

**Action  
Health Incorporated**

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# **2021 ANNUAL REPORT**



# Action Health Incorporated

**A**ction Health Incorporated (AHI) is a non-profit organization committed to creating opportunities for young people's successful transition to productive adulthood. AHI was founded out of a deep concern about young people's limited access to preventive information and life skills to deal with the myriad of issues confronting them.

Since our establishment in 1989, AHI has served as an advocate and catalyst for creating better life options for young people in Nigeria. In partnership with individuals and institutions around the globe, AHI has helped to drive advocacy efforts in the public domain and engender action by states and the federal government to address the sexual health and development needs of young people in Nigeria.

We envision a world where every young person's right to achieve their full potentials is guaranteed, where all young girls and boys can grow up to assume control over their lives, having the basic information, skills, and services to enhance their health and well-being.

Learn more about our work on our website at  
<https://www.actionhealthinc.org>

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# 2021 at a Glance



**31,010**

Adolescents reached with sexuality education



**1,851**

Community members trained to report school feeding program



**48**

Health facilities received drugs, equipment and COVID-19 PPEs



**176**

Health personnel and volunteers trained in MISP & GBV management



**70**

Next generation doctors trained in providing youth-friendly services



**1,465**

Safe deliveries attended by skilled birth attendants in IDP Camps



**8,133**

Beneficiaries of dignity, hygiene and delivery kits



**15**

Communities abandoned FGM/C



**2**

GBV One-Stop Centres established



**1,889**

GBV survivors received Psychosocial Support Services



**235,241**

People reached with SRH information in humanitarian setting



**1.98 Million**

People reached with GBV prevention messages on social media

# Executive Director's Statement

**B**uilding back from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has confirmed the importance of ensuring that we have education, health and social safety nets in place to increase resilience for the most vulnerable amongst us. It has demonstrated that when eventualities like these arise, girls and women should have the power to take charge of their immediate needs and those of their families. Therefore, in 2021 at AHI, we prioritized our programming in line with this agenda through partnerships with young people, kindred civil society organizations, government agencies and development partners.

We worked to scale-up lifesaving information and services that keep adolescent girls free from judgement, discrimination and disrespect in clinical settings. We contributed to closing the knowledge and skills gap among education, health, and youth development sector practitioners by facilitating a range of capacity-building opportunities to enable them to better respond to the specific needs of young people.

We established and equipped two One-Stop Centres in Adamawa and Yobe States to serve as safe havens for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, and the survivors were supported with counselling, case management referral services, social cohesion and life skills training. Key stakeholders in female genital mutilation endemic states were engaged in intergenerational dialogues and 15 communities in Osun State publicly declared abandonment of the practice of FGM and signed community consensus documents to this end.

We scaled up our monitoring activities to promote transparency and accountability in the implementation of the Ogun State Home Grown School Feeding Programme from 60 to 341 schools. Taking advantage of developments in information technology, AHI developed the School Feeding Data Tracker, an online platform that enables community members to collect monitoring data on their phones, and report directly, whether or not state actors are fulfilling their obligations to provide one meal per day to public primary school pupils.

We published the report of the research conducted in partnership with the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) which highlights contributions and gaps in the provision of essential protection, health, and skills acquisition services for residents in internally displaced persons camps. It amplifies the voices of adolescent girls and young women displaced by the ongoing humanitarian crisis, and provides further insights into potential interventions that can advance the wellbeing of persons in similar settings.

We are very grateful to all our generous donors and hardworking partners who made these interventions possible. Your continuing support and partnership will be critical in 2022 as we work relentlessly on our mutual commitments to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development particularly around SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). ■



**Adenike Esiet**  
**AHI Executive Director**





CONSULTING ROOM 2

CONSULTING ROOM 2

ACT LIKE A LADY  
Perform house chores (Hard work)  
Always try to be calm  
Dress properly (Neat)  
Meant to be submissive  
Not meant to be violent  
Not meant to be in offices  
Not meant to do certain things (e.g. combing, gatekeeping)  
Not meant to cut their hair  
Not meant to smoke  
Not meant to wear trousers

# Empowering Young People with Lifesaving Information

Access to comprehensive sexuality education plays a central role in preparing young people for a safe, productive and fulfilling life in a world where HIV and AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unintended pregnancies, gender-based violence (GBV) and gender inequality still pose serious risks to their well-being. Unfortunately, so many young people still do not have the opportunity for this necessary preparation.

