.94%), public education (27.94%), male caregiving role models (22.06%), and improved paternity leave (22.06%). The findings reveal a quiet shift in perception around care-sharing, especially among younger urban Nigerian couples. While gendered expectations persist, shared caregiving is increasingly seen as a pathway to healthier relationships, improved productivity, and greater gender equity. This research contributes original insights into the experiences of Nigerian women navigating unpaid care and highlights actionable paths for equitable policy design. Policymakers and communities must amplify this shift through supportive policies, cultural sensitisation, and structural investments in the care economy.

Keywords: Shared Care, Gender Equity, Unpaid Domestic Work, Household Labour

Behind the scenes: Gender, inclusion and the creative economy in Mandoul, Sarrh region of Chad

Presenting Author: Bonidjita Noubadoumadji¹

Contributing Authors: Pauline Nnenna¹

Organization: ¹TearFund

Summit Track 8: Behind the Scenes: Gender, Inclusion, and the Creative Economy

Abstract

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), known as “Yondô or ndô”, remains widespread in Chad’s Mandoul region, despite its harmful effects. The 2014 Demographic and Health Survey (EDS 2014) shows 38% of women have been circumcised, with prevalence reaching 82% in Mandoul, where it is seen as normal and even desirable. This ancient practice, a rite of passage for girls aged 8-14, instils community values like courage, endurance, and respect during 3-4 week initiation trials. Excised girls command a higher dowry, giving the practice an economic value that harms the victim. In regions where FGM is prevalent, women encounter significant barriers to accessing financial services, a factor identified as contributing to the persistence of the practice. Training FGM practitioners in alternative income-generating activities and supporting survivors has been crucial in reducing FGM cases in Mandoul, with 102 victims and 30 excisors benefiting. Facilitating access to credit and enhancing women’s financial literacy show considerable promise for expanding their economic opportunities. The Transforming Masculinities approach and ‘Journey to Healing’ initiatives facilitated a change in the established practice through the engagement of traditional rulers, excisors, and faith leaders, as well as survivors of FGM. Leaders gained understanding of the detrimental effects of the practice, while survivors were supported in their healing process and empowered to vocalise their experiences. Practitioners received economic engagement for a two-year period (August 2022 - June 2025). This has led to a 45% reduction in cases (monitored during the months of August-September-October, a period known for the peak of the practice of FGM) from 82%. Economic empowerment of women is crucial for achieving gender equality and upholding women’s rights. This empowerment involves various facets, including equitable participation in markets and control over productive resources. Providing former FGM practitioners and victims with alternative opportunities has significantly contributed to the reduction of FGM rates, fostered behavioral and attitudinal shifts and financial inclusiveness. Next steps: Explore ways of reintegrating FGM practitioners into society and building their capacity to carry out bankable projects.

Keywords: Excision, Transforming Masculinities, Empowerment, Income-generating activities, Financial Inclusiveness

Smart Scans: Using AI to Interpret Chest X-Rays for Pneumonia Diagnosis

Presenting Author: Monica Oijah

Contributing Authors: Oke Opeyemi¹, Odunayo Emmanuel Dada², Deborah Chisom Duru¹

Organisation: ¹Federal University of Technology, Owerri; ²Federal University of Technology, Minna

Summit Track 4: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

Access to quality radiological services remains a critical challenge in many health facilities, where there is a severe shortage of radiologists to interpret medical images. This gap in diagnostic capacity poses serious risks, particularly in the timely detection and treatment of diseases. This project aims to develop a software tool that assists in the interpretation of chest X-ray images, with a specific focus on detecting pneumonia cases. This study was conducted in Owerri, where we collected datasets from the Federal Medical Centre, Owerri, and also leveraged publicly available data from pediatric patients at the Guangzhou Women and Children's Medical Centre in China. The collected data was thoroughly cleaned and preprocessed. Using a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) model, we trained, validated, and tested the system with the Python programming language and the TensorFlow framework. Additionally, we integrated the trained model into a custom-built website to allow users to interact with the system for diagnostic purposes. A series of technical evaluations was carried out to assess the model's effectiveness and accuracy. The model's output displayed whether a chest X-ray image was classified as "normal" or showed signs of pneumonia, along with the degree of pneumonia presence. Performance metric analysis revealed that the model achieved 58% precision and accuracy. However, the results indicate a significant need for improvement in recall (sensitivity) and specificity, suggesting that the model currently struggles to consistently detect true pneumonia cases and correctly identify normal images. Further improvement, this prototype can aid healthcare institutions in accurately interpreting medical images, especially chest X-rays. If successfully deployed, it could enhance early pneumonia detection and improve patient care, particularly in resource-limited settings.

Keywords: (CNN), Chest X-Rays, Medical Imaging, Pneumonia Diagnosis

Bridging the Gaps: A Pilot for Inclusive, Affordable and Gender-Sensitive Urban Mobility in Abuja

Presenting Author: Oluwajuwon Oni

Organization: ¹Esam Energy Solutions Limited

Summit Track 6: Safe, Inclusive, and Gender-Responsive Transportation

Abstract

Abuja's fast-growing urban infrastructure continues to neglect the diverse mobility needs of its residents, especially women, the elderly, and persons with physical disabilities. Cross-over pedestrian bridges lack ramps and accessible pathways, while wide drainages and poorly structured sidewalks act as daily barriers to safe movement. This project aims to design and test inclusive, affordable, and gender-responsive transportation interventions in selected parts of Abuja. Its objectives include identifying physical and economic access challenges, proposing context-specific infrastructure improvements, and advocating for policy adaptation that prioritizes inclusive mobility planning at the FCTA level. The project was implemented between May and June 2025 across three high-density districts in Abuja: Kubwa, Gwarinpa, and Nyanya. A participatory audit was conducted involving local womens groups, youth associations, elderly residents, and physically challenged individuals. Key activities included route-mapping exercises, interviews, infrastructure walk-throughs, and consultative sessions with local transport unions, city stakeholders, and planning professionals. Core interventions includes Auditing pedestrian bridges and sidewalks for accessibility, developing design proposals for ramps, railings, and curb-side walkways, introducing a Smart Mobility Card system (currently in technical development) intended to offer subsidized fares for vulnerable commuters through NFC-enabled access points, sensitization training for drivers on disability and gender-based commuting barriers. The findings revealed that 70% of elderly and disabled respondents avoid cross-over bridges due to steps and lack of handrails. Women reported drainage crossings as unsafe, especially while carrying children or goods. The Smart Mobility Card concept was positively received during design testing, with projected reductions in fare-related exclusion. Simulated pilot testing forecasted a 12% increase in school attendance among participating girls and a 30% reduction in verbal harassment cases on identified routes. Findings were informed by simulations, feedback from participants, and regional mobility case studies. This project highlights the urgency of integrating inclusive design principles into Abuja's transport planning ecosystem. Design exclusions like stair-only pedestrian bridges and inaccessible road curbs unintentionally marginalize entire groups. We recommend a city-wide accessibility audit, the institutional adoption of inclusive urban mobility codes by the FCTA, and further investment in Smart Mobility Card Infrastructure. The model is cost-adaptable and scalable to other urban centers across Nigeria. Future work should prioritize gender and disability-sensitive design as a foundational element in inclusive transport policy.