In 2021, AHI made significant strides in this regard, reaching over 31,010 adolescent girls and boys directly with information and skills that empower them to take control of and make informed decisions about their sexuality and relationships freely and responsibly, while another nearly 2 million people across Nigeria were reached through our social media programme interventions.

Our *social and behavior change communication (SBCC)* sessions are a platform designed to engage and educate adolescents about key sexual and reproductive health issues that impact their ability to live healthy and productive lives. These sessions were conducted as walk-ins at the AHI Youth Centre, school assembly outreaches and through online messaging platforms, such as WhatsApp and Telegram.

To address the specific risks that girls face due to early marriage, early childbearing, female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation/abuse and various forms of gender-based violence, we created the *Girls' Fora*. These are group sessions in which about 15 girls between the ages of 14 and 19 were provided a safe space to share their real-life experiences and receive factual sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) information on how to deal with these circumstances. During these group sessions, the girls explored their own attitudes and values, got the opportunity

to debunk commonly held myths and misconceptions, as well as, discuss how to make autonomous decisions about their bodies, sexuality and reproduction. A total of 75 adolescent girls benefitted from these comprehensive information and skills-building sessions in 2021.

As part of our efforts to strengthen the implementation of the comprehensive sexuality education (named as Family Life and HIV Education-FLHE) curriculum in Nigerian schools, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Abuja Regional Office collaborated with AHI to increase adolescents' access to age-appropriate, factual and gender-inclusive SRHR information. This was implemented in 15 public junior secondary schools in Somolu and Mainland areas of Lagos State. The goal of the intervention was to ensure that early adolescents are empowered to make informed decisions about their sexuality. The intervention sensitized the 15 schools' principals on the national FLHE curriculum's implementation, built the capacity of 30 teachers on effective delivery, and reached 11,762 junior secondary school students with structured delivery of content using the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE) concepts.

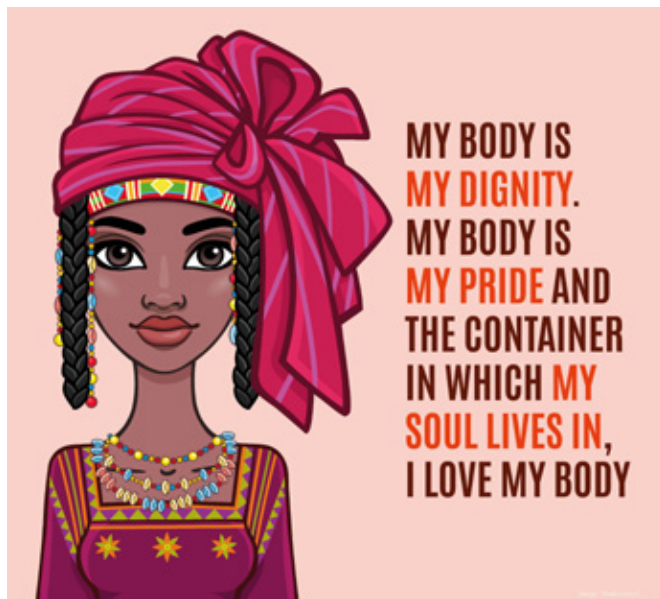
In addition to attending sexuality education classes, the students engaged in co-curricular activities where they developed educational messages and related illustrations based on their new knowledge. These gender-sensitive and rights-based messages and posters were used to drive a social media campaign on Facebook and Instagram, reaching an additional 1.98 million people. ■



This message is brought to you by UNESCO Education for Health and Wellbeing Programme: Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future (O3) Project.



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University of Lagos Medical Students  
at the Youth-Friendly Services Provision  
training at AHI's Youth Centre.

# Building the Capacity of Education and Health Service Providers

In addition to building up the capacity of young people, AHI also invests in building the capacity of education and health service providers to ensure that young people can reach their full potential. We contributed to closing the knowledge and skills gap among education, health, and youth development sector practitioners by facilitating a range of capacity-building opportunities to enable them to better respond to the specific needs of young people.

In 2021, AHI's Health Services Unit / Youth-Friendly Clinic collaborated with the Department of Community Health and Primary Care at the College of Medicine University of Lagos (CMUL) and conducted the annual training of 70 penultimate year medical students from the CMUL. The training programme provided the medical students with the basic knowledge and skills required for the provision of adolescent and youth-friendly health services in healthcare settings.

Also under the auspices of AHI's partnership between CMUL, we provided experiential learning to 12 resident doctors undergoing their post-graduate training in Community Health. During each resident doctor's rotation, they provided clinical services to adolescent clients in the AHI Youth-Friendly Clinic, as well as facilitated discussions to address SRH issues identified during the regular group educational sessions within the facility.

Travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic had stalled our annual regional sexuality leadership training that exposes participants to cutting-edge conceptual, theoretical, policy and programming issues in the human sexuality field. However, in 2021 we had the opportunity to conduct the Sexuality Leadership

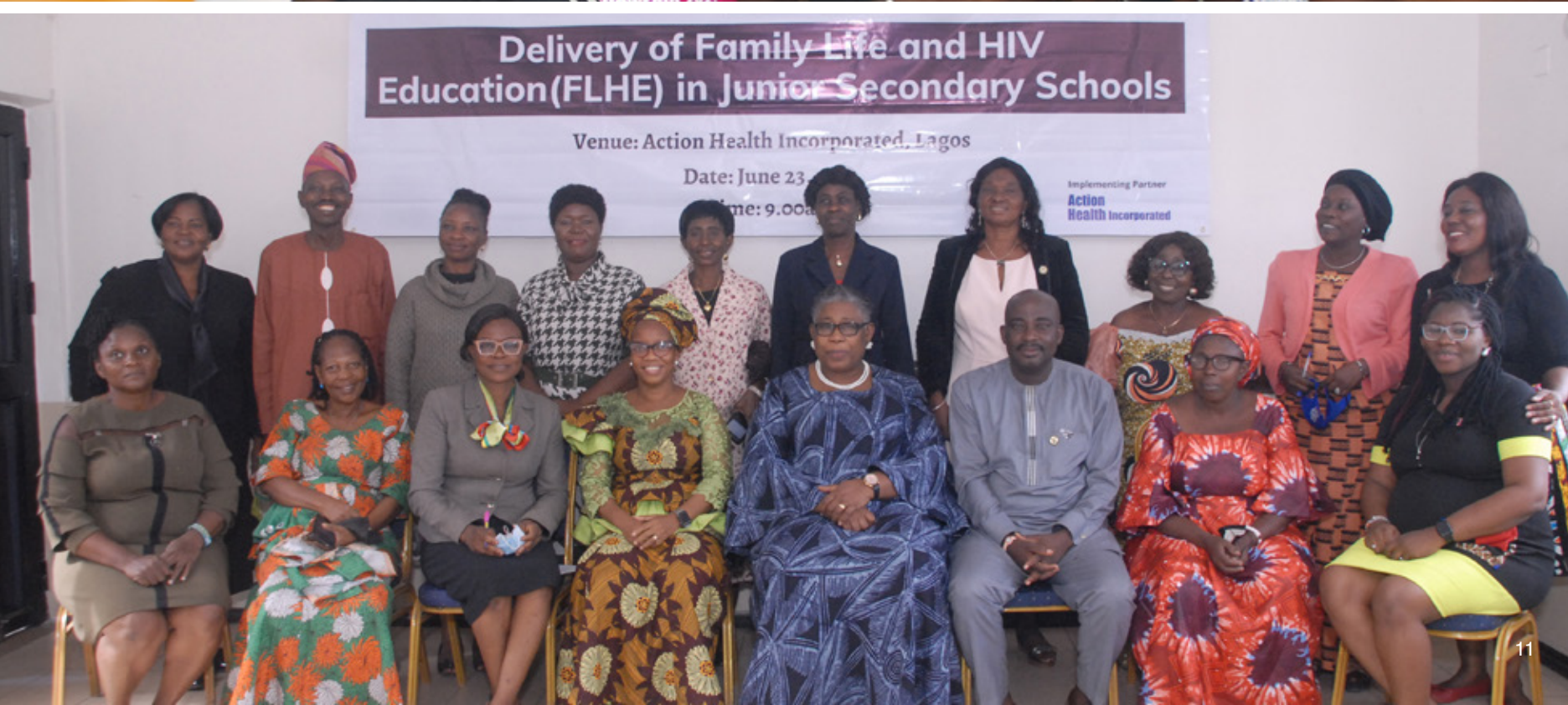
Development Fellowship for 30 young professionals in the Gambia with funding from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) country office.