Keywords: Inclusive Mobility, Smart Mobility Card, Urban Accessibility, Gender-Responsive Transport, Participatory Design

Bridging Implementation Gaps in Health Service Provision: Integrating Traditional Birth Attendants in PMTCT HIV Testing Services for pregnant women within the community across selected States in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Elizabeth Isah

Contributing Authors: Chiedozi Akueshi¹, Olubunmi Amoo¹, Anna Agbaji¹

Organisation: ¹APIN Public Health Initiatives of Nigeria

Summit Track 4: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

Many expectant mothers, particularly those in hard-to-reach or low-income settings, prefer Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) for cultural comfort, proximity, and affordability. Consequently, women who present initially to TBAs remain undiagnosed until they eventually attend a clinic, delaying early detection and ART initiation, increasing mother-to-child transmission risk, and perpetuating inequities in service coverage and health outcomes. Therefore, to bridge this gap, we implemented the integration of TBAs to increase HIV identification among pregnant women and link them to PMTCT in Plateau, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo and Benue states in Nigeria. This intervention involves HIV testing services in TBAs within the community across five States. This model decentralises HIV testing, ensuring timely screening, counselling, and PMTCT interventions at TBA sites. First, we conducted rapid community mapping to identify and register active TBAs. Then, we co-created a tailored training curriculum with local health authorities, covering rapid HIV testing, basic counselling, infection prevention, data recording, and referral protocols. TBA staff were trained to provide HTS for pregnant women using the training curriculum. Each TBA received a standardised PMTCT testing kit, approved rapid test kits, PPE, job aids, referral forms, and documentation registers. All pregnant women who tested HIV positive at TBAs were accompanied to hub facilities for immediate ART initiation. Mentor nurses from the nearest hub facilities, supported by program staff, conducted monthly field visits for supervision, supply replenishment, and collection of de-identified data forms. Integrating TBAs into PMTCT services dramatically increased community testing coverage: 228,263 pregnant women accessed HIV screening through TBAs, with 163 newly diagnosed Persons living with HIV (PLHIV) pregnant women and all were successfully initiated on Antiretroviral therapy, demonstrating the model's effectiveness in early case detection and linkage to care. TBAs' trusted community relationships enhanced service uptake, while monthly supervision and standardised documentation maintained data quality. Firstly, strengthen TBA Capacity by delivering refresher training on risk-based client targeting and advanced counselling. Secondly, explore community differentiated ART refill platforms to reduce travel barriers, whereby clients can obtain their ARV treatments as well as other relevant services with the integration of mobile ART delivery.

Keywords: TBA, Pregnant women, PMTCT, ART, HIV.

Voices that Lead: Educating a nation to reimagine women's leadership

Presenting Author: Simbo Olatoregun

Contributing Authors: Abosede George-Ogan¹, Antonia Emetarom¹

Organization: ¹Women in Leadership Advancement Network

Summit Track 1: Empowering Voices: Advancing Gender Equity Through Education

Abstract

Across Nigeria, structural barriers and cultural biases continue to limit women's participation in leadership and governance. The Leading Woman Show (TLWS) was created as a public education and perception change platform to challenge these limitations and change the national narrative one episode at a time. Designed as a nonpartisan civic media programme, TLWS uses mass communication as an innovative strategy to inform, engage, and inspire Nigerians across demographics to rethink gender roles, question exclusionary norms, and support inclusive leadership. Over three seasons, TLWS delivered 39 high-impact episodes across four national TV stations, integrating expert interviews, real-life stories, audience Q&A sessions, and vox-pop segments that translated complex governance and policy issues into accessible learning moments. Each season was intentionally designed to educate citizens on a different dimension of leadership: electoral participation, public governance, and policymaking. Through this civic learning approach, TLWS provided visibility to women in leadership, uncovered the systemic challenges they face, and introduced viewers to the tools of advocacy, representation, and policy literacy. The impact has been both measurable and transformative. After season one, 97% of viewers reported a stronger understanding of the barriers women face in politics. Season two prompted 80% of the audience to reassess women's roles in governance, and in Season three, 100% of viewers surveyed agreed that understanding public policy is essential. This confirms that civic education, when localized and accessible, can ignite national dialogue and behaviour change. What makes TLWS unique is its ability to merge media, education, and movement-building. By elevating diverse voices, including women leaders, male allies, policy experts, and everyday citizens, the show has reshaped perceptions and equipped audiences with the knowledge and confidence to support gender-inclusive governance.

TLWS offers a replicable model for civic education through media that drives public discourse, dismantles structural inequities, and positions women as central to Nigeria's future leadership.

Keywords: Civic education, Women's leadership, Inclusive governance, Media for change.

CycleEd: Advancing Inclusive Education for Muslim Girls with Disabilities in Northern Nigeria

Presenting Author: Zuliehat Ohunene Abdullahi

Organisation: ¹MOVING MIND ALLIANCE

Summit Track 1: Empowering Voices: Advancing Gender Equity Through Education

Abstract

In Northern Nigeria, Muslim girls with disabilities face extreme educational marginalization due to intersecting factors of gender, religion, disability, and poverty. In response, the Ability in Disability Foundation launched a grassroots-led initiative from 2023 to 2025 in rural communities of Kogi and Kaduna States. The project aimed to improve access to inclusive education through locally informed strategies. Key activities included training 120 teachers on inclusive pedagogy, providing assistive learning tools, hosting interfaith parent sensitisation forums, and launching student-led peer support clubs. Collaborations with religious and traditional leaders helped challenge social norms and reduce stigma. As a result, school enrolment of girls with disabilities rose by 45%, while teacher capacity in inclusive practices improved by 60%. Post-intervention assessments also showed improved community support and acceptance. A unique feature of the initiative was the integration of Qur'anic teachings to promote inclusive values, which helped secure buy-in from conservative communities. This project shows that culturally sensitive, grassroots strategies can successfully expand educational access for girls historically excluded from the classroom. The next steps include expanding to neighboring states, digital storytelling campaigns led by the girls themselves, and working with policymakers to promote inclusive education at state and federal levels. This model has the potential to shift education systems to be more gender- and disability-responsive while amplifying voices often unheard in education discourse.

Keywords: Disability inclusion, girls' education, Northern Nigeria, equity, grassroots

Empowering the marginalised: UNICEF's inclusive education strategies for children with disabilities in Nigeria (2015–2023)

Presenting Author: Shamsiyyah Umar

Contributing Authors: Abosede George-Ogan¹, Antonia Emetarom¹

Organization: ¹We Are Special Foundation

Summit Track 1: Empowering Voices: Advancing Gender Equity Through Education

Abstract

This study examines the strategic interventions of UNICEF in advancing inclusive education for children with disabilities in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023, with a critical lens on gender equity. Despite international and national policy commitments to inclusive and equitable education, children with disabilities particularly girls continue to experience structural exclusion and underrepresentation in formal schooling systems. This research investigates the extent to which UNICEF's programs have addressed the intersecting barriers of disability, gender, and poverty, and evaluates their effectiveness in promoting access, retention, and learning outcomes. Employing a mixed-methods design, the study was conducted across selected Nigerian states where UNICEF has supported inclusive education initiatives. Data were drawn from document analysis, policy reviews, secondary datasets, and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders including educators, caregivers, and officials. Analytical frameworks were based on the social model of disability and a rights-based approach, providing insights into how systemic barriers and sociocultural dynamics influence implementation. The findings indicate that while Nigeria has made policy strides toward inclusive education, practical implementation remains inconsistent. Only 10% of children with disabilities are enrolled in school nationally, with girls comprising less than half of this population due to cultural stigma, safety concerns, and resource scarcity. UNICEF's interventions such as infrastructure support, community engagement, assistive technology provision, and teacher training have improved awareness and accessibility in specific regions but have not yet translated into widespread systemic change. The study highlights that success depends on multi-level partnerships, sustained political will, and the integration of inclusive education into national planning and budgeting processes. Conclusions underscore the need for gender-responsive and disability-inclusive educational strategies that are locally adaptable and informed by community realities. Future directions include expanding digital learning platforms for remote inclusion, strengthening community ownership, and institutionalizing inclusive curricula and monitoring systems. By amplifying the experiences of children with disabilities especially girls this research contributes to global conversations on advancing gender equity through inclusive and transformative education.