Using a hybrid of physical and virtual training, the two-week fellowship was facilitated by a multidisciplinary faculty of experts in sexuality, human rights, gender advocacy, policy development and programme management. Fellows were engaged in interactive sessions to enhance their understanding of the interplay between sexuality, development and social justice and how they could start making a difference in their organizations and communities.

Other capacity-building activities within the context of our humanitarian interventions in Northern Nigeria included:

- Training in community-based protection strategies for humanitarian workers conducted for 50 community-based volunteers in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States;
- Gender-based violence (GBV) case management and mental health and psychosocial support training for 16 social workers and clinical management of rape for 8 health workers in Adamawa and Yobe States, equipping them on how to provide timely intervention while ensuring the survivors' physical safety, guaranteeing confidentiality of services and ensuring non-discrimination; and
- Capacity building for 66 staff of community-based, women-led organizations in the BAY State on the rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the conduct expected of humanitarian workers in IDP camps and host communities. ■









2.5k  
Active Schools

4  
Project LGAs

2.5k  
637 re the last 7 days

315430/100  
64.4% target met  
Total male and female pupils fed compared classes.



# Engaging and Strengthening Communities for Accountability

From 2018-2020 Action Health Incorporated (AHI) partnered with kindred civil society organizations in Ogun State to develop and test strategies to mitigate corruption in the implementation of the Home Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP). We worked with community stakeholders in 60 public primary schools across 4 local government areas (Ado-Odo Ota, Ifo, Ijebu-Ode and Sagamu) to monitor and document anomalies that had to be addressed in order to improve the programme's implementation and delivery of meals to pupils. ([ogun-hgsfp-report-full.pdf \(actionhealthinc.org\)](https://www.ogunhgsfp.ng/))

In 2021, we expanded the reach of our work from 60 to 341 schools where School Feeding Accountability Scoreboards were installed to provide a snapshot of the school's performance with weekly meal provision. We also established mechanisms to sustain the lessons learnt about ensuring transparency and accountability in the implementation of the HGSFP, which is a part of the Nigerian government's ongoing social investment programmes (N-SIP). Taking advantage of the developments in information technology and geographical information systems, we developed the Home Grown School Feeding Data Tracker and set up online presence for 341 public schools in Ogun State to enable communities to send real-time school feeding monitoring information for central reporting. We also built the capacity of 1,851 stakeholders across the 341 schools (average of 5 persons in each school who are reachable via an online directory that includes their names, photos and contact numbers that is accessible within the Data Tracker) as Community Accountability Partners (CAPs). They are the driving force behind the School Feeding Data Tracker, using ArcGIS survey forms on their phones, to collect key performance indicators, as well as upload photos of their findings on the platform as means of verification.

During the 2020-2021 academic year, the federal government only released funds for the provision of meals to pupils in Ogun State for two months (May and July) and in this period CAPs actively reported on the status of school meal provision in the 341 schools being monitored within their communities. Approximately 85% of the 52,943 eligible pupils enrolled in these schools actually received the meals they were entitled to by the end of July 2021. This information is accessible online at <https://www.ogunhgsfp.ng/>.

At AHI's public handover event of the school feeding data tracker platform to the people of Ogun State, the Commissioner for Special Duties and Inter-Governmental Affairs, Barrister Femi Ogunbamwo, committed to sustaining and scaling up the use of the School Feeding Data Tracker platform across all LGAs and covering the over 1,500 public primary schools in Ogun State.

For the Ogun State Government, the use of the School Feeding Data Tracker has significantly reduced the time and resources formerly spent on paper processing and travel to collect routine data. It is also facilitating efficient processing, analysis and reporting of school feeding programme data. And even more importantly, using the Data Tracker has empowered communities to report government duty bearers' performance and use of resources. Ogun State residents can document and report to the world whether or not state actors are upholding their promises and fulfilling their obligations to provide one meal per day to public primary school pupils. ■



## Spotlight

Mr. Fatai Babayemi didn't have much regard for government-led social development projects because he believed that they were always run without any consideration for citizens' opinions, and most times they end up as empty promises that are never fulfilled. So, when the Head Teacher of the government primary school in his community notified him that he had been selected to attend a training on promoting accountability and transparency in the school feeding programme, he hesitated, saying that no good could ever come out of a government-led social welfare intervention. Because he was a well-respected and vocal member of the Papalanto Community, the Head Teacher pleaded with him to at least participate in the preliminary training and Mr. Babayemi finally yielded to her plea.

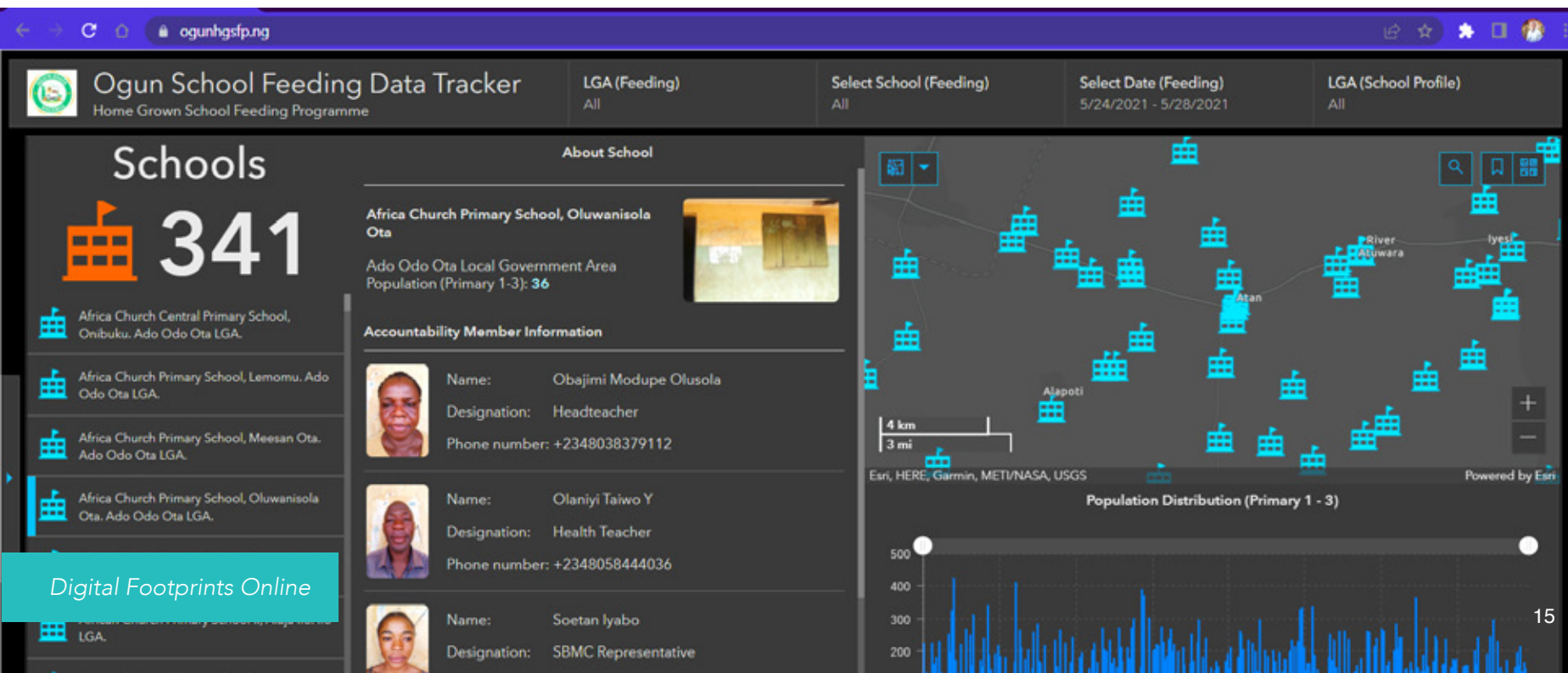
Listening to the Facilitator speak about the importance of nutrition on the learning outcomes of children in the early years of their development, as well as how community stakeholders