Keywords: Inclusive education, gender equity, disability rights, UNICEF Nigeria, access to learning.

Gender and Inclusion in Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Learning Opportunities in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Rachael Okoronkwo

Organisation: ¹Cloneshouse Nigeria

Summit Track 1: Empowering Voices: Advancing Gender Equity Through Education

Abstract

Access to Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) opportunities plays a vital role in shaping the quality of evidence available for development decision-making. Yet in Nigeria, pathways into MEL remain underexplored, especially through a gender lens. This study explored the gendered nature of access to MEL learning opportunities, barriers to participation, and mechanisms that foster more inclusive learning. It also examined how intersectional factors such as age and disability influence entry into MEL practice. Using a mixed-methods approach between June and July 2025, the study combined a desk review of literature and global reports with primary data collection. The survey, completed by 25 MEL professionals, captured data on learning access, challenges, enablers, and actions to improve inclusion. In-depth interviews with six MEL practitioners (three women and three men) explored learning journeys and how gender shaped professional experiences. Survey data was analyzed descriptively, and interviews were coded thematically. Findings show that while interest in MEL learning is high, access remains uneven. Although 72% of respondents had participated in MEL learning, 60% reported barriers, including financial constraints, time limitations, and location. Cost was a particular challenge for early-career professionals and women. Gendered dynamics emerged strongly, 44% felt men and women do not have equal access. Interviews further revealed that women often face competing domestic responsibilities, safety concerns during field deployments, and limited gender-sensitive training designs. Mentorship and networking were identified as major gaps, especially for women, who preferred female mentors for ease of communication and shared lived experiences. However, such mentors were scarce. Access to field-based technical exposure also differed: men reported more hands-on learning, while women relied on remote or self-paced options, affecting visibility, and growth. The desk review and interviews highlighted that Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) remain largely excluded from MEL learning, due to limited intentional design, inaccessible materials, and poor infrastructure. Inclusion efforts were often tokenistic or reactive. This study reveals persistent gaps in equitable access to MEL learning in Nigeria. Addressing these requires intentional, inclusive design, standardized mentorship, and proactive policies. Moving forward, stakeholders must invest in strategies that promote context-relevant, accessible, and sustain MEL capacity strengthening for all.

Keywords: Gender equity, mentorship, Nigeria, intersectionality, inclusion

J Blood Match: Bridging Nigeria's blood-supply gap

Presenting Author: Angela Omeiza

Organization: ¹Jela's Development Initiatives (JDI)

Summit Track 4: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

Timely access to safe blood in Nigeria remains a significant barrier to equitable healthcare. Jela's Development Initiatives (JDI), launched J Blood Match to bridge this gap by leveraging digital technology and community engagement. The programme's objectives are to prevent avoidable deaths, reduce financial burdens on low-income families, and promote health equity by matching voluntary donors to patients in need, based on location and blood type. Since its initial launch on Telegram and Facebook in November 2019 and its redevelopment as a web application in February 2023, J Blood Match has been active in both urban and rural hospitals in all 36 states, integrating Google's API for precise donor-recipient matching, advanced tracking, and automated notifications. A growing network of trained blood advocates drawn from Nigeria's six geopolitical zones raises grassroots awareness of voluntary blood donation. Key populations served include pregnant women, accident victims, individuals with sickle cell disease, cancer warriors, and other chronic health conditions. To date, more than 1,500 voluntary donors have registered, over 600 requests have been processed, 125 successful donor-recipient matches have been achieved, and nine community blood drives conducted have yielded about 100 units of blood. Our experience shows that sustained donor engagement through regular communication and reminders markedly improves conversion rates. The platform's matching algorithm consistently links donors with recipients within minutes. Continuous follow-up has been essential to ensure scheduled donations take place as planned, and grassroots campaigns led by our blood advocates have effectively driven awareness in their communities. Building on these insights, JDI plans over the next five years to expand Nigeria's blood donor pool by 3%, reduce average request-to-donation times from 48 hours to under 12 hours, facilitate more than 2,000 donations, and mobilise 500+ Blood Advocates for targeted outreach. Strategic partnerships with policy-making bodies, hospitals and health organisations will be deepened, follow-up systems will be strengthened to track outcomes more effectively, and outreach will extend further into underserved rural communities. These efforts will help solidify J Blood Match's impact and move Nigeria closer to achieving sustainable, equitable access to safe blood.

Keywords: Blood donation, health equity, digital health, blood advocacy, J Blood Match

Safe, inclusive and Gender responsive Transportation

Presenting Author: Solomon Liman Ahore

Contributing Authors: Laiatu Augustine Bamaiyi¹

Organisation: ¹Women Right Initiative (WORI)

Summit Track 6: Safe, Inclusive, and Gender-Responsive Transportation

Abstract

Transportation systems around the world are often designed without adequate consideration of the diverse needs of all users, particularly women, girls, and other marginalised groups. This study explores the concept of gender-responsive and inclusive transportation as a critical element of urban planning that ensures safety, equity, and accessibility for all. The objective was to assess existing transport systems in selected urban and semi-urban centres, identifying barriers faced by women and gender-diverse populations in terms of safety, affordability, accessibility, and cultural acceptability. A mixed-method approach was employed between January and October 2024 across three countries, Nigeria, Kenya, and India, targeting public transit users, operators, and policymakers. Data collection included surveys (1,200), focus group discussions, and policy document reviews. Key findings show that over 68% of women reported experiencing harassment in public transport, while 54% avoided travelling after dark due to safety concerns. Structural factors such as lack of lighting, untrained drivers, poor station design, and policy gaps were major contributors. The study also identified innovative solutions like gender-segregated buses, mobile safety apps, and participatory design models as effective interventions. In conclusion, the integration of gender-responsive planning in transportation is vital for building safe and inclusive cities. The research recommends comprehensive policy reforms, multi-stakeholder engagement, and investment in infrastructure that supports diverse mobility needs. Future research should examine the scalability of these interventions in rural contexts.

Keywords: Gender equity, mentorship, Nigeria, intersectionality, inclusion

From Tokenism to Transformation: Rethinking Women's Quotas in Political Parties

Presenting Author: Mary Bukola Taiwo

Organization: ¹Department of Political Science (Public Policy Analysis), Nasarawa State University

Summit Track 2: Equitable Futures: New voices and strategies for promoting women in leadership

Abstract

Despite the adoption of a 35% affirmative action policy in Nigeria, women's representation in elective and appointive political roles remains significantly below the target. This research investigates the extent to which gender quotas in political party structures have moved beyond symbolic inclusion to foster genuine equity in leadership. The objective is to critically assess the effectiveness of gender quotas, the structural limitations undermining their implementation, and the potential of internal party reforms, mentorship pipelines, and financial support mechanisms in transforming women's political leadership outcomes. This study employs a qualitative approach, using desk review and in-depth interviews conducted with female political aspirants, party officials, and gender experts across five geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The research examines political party constitutions, affirmative action plans, and nomination processes to identify patterns of inclusion and exclusion. The data were analysed thematically to explore narratives of tokenism, structural bias, and access to power. Findings indicate that while most political parties formally adopt gender quotas, these are often not enforced or are undermined by opaque internal party dynamics and patriarchal political culture. Women are frequently positioned as symbolic candidates with limited decision-making power. However, where mentorship programs and candidate support funds exist, women report improved confidence, visibility, and political competitiveness. Respondents also emphasized the need for legal backing to enforce party-level quotas and integrate gender parity into national electoral reforms. The study concludes that gender quotas, while essential, are insufficient on their own. A transformational shift requires institutional reforms that embed gender responsiveness in party structures, capacity development for emerging female leaders, and robust accountability mechanisms. Advancing from tokenism to transformation necessitates an ecosystem approach that aligns policy, political will, and societal norms. This research calls for a reimagining of affirmative action as a tool not just for entry, but for influence and impact.

Keywords: Gender quotas, Political leadership, Affirmative action, Women's political participation, Party reform

Invisible Trauma: Addressing Postpartum Depression Among Women in Underserved Nigerian Communities Through Community-Based Mental Health Integration

Presenting Author: Rukoyah Adedeji Temilade

Organisation: ¹University of Ibadan

Summit Track 4: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

In many underserved Nigerian communities, the joy of childbirth is quietly shadowed by a hidden crisis: postpartum depression (PPD). Affecting nearly one in five women in developing regions, PPD remains underdiagnosed and untreated, especially in settings marked by poverty, displacement, weak infrastructure, and gender-based violence. In Nigeria, where 29% of mothers receive no postnatal care, early detection of maternal mental health issues is often impossible. This initiative aims to integrate maternal mental health screening into Nigeria's primary health care system, targeting flood-prone urban slums and remote rural communities. Using the WHO's Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) model, trained community health workers will screen mothers during routine postnatal visits using tools like the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS). The approach prioritizes emotional first aid, early identification, culturally sensitive care, and referral pathways within a low-resource, non-specialist framework. Lagos-based research highlights key PPD risk factors: postpartum blues (OR=32.77), lack of caregiving support (OR=2.64), intimate partner violence (OR=5.2), and unsupportive partners (OR=2.6). These findings underscore the gendered vulnerability of new mothers, especially in crisis-affected environments. While traditional communal caregiving offers some protection in rural areas, stigma and silence continue to suppress recognition and response. To build a more inclusive and resilient health system, maternal mental health must be formally embedded in Nigeria's gender-responsive Universal Health Coverage and emergency preparedness strategies. A pilot rollout across selected primary health centers could test feasibility and scalability, particularly in climate-affected regions. Future steps include monitoring maternal-child outcomes, training expansions, and creating community referral linkages. This pilot addresses a critical gap in maternal care and brings mental health into mainstream reproductive health programming. By surfacing new voices and overlooked realities, it directly supports efforts toward equitable healthcare access, thriving communities, and gender justice.

Keywords: Postpartum depression, maternal health equity, rural communities, mental health integration, Nigeria

Addressing Period Poverty and Shame in Nigerian Communities through Mobile Cinema.

Presenting Author: Ramatu Ada Ocheكليye

Contributing Authors: Adetayo Adetokun¹, Atinuke Adeosun¹, Halimatu Ocheكليye¹

Organization: ¹Shades of Us Storytelling Initiative for African People

Summit Track 1: Empowering Voices: Advancing Gender Equity Through Education

Abstract

Period poverty, defined by inadequate access to menstrual products, pain relief, and sanitation facilities, affects over 37 million women and girls in Nigeria. Economic decline and rising inflation have further limited access to essential menstrual products. In response, Shades of Us Storytelling Initiative for African People launched a mobile cinema campaign featuring the film FLOW to raise awareness and promote sustainable menstrual hygiene practices. The campaign included partnerships with women- and girl-focused organisations, a premiere screening with an audience including women and girls from the Wassa Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp, and broad digital dissemination via YouTube and social media (Facebook, X, LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok). A live discussion on X extended the conversation on period poverty. Pre- and post-screening surveys measured knowledge gains, and social media analytics tracked reach and engagement. The initiative reached 431,311 people in person and online, with 113,617 video views across platforms. Survey results showed a significant improvement in understanding of menstrual health, with notable increases in agreement that schools should provide free sanitary products (from 40% to 100%), support for male involvement in menstrual health (from 51% to 100%), and recognition of the economic impact on menstrual hygiene (from 72% to 100%). Period poverty continues to be a critical challenge in Nigeria. This project highlights mobile cinema as a powerful, scalable tool for breaking taboos, raising awareness, and improving menstrual health education in underserved communities.

Keywords: Period Poverty, Menstrual Health Education, Mobile Cinema, Sustainable Hygiene Practices, Community Engagement.

The Role of Digital Literacy in Reducing Gender Inequality: Evidence from Community-Based Interventions in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Irene Oluwashina

Organisation: ¹THE HEED INITIATIVE

Summit Track 3: Bridging the Digital Gender Divide: Inclusive Technology for All

Abstract

Gender inequality is a persistent challenge in Nigeria, particularly in underserved communities where women and girls face systemic barriers to accessing digital tools and opportunities. This research investigates the impact of digital literacy programs on reducing gender disparities, promoting economic empowerment, and fostering social inclusion among marginalised groups in Lagos State. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach conducted over 12 months in the Makoko community. A total of 150 participants, 75% of whom were women, engaged in a comprehensive digital literacy program. Quantitative data were collected through pre- and post-program surveys measuring digital proficiency, economic activity, and gender role perceptions. Qualitative data were obtained via focus group discussions and interviews to capture participant narratives and program outcomes. Descriptive statistics were used for quantitative analysis, while thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data to identify trends and insights. Findings indicate a significant improvement in digital skills, with a 65% increase in literacy levels among participants. Notably, 70% of female participants reported adopting digital tools for entrepreneurial activities, leading to enhanced economic independence. The program also contributed to shifts in traditional gender roles, with participants expressing greater confidence in engaging in community decision-making processes. Key success factors included culturally sensitive training modules and peer-led mentorship, which fostered a collaborative and inclusive learning environment. This study highlights the critical role of digital literacy in addressing gender inequality and advancing social and economic development in underserved communities. By equipping women with the tools and confidence to engage in the digital economy, such initiatives can create pathways for inclusion and empowerment. Scaling this model across similar contexts in Nigeria and beyond holds potential for significant societal impact. Future research should explore long-term program effects and strategies for integrating digital literacy into broader national gender equity policies.

Keywords: Gender inequality, digital literacy, economic empowerment, social inclusion, Nigeria

Boosting Equity in Family Planning Access Through the Gates-Funded Enhancement of the MSI Ladies Approach in Kano, Nigeria

Presenting Author: Aisha Ahmad¹

Contributing Authors: Ahmad Sani¹, Andrew Aisien¹, Chibuike Utaka¹

Organization: ¹MSI Nigeria Reproductive Choices

Summit Track 7: Shared care, Shared Power: Rethinking roles for a fairer future for all

Abstract

In underserved communities of Northern Nigeria, access to voluntary family planning (FP) services is limited, especially for adolescents, first-time mothers, and women with mobility constraints. To bridge these gaps, MSI Nigeria Reproductive Choices introduced the MSI Ladies channel, a community-based initiative where trained female health workers deliver contraceptive services at the community level. The MSI Ladies model was initially implemented in Kano in 2016 with 34 trained providers. In May 2025, the Gates Foundation, in collaboration with the Kano State government, supported the onboarding of an additional 22 MSI Ladies. All selected nurses, midwives, and community health extension workers underwent Values Clarification and Attitude Transformation training, followed by a 7–9-day course on Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARCs). Providers who passed a global-standard competency assessment were deployed to offer home-based FP services across 56 communities in 19 local government areas. Services were delivered at clients' homes or health facilities, with real-time reporting via the ComCare digital platform. Data were validated by supervisors and Social and Behavioral Change Communication Officers. Descriptive analysis was conducted on service volume, client age, method mix, and new client uptake, comparing the standalone MSI Ladies model with results achieved after integrating Gates-funded demand generation strategies. This study assesses how the Gates Foundation-supported project complements and strengthens the existing MSI Ladies model to improve equitable access to FP services in Kano State, Nigeria. Between 2017 and June 2025, MSI Ladies served 1,460,227 clients, including 215,543 adolescents (15%). Within six months of the Gates-funded intervention, the number of adolescent and first-time FP users significantly increased, doubling in comparison to annual averages from previous years. This growth is linked to expanded outreach, including in-school sensitisation, tailored IEC materials, and engagement of local influencers. These demand-generation strategies effectively enhanced the reach and impact of the existing MSI Ladies model. The results highlight how targeted investments and partnerships can complement and amplify established community-based models to drive inclusive, equitable access to FP. The MSI Ladies model, with adequate funding, should be scaled to increase access to FP services in Kano and other states in Northern Nigeria.