can provide feedback to government and the world at large, by monitoring the programme using their mobile phones, his interest grew.

From his first day as a community monitor in the school, he observed and documented his findings, took photographs of the food being served to the pupils and uploaded them on the online data-tracking platform. He also became active within the group of six Community Accountability Partners in his community's primary school, sharing experiences and comparing notes about their shared responsibilities.

**"Before the accountability training, I never knew one could report the school cooks, because some of them were co-opted into the programme through godfathers. Now, we can easily report the irregularities we find in the system without having to go through any third parties. I am still excited about this innovation; I just have to do my bit within my community and concerned people anywhere in the world can immediately know what is going on with our children!" ■**









The First Lady of Osun State, Mrs. Kafayat Oyetola presenting the Certificate of FGM Abandonment to Chief Jinadu Atanda, Baale of Oke Eran Community, during the Public Declaration Ceremony held at Ilobu Palace, Irepodun LGA.



# Advancing Efforts to End Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is an expression of entrenched gender inequality, and the practice persists for various reasons, including cultural and economic factors that make it difficult for girls, women and communities to abandon it. In 2021, AHI engaged with critical stakeholders to facilitate the elimination of the practice in designated high prevalence communities within Osun State, with funding support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Working in partnership with the State Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Affairs, across 8 Local Government Areas (*Olorunda, Boripe, Isokan, Irepodun, Ilesha-West, Ede-South, Atakumosa-West, Egbedore*), interventions undertaken included:

- Intergenerational dialogues on the abandonment of FGM held with community/ traditional leaders, religious leaders, women leaders, youth leaders and other stakeholders across 45 communities.
- Orientation and capacity strengthening for 30 Traditional Birth Attendants and Auxiliary Nurses, to serve as FGM champions promoting actions toward the elimination of FGM at community levels