Keywords: Period Poverty, Menstrual Health Education, Mobile Cinema, Sustainable Hygiene Practices, Community Engagement.

Overlapping Identities: The interplay of gender dynamics on food security outcomes in agrarian communities across Northern Nigeria

Presenting Author: Anwulika Onwudinjo

Organisation: ¹AFEX

Summit Track 10: Collaborative Strategies for Achieving Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Abstract

This topic presents the central idea that gender dynamics represented through social, economic and religious norms, values and traditions inherent in Nigerian societies pose a major effect on food security outcomes and livelihoods of female farmers in agrarian communities. To understand the interplay of gender dynamics in women's access to productivity enhancing resources like credit facilities as well as gender-sensitive extension services, which drive food security outcomes, the study leveraged on the Resilience approach framework. This framework seeks to understand the way societal differences interact and ultimately impact the ability of men and women to access and subsequently deploy capacity assets to respond to shocks and stressors. This study drew on qualitative case studies from food players in the value chain that provide credit support and agricultural extension services, semi-structured interviews with selected farming communities, as well as national policy analysis, to examine the impact of societal and institutional biases on the outcomes of female farmers in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Thematic analysis was employed to establish patterns in responses that identify the extent to which cultural and religious dynamics prevent women from accessing productivity enhancing resources. Preliminary findings reveal that gender dynamics significantly impact women's access to input programs, loans and tailored agriculture extension services. Factors such as land ownership challenges, predatory lending criteria, extension service biases, as well as administrative and structural blind spots impact the resilience capacity of female farmers. The study concludes that understanding the interplay of these factors on the livelihoods of female farmers is an essential facet of developing a holistic national response to food security in Nigeria, drawing on the application of a resilience approach in implementing relevant programs and policies that drive agrarian transformation.

Keywords: Gender dynamics, Food Security, Northern Nigeria, Agriculture

Beyond access: Redesigning inclusive digital futures to bridge the gender divide

Presenting Author: Mutinta Masowe

Organization: Mcover solutions

Summit Track 1: Bridging the Digital Gender Divide: Inclusive Technology for All

Abstract

Despite the rapid expansion of digital technologies, women and girls in low-resource settings, especially across Africa continue to face structural barriers that limit their participation in the digital ecosystem. The gender digital divide is exacerbated by factors such as poverty, low literacy levels, harmful social norms, and limited policy enforcement around inclusive digital access. In Zambia, many adolescent girls lack access to digital tools, training, and safe online environments, which hinders their educational advancement, health outcomes, and economic empowerment. This study was developed in response to these gaps, aiming to explore how inclusive, community-led digital interventions could help bridge this divide. The study employed a mixed-methods participatory action research approach over a 12-month period in three rural and peri-urban communities in Zambia. Interventions included: (1) girl-led digital empowerment circles focused on basic coding, AI awareness, and digital rights; (2) mobile-based learning tools tailored for low-literacy users; and (3) creation of WhatsApp-based safe spaces for peer education and SRHR support. Data collection included baseline and endline surveys, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and digital competency assessments. Stakeholder engagement involved youth, educators, traditional leaders, tech developers, and community health workers in co-designing and adapting the tools to ensure contextual relevance and ownership. The interventions demonstrated measurable impact. Among 120 adolescent girl participants, 72% reported increased digital literacy and confidence. School retention rates among participants improved by 43% over the study period. Health-seeking behaviour related to SRHR rose by 55%, and community feedback showed improved acceptance of girls' engagement with digital tools. Qualitative data highlighted enhanced self-expression, peer support, and a shift in gender norms within families and communities. Importantly, several participants initiated their own tech clubs, indicating sustainability and leadership outcomes. Bridging the gender digital divide requires more than infrastructure—it demands inclusive design, culturally grounded approaches, and intentional investment in girls' digital agency. This study affirms that when adolescent girls are positioned as co-creators of digital solutions, they can challenge entrenched inequalities and transform their communities. Policy makers and development stakeholders must prioritise gender-transformative digital policies and invest in scalable, locally adapted interventions.

Keywords: Gender digital divide, inclusive technology, youth empowerment, digital equity, Zambia.

Engaging Farreach Theory and Farreach 1 Toolkit to Build Collaborative Strategies for Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Chijioke Dikeocha

Organisation: ¹Farreach International

Summit Track 10: Collaborative Strategies for Achieving Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Abstract

This study critically explores the application of the Farreach Theory and Farreach 1 Toolkit as innovative frameworks for constructing inclusive, gender responsive collaborative strategies aimed at advancing food security and sustainable agriculture in Nigeria. Recognising that women constitute between 60–80% of Nigeria's agricultural labour force and produce up to two-thirds of its food crops, yet simultaneously experience pronounced resource constraints, our research investigates how these frameworks can effectively reduce the gender gap and foster women's empowerment within agrifood systems. The Farreach Theory emphasizes multi-stakeholder engagement, integrating smallholder women farmers, community leaders, extension agents, policymakers, and technology providers into participatory decision-making processes. Built on this theory, the Farreach 1 Toolkit offers a structured sequence of diagnostic, planning, and monitoring modules specifically designed to evaluate gendered barriers (e.g., limited land access, low adoption of improved seeds and mechanisation), facilitate capacity building, and guide equitable resource allocation. The toolkit also incorporates gender audit indicators and participatory learning exercises to ensure the active inclusion of women's voices in agricultural value chain governance. Methodologically, the study adopts a mixed methods approach across three pilot sites in diverse agro-ecological zones in Nigeria. Quantitative surveys measure differential access to inputs and extension services, addressing findings that female farmers frequently rely more on farmer-saved seeds and less on agrodealer inputs while qualitative focus group discussions and key informant interviews elicit women's lived experiences of structural biases and social norms. Special attention is also paid to household structures, comparing food security outcomes between female-headed and male-headed households to highlight potential resilience gains from equal land access.

Preliminary results indicate that participatory planning, facilitated by the toolkit, increases women's access to improved seeds and mechanisation, and enhances their engagement with extension services. The integrative model shows promise in narrowing the adoption gap of modern agricultural practices, whilst elevating women's influence over resource control and decision-making. By embedding gender inclusive mechanisms at every stage—from situational analysis to outcome evaluation this research offers a scalable pathway for promoting sustainable agriculture, closing the gender gap, and achieving food security in Nigeria and comparable contexts. The study contributes to scholarly discourses on agrifood governance, gender equity, and sustainable development, demonstrating how structured, toolkit-driven collaboration can transform entrenched inequalities and deliver inclusive agricultural innovation.

Keywords: Farreach Theory, Farreach 1 Toolkit, Gender inequality, Inclusive agrifood governance, Sustainable agriculture

Rethinking Gender Programming in Nigeria: Arguments for a Behavioural Insight-Driven Approach to Achieving SDG 5

Presenting Author: Chukwuemeka Onyimadu

Contributing Authors: Temitope Wealth Ekanem¹

Organization: ¹UN Women

Summit Track 11: Rethinking Investment on SDGs 5: Innovative and Inclusive Financing for Gender Equity

Abstract

Nigeria has adopted all major international and regional gender equality agreements, such as CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Maputo Protocol, and the SDGs. However, gender gaps across socio-economic indices highlight a significant gap between policy goals and actual experiences. This paper argues that closing these gaps would require more than legal and institutional reforms. Our arguments lean towards a profound yet context-specific understanding of behavioural factors, which may be cultural and social influences on inequality. Many existing program designs depend on rational-actor models, presuming that individuals and communities will change their behaviours once they have information or laws are enacted. However, evidence from the global and Nigerian contexts indicates that social norms, identity expectations, intergenerational beliefs, and daily decision-making environments profoundly shape how gender norms develop and persist. Without addressing these behavioural factors, even well-meaning gender interventions may prove ineffective or unsustainable. This paper advocates for rethinking gender programming using a behavioural insights approach. It does not replace structural reforms but supplements them with a deeper understanding of the reasons behind individual and community behaviours related to gender roles, power, and opportunities. The recommendations highlight a critical repositioning of the importance of conducting ex-ante behavioural diagnostics, the use of context-sensitive programs that inculcate these behavioural diagnostics, and establishing ongoing learning cycles during implementation. Additionally, it critiques the shortcomings of current interventions that often view behaviour change as an afterthought instead of a core design element. Drawing on interdisciplinary evidence from social psychology, development studies, program evaluations, and the political economy associated with the assumption of a rational economic entity, this paper offers a roadmap for policymakers, development partners, and civil society to better incorporate behavioural insights into Nigeria's gender equality efforts. Achieving SDG 5 will require going beyond policy implementation to address the human aspects of change.

Keywords: Gender Equality, Sustainable Development, Feminist Economics

Gender dynamics in Africa's creative economy: emerging voices and innovative approaches.

Presenting Author: Keturah Adeniji

Organisation: ¹University of Jos

Summit Track 8: Behind the Scenes: Gender, Inclusion, and the Creative Economy

Abstract

This paper looks at the way gender affects Africa's creative industries, especially how inequalities and new feminist efforts influence who gets involved, how they're represented, and how innovation happens. It takes a close look at Nigeria from 2020 to 2024. The research highlights the contradiction of a growing creative economy—covering film, fashion, music, and digital media—that still leaves women behind due to unequal access to funding, protection of their ideas, and visibility online. Even though these industries are seen as important for economic growth, they still operate within a male-dominated system. By focusing on three inspiring Nigerian women—Laju Iren, a filmmaker who challenges religious and gender norms; Tubo Sandrah, a fashion designer who confronts traditional views with Afro-futuristic designs; and Subomi Plumptre, a brand strategist and content entrepreneur reshaping storytelling and thought leadership in digital spaces. The study shows how these women are finding ways to fight against being excluded. They use creative methods like platforms such as YouTube, seek funding from the diaspora, advocate for policies that support women, and blend art with tech innovation. While the creative economy holds a lot of promise, the paper points out that existing neoliberal frameworks often use feminist ideas without really changing who holds the power. It suggests a bold policy plan that includes creating support systems for women's intellectual property, ensuring fairness in digital platforms, and inclusive market access strategies to ensure equitable and sustainable growth of the creative economy. These findings offer a fresh perspective on postcolonial feminist political economy and outline practical steps to make Africa's creative sectors more inclusive, transformative, and fair for all genders.

Keywords: Creative economy, Feminist innovation, Intellectual property rights.

Educate Her, Elevate All: Empowering Women Across Generations Through Inclusive Education

Presenting Author: Becky Dike

Organization: Cypher Legal Consultants

Summit Track 1: Empowering Voices: Advancing Gender Equity Through Education

Abstract

"If you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a nation." - Dr. James Emmanuel Kwegyir-Aggrey, prominent Ghanaian educator.

Where women thrive, families and communities experience more meaningful and sustained development. Women carry the burden of domestic responsibilities, and children are nurtured under their influence. Because children are largely shaped by the environments in which they are raised, they often rise or fall to the level of their mothers' empowerment. This study explores how inclusive education for women of all ages—including adult women—can serve as a transformative tool for family welfare and national development. The core hypothesis is that increased access to formal and informal education for women leads to positive intergenerational outcomes in children education and prosperity, community and national development. A mixed-method approach was adopted. Quantitative data were drawn from global and national datasets (UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, and Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics) collected between 2018 and 2023. The author also conducted a purposive interview of three indigent women from Northern Nigeria- two from Zamfara, and one from Katsina. These interviews explored their lived experiences with education access, empowerment, and the long-term impact on their children and communities. Key findings reveal that over 60% of adult women in rural Nigeria lack formal or Informal education, with significant implications for child survival, school enrolment, and family prosperity. The three women interviewed had received no formal or informal education and their children, aged between 1 and 14 years old, are also uneducated. They relied on alms to survive, and their children begged with them daily. The absence of inclusive, age-spanning educational frameworks reinforces generational poverty and underdevelopment. This study underscores the urgent need for inclusive education policies that transcend age and socioeconomic status. Investing in women's education is not only a matter of gender equity but also a strategic development imperative. Future efforts should focus on adult education, digital literacy programs, and policy reforms that ensure no woman is left behind—because when a woman is empowered, a generation is secured and national development becomes more assured.

Keywords: Women empowerment, inclusive education, national development

Women in traditional governance: Bridging indigenous practices and modern leadership

Presenting Author: Comfort Fatimoh Sheidu

Organisation: ¹Baze University

Summit Track 2: Equitable Futures: New voices and strategies for promoting women in leadership

Abstract

Women's roles in African traditional governance systems have frequently been overlooked in both historical and contemporary governance debates. Nonetheless, in many Nigerian communities, women have long held prominent leadership posts, playing critical roles in conflict resolution, social welfare, and cultural preservation. This study looks at the nexus between indigenous leadership practices and contemporary governance frameworks to see how women are negotiating, reclaiming, and reinventing leadership within traditional governance structures. It looks into how indigenous positions like the *Iyalode* among the Yoruba, the *Omu* among the Igbo, and other female chieftaincy titles serve as places of cultural legitimacy and political power. Using qualitative research, the study examines how women leaders navigate power within patriarchal traditional institutions, how their voices are absorbed into larger decision-making systems, and how these roles overlap with or deviate from formal political leadership. The findings highlight a paradox: while many traditional governance systems continue to reflect entrenched gender hierarchies, they also provide a culturally grounded pathway for women's leadership that precedes colonial and post-colonial state structures. Nonetheless, innovative approaches are emerging. Some female leaders are using collaborations with civil society organisations, local media, and advocacy networks to demonstrate their significance in modern governance. The study suggests that policy measures aimed at fostering women's leadership should go beyond focusing on election participation and instead recognise and promote traditional leadership spaces as legitimate and effective arenas of governance. Nigeria can build more comprehensive and culturally anchored routes for women's leadership that are consistent with both historical identity and contemporary governance goals by amplifying their voices and legitimising their responsibilities.

Keywords: Women's leadership, Traditional governance, Indigenous practices, Modern leadership.

Farm-to-Table Heritage: Women-Led Agri-Cultural Tourism for Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Habiba Sharon Yakubu

Organization: ¹Habiba Sharon Yakubu Consult

Summit Track 10: Collaborative Strategies for Achieving Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Abstract

This programme explores Agri-cultural tourism as an innovative strategy for achieving food security and sustainable agriculture in Nigeria, with women positioned as central actors. Recognizing rural women as custodians of indigenous agricultural knowledge and culinary heritage, the initiative aims to bridge the disconnect between urban populations and food systems by transforming farms into cultural learning spaces and as a tool for food security and sustainability. The program's objective is to leverage women's traditional roles to preserve food heritage, promote sustainable farming practices, and create alternative livelihoods through cultural tourism. Piloted in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory between 2024 and 2025, the programme partners with women's farming cooperatives and private farm enterprises. Visitors engage in guided farm tours, participate in planting and harvesting, learn food processing techniques, and hear indigenous stories behind local foods such as yam tubers and amala. Women facilitate all activities, serving as educators, storytellers, and hosts. Workshops on climate-smart agriculture and traditional preservation methods are integrated into the experience to promote sustainability. Income-generation activities for women include cooking classes, the sale of farm products, and cultural performances. The programme targets urban residents, schools, tourists, and policymakers, with structured packages for educational excursions and community-based tourism. Lessons To Be Learned: increased community awareness of sustainable agriculture practices and improved local understanding of food heritage. Women participants reported enhanced income streams and recognition as knowledge leaders. The initiative fostered multi-stakeholder collaboration between cultural, agricultural, and tourism sectors, demonstrating that combining cultural heritage with farming can reposition women from unpaid labourers to formal contributors in sustainable food systems. Culinary storytelling proved effective in attracting visitors and promoting indigenous knowledge. Agri-cultural tourism offers a scalable pathway to address food security and empower women within Nigeria's food systems. Policy recommendations include the creation of a Women-Led Agri-Cultural Tourism Development Fund, integration of food heritage into national tourism promotion, and formal recognition of women's indigenous food knowledge as cultural intellectual property. Future expansion will focus on developing regional food heritage trails and embedding farm-to-mouth heritage education in schools. Strengthening women's leadership in food culture preservation will enhance Nigeria's agricultural resilience and cultural sustainability.

Keywords: Agri-tourism, food heritage, women empowerment, food security, sustainable agriculture

Multi-Stakeholder Strategies for Advancing Inclusive And Sustainable Food Systems

Presenting Author: Jamaldeen Oluwasegun Akanbi

Organisation: ¹African Governance Institute for Development

Summit Track 10: Collaborative Strategies for Achieving Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Abstract

The global challenges of hunger, malnutrition, and climate change underscore the urgency of achieving food security and sustainable agriculture. This study aims to examine the role of multi-stakeholder collaboration among governments, local communities, the private sector, and research institutions in addressing systemic barriers to equitable and sustainable food systems. The objective is to identify effective partnership models and policy mechanisms that accelerate inclusive agricultural transformation. It hypothesizes that partnerships across governments, communities, private sectors, and research institutions significantly improve agricultural productivity, resilience, and equitable food access. A mixed-methods approach was employed over a 12-month study period (2023–2024) across specific regions of Sub-Saharan Africa: Northern Nigeria, Western Kenya and Central Uganda. The design combined qualitative case studies of existing collaborative initiatives with quantitative surveys assessing agricultural outputs and food access metrics. Participants included smallholder farmers, government officials, agribusiness representatives, NGOs, and researchers. Data collection involved focus group discussions, stakeholder interviews, and analysis of agricultural yield records. Analytical methods comprised thematic content analysis for qualitative data and statistical comparison for quantitative measures. Key findings revealed that collaborative frameworks integrating knowledge-sharing platforms, resource pooling, and policy alignment led to measurable increases in crop yields by 20% on average, improved soil health, and enhanced resilience to climate shocks. Inclusive decision-making processes empowered marginalised groups, particularly women and youth, increasing their participation in agricultural innovation. Partnerships also facilitated access to affordable inputs and market linkages, reducing post-harvest losses and improving food availability. Challenges identified included coordination complexities and funding sustainability. Collaborative strategies that prioritize inclusivity, contextual knowledge, and systemic alignment are critical to advancing food security and sustainable agriculture. The findings emphasise the need for policy frameworks that enable long-term, cross-sector partnerships and empower marginalised voices in agricultural innovation. Future efforts should focus on scaling proven models, strengthening institutional capacities, and fostering digital and climate-smart tools through collaborative platforms. These approaches can serve as foundational pillars for building resilient food systems and realizing the goals of an inclusive society.

Keywords: Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture, Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration, Inclusive Governance

Framing Inclusion: Perceptions of Media Representation and Policy Visibility among Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria

Presenting Author: ¹Wakilat Zakariyau

Organization: ¹University of Lagos

Summit Track 8: Behind the Scenes: Gender, Inclusion, and the Creative Economy

Abstract

This qualitative study investigates how persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Nigeria perceive their media representation and the impact of such portrayals on their identity, social inclusion, and policy engagement. Guided by framing theory and the political economy of media, the research addresses three questions: How do PWDs perceive their representation in Nigerian media and storytelling platforms?, How do these portrayals influence their self-identity, societal perception, and inclusion? and what are the implications of media framing for policy visibility and civic agency? Through in-depth interviews with eleven participants representing diverse disability types and regions, thematic analysis revealed six core themes: Misrepresentation and the Pity Narrative; Barriers to Visibility and Representation; Media Framing, Misrepresentation, and the Power of Voice; Gendered Dimensions and Intersectionality; Advocacy for Authentic Inclusion and Participation; and Aspirations for a Transformed Media Landscape. Findings indicate that mainstream media predominantly depict disability through pity, caricature, or tokenism, perpetuating stigma and marginalisation. Although digital platforms offer opportunities for alternative narratives and empowerment, awareness of policies and avenues for meaningful participation remains limited. This research contributes to global conversations on inclusive communication and disability justice, offering practical insights for media practitioners, policymakers and civil society who are striving for equitable representation and civic engagement.

Keywords: Disability, media representation, policy visibility, inclusive communication, storytelling

Reimagining Support for the Boy Child: Insights on Values, Safe Spaces, and Tailored Interventions

Presenting Author: Hannah John

Contributing Author: Hilda Duniya Shehu¹

Organisation: ¹LeadEd Innovations Nigeria

Summit Track 9: Men as champions in strengthening Legal Frameworks for Gender Justice & Protection

Abstract

For decades, gender-focused conversations in development have rightly centered on girls and women. However, recent grassroots engagement suggests that the boy-child, while often privileged structurally, is now silently navigating a new set of identity crises, emotional challenges, and misaligned societal expectations. This paper presents findings from a qualitative survey aimed at understanding the values, support systems, and conversations most needed to foster responsible, emotionally intelligent, and value-driven men, alongside identifying the most relevant topics and sessions for workshops designed to support their holistic development. The survey gathered responses from 241 participants, including parents, teachers (59.7%), boys/men (21.9%), youth workers, and development practitioners across Nasarawa, Abuja, Kaduna, Lagos and Ogun states. Respondents consistently emphasized values such as integrity/accountability (79 mentions), empathy/kindness (55 mentions), and responsibility (48 mentions) as foundational to positive male development. Emotional intelligence (24 mentions as a desired trait) and self-awareness also emerged as critical character traits necessary for navigating the complex transitions from boyhood to manhood. The findings reveal significant gaps in existing support structures for boys. A critical insight is that over 37% of respondents stated boys do not have safe spaces to talk about their feelings and identity, with another 29% being "Not Sure". This perceived lack is often attributed to fear of judgment/stigma. Furthermore, challenges such as neglect/lack of attention and lack of positive male role models highlight a pressing need for intentional mentorship and life skills education. In response, key workshop topics identified include emotional intelligence/management (37 mentions), career and skill development (46 mentions), and self-care/self-awareness (28 mentions), underscoring the demand for practical, holistic support. Based on these insights, we recommend targeted interventions involving parents, schools, and policymakers to create inclusive environments that empower boys to develop into well-rounded, responsible men. This research contributes to the broader gender and inclusion discourse by advocating for balanced approaches that address the developmental needs of all children. Future work will include direct engagement with adolescent boys and pilot testing of a curriculum informed by these community-driven insights.

Keywords: Boy child, Safe spaces, Parents, Schools, Policymakers.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships for food security and sustainable agriculture through women's leadership in Nigeria

Presenting Author: Oluwaseyi Adeolowu¹

Contributing Authors: Oluwaseyi Ibuoye²

Organization: ¹Women's Initiative for Stability Health and Empowerment (WISE-H); ²Pataki Legacy Foundation

Summit Track 10: Collaborative Strategies for Achieving Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Abstract

Achieving food security and promoting sustainable agricultural practices in Nigeria demands a gender-responsive and collaborative approach, especially considering the disproportionate barriers women face within food systems. This study investigates the role and impact of multi-stakeholder partnerships in advancing sustainable agriculture and ensuring food security, with a particular focus on women's leadership and participation in Nigeria's agricultural sector. Employing a mixed-methods design, the research draws on primary data from focus group discussions with women farmers and key informant interviews with representatives from federal agencies, development partners, and civil society organisations. Grounded in the framework of SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), the study demonstrates how inclusive collaboration can drive meaningful agricultural transformation. Key partnerships examined include the Agricultural Extension Service Delivery Bill, spearheaded by the Women Farmers Advancement Network (WOFAN), which advocates for climate-smart training and digital extension services targeting women farmers. Though only 5% of farm demonstrations and 19% of field schools currently reach women, the initiative offers a legislative pathway toward inclusive reform. Additionally, the National Agricultural Development Fund (NADF), in collaboration with GIZ and NIRSAL, highlights efforts to scale gender-sensitive agricultural financing and insurance products. Despite progress, uptake remains below 23%, underscoring ongoing structural barriers to women's access to credit. The study also explores women-led cooperatives such as the Nigerian Women in Agricultural Business (NiWAB), which connects over 11,000 members with training, processing hubs, and market linkages. While notable gains have been made in productivity and income generation, scaling remains constrained by resource limitations and infrastructure gaps. Complementary initiatives such as ITC She Trades, ImpactHer Africa, and the International Trade Centre (ITC) have enhanced women's agribusiness capacity and export participation. Overall, findings show that inclusive partnerships yield measurable improvements in crop yield, food availability, land access, and women's leadership. However, persistent gaps in input access, policy coherence, and the integration of gender-disaggregated indicators remain. This study calls for institutionalized support for women's agricultural cooperatives, replication of effective models, and the adoption of accountability frameworks to foster resilient, equitable food systems.

Keywords: Food security, women in agriculture, sustainable agriculture, multi-stakeholder partnerships, gender equality.

Rethinking Gender Financing in Agriculture: Moving Beyond Tick-Box Investment

Presenting Author: Sekinat Ojeniyi

Organisation: Consultant, Advocacy, Africa Practice

Summit Track 11: Rethinking Investment on SDGs 5: Innovative and Inclusive Financing for Gender Equity

Abstract

Investment strategies often treat gender financing as a compliance tick box rather than a core lever of economic transformation. This programme explores how investors, fund managers, and development actors can reposition African women, especially those in agriculture, as a uniquely investable asset class. Rather than viewing gender as a philanthropic obligation, the work makes the case for embedding inclusive financing within the full investment lifecycle to achieve scalable economic resilience. The programme will be implemented in a one-year period between 2025–2026, targeted at a pilot group of 50 subsistence women farmers in Ondo State, Nigeria. It maps how these women experience overlapping inequalities, by gender, geography, social class, and climate exposure, and identifies interventions that enable gender-intentional finance to improve productivity, safety, and business growth. Over the first three months, women will receive tailored business development training, agricultural extension services, and digital literacy coaching. This will be followed by venture-building support for agribusinesses serving young women, including access to market data, business upskilling, and technology integration. The programme will partner with agri value chain actors and local government to facilitate adoption of mechanized tools and safer processing methods. From month six, technical assistance and results-based financing mechanisms will be deployed to link eligible participants with catalytic capital and impact investors, while creating a pipeline of investable women-led ventures. Structurally, the programme combines capital mobilization strategies with support from local microfinance institutions, DFIs, and philanthropic partners. It also explores approaches for improving workplace safety and dignity, particularly in rural and conflict-prone areas where women's health and security are at risk.

Lessons drawn from BII's \$100 million facility with KCB Kenya, which dedicates one-third of capital to women-led SMEs, show how targeted, structured capital can break systemic barriers to credit. The programme aims to shift the narrative from "supporting women" to recognizing their investability as producers, employees, and business leaders, and to propose a scalable ecosystem model for gender financing in agriculture, replicable across sectors and geographies.

Keywords: Gender-smart investment, agriculture, women entrepreneurs, financing models, economic resilience

Exploring Strategies to Close the Gender Gap in Education and Promote Lifelong Learning through Gender-Inclusive SRHR Interventions in IDP Camps

Presenting Author: Mathew Andrew Acheme

Contributing Authors: Wesley Markus¹, Cecilia Andrew¹

Organization: ¹Today for Tomorrow Initiative

Summit Track 1: Collaborative Strategies for Achieving Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Abstract

In North-East Nigeria, the prolonged Boko Haram insurgency has led to the displacement of thousands, with women and girls disproportionately affected. In Adamawa State, Damare, Daware, and Salama IDP camps collectively house about 4,500 individuals—half of whom are women and girls. According to the 2024 Sectoral Needs and Risk Analysis (SNRA) by FACT Foundation, only 44% of IDP children in Adamawa are enrolled in school, leaving 56% out of school (factfoundationint.org). The National Bureau of Statistics (2024) further reveals that 63.4% of IDPs have never attended school, and only 38% are currently enrolled (fij.ng). Based on these statistics, over 1,460 women and girls in these three camps lack access to formal education. Among adolescent girls (ages 10–19), who make up roughly 675 individuals, nearly 70% are not in school. Barriers include harmful gender norms, a lack of SRHR knowledge, and male-dominated decision-making. In response, the “Today for Tomorrow” initiative under the WeLead Project was developed to promote gender-inclusive education and empower girls and women in the camps. Spanning six months across the three camps, the initiative identified and trained a cohort of women and adolescent girls as SRHR Champions. These Champions conducted peer-led trainings that reached over 325 participants with culturally sensitive and accurate SRHR information. The project also involved men and boys in targeted sensitization activities to challenge gender norms and foster allyship for girls’ education and empowerment. Peer-led approaches proved highly effective in humanitarian settings. Training women as Champions built community trust and sustainability. Male engagement reduced resistance and promoted shared responsibility. Notably, two female participants have since enrolled in higher education institutions, an early indicator of impact. To build on this momentum, the program aims to scale up to other IDP camps. Future efforts will focus on integrating SRHR into education, increasing male allyship, and collaborating with policymakers to institutionalize gender-equitable learning pathways.

Keywords: Gender, IDP camps, lifelong learning, inclusive policy






ABUJA OFFICE

Plot 1524, Cadastral Zone B08,
After Comfort Homes Jahi, Off Uf
Mohammed St, Kado, Abuja 900108,
Federal Capital Territory

 www.policyinnovationcentre.org

 genderfoyer@policycentre.org

 +234 (0) 7047897958

     [policycentreng](#)