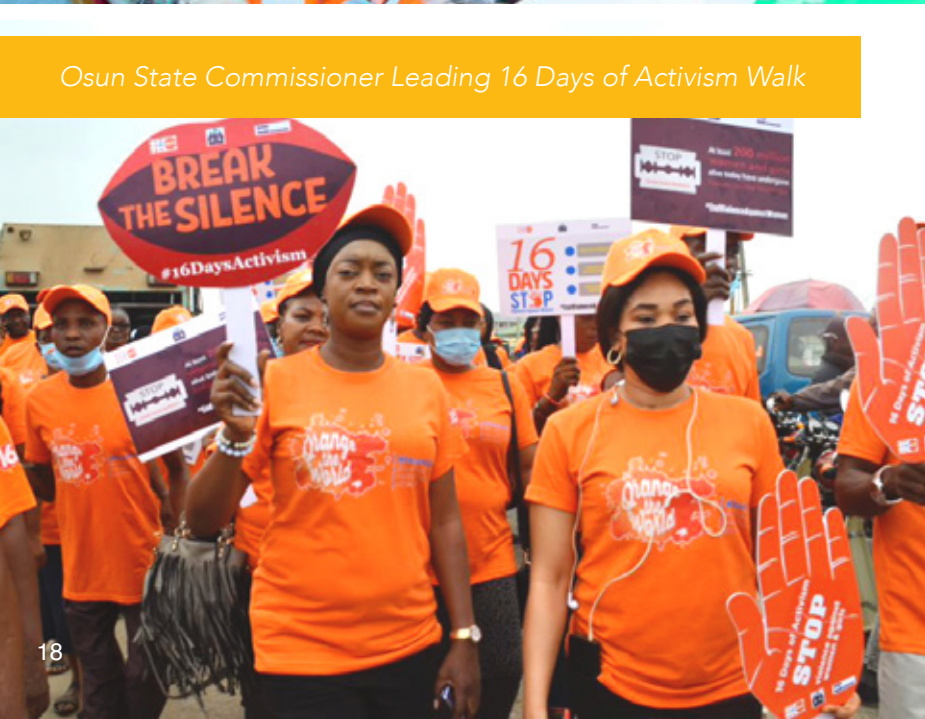
- Capacity building for 40 Health Workers to operationalize the referral pathway and utilize the FGM protocol and case management tools to provide services at the community level.
- Establishment of 90 Surveillance Teams to prevent, monitor and track the incidence of FGM in their communities.
- The State's Commissioner for Women and Children Affairs led over 300 persons on a campaign walk against GBV, to commemorate the year's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence.
- Public declaration of the abandonment of FGM took place in 15 communities including the signing of community consensus documents to abandon the practice
- In furtherance of these efforts, 20 law enforcement agents and lawyers have been sensitized on the application of the Osun State VAAP Law.

Over 35,581 people were reached with FGM prevention information across the various communities. ■

Training of Health Workers



Osun State Commissioner Leading 16 Days of Activism Walk



Baale of Ganga Community Signing Declaration of Abandonment of FGM



# Responding to the Humanitarian Crisis in Northeastern Nigeria

The humanitarian crisis in Nigeria's northeastern states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe continued to affect millions of people in 2021, subjecting them to displacement, impoverishment and exposure to violence, with many relying on humanitarian assistance to survive. With funding support from UNFPA and the Nigerian Humanitarian Fund, AHI's interventions in the three states focused on reducing gender-based violence, providing essential life-saving health services to survivors and scaling up emergency sexual and reproductive healthcare services available to young girls and women in the IDP camps and host communities.

In response to the heightened incidences of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), *one-stop centres* were established and equipped in Daware Community, Adamawa State and Damaturu, Yobe State to contribute to the security, safety, health and well-being of survivors of SGBV. The one-stop centres offer safe shelter residential facilities, healthcare, psycho-social support, security and access to legal redress to women in need of these services. Multi-sectoral partnerships were also established between each State's Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Ministry of Health, Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) and the Nigerian Police Force to facilitate the efficient delivery of services and speedy access to justice for the facility users.

During humanitarian crises, it is crucial to always safeguard, protect and uphold the human rights and dignity of displaced persons. Even with the best of intentions, humanitarian actors have the potential to cause harm if the assistance they are providing is misused, politicized or co-opted by other interests. To avert such potential risks, AHI worked with community-based, women-led organizations to implement awareness-raising

activities on the essential principles and ethics that should guide humanitarian aid workers' interactions and provision of services to beneficiaries and communities in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States.

The COVID-19 pandemic also created a greater need to focus on hygiene, especially in the IDP camps where living conditions along with poor water and sanitation facilities worsen the risks of the spread of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases. To curb the spread of COVID-19, especially in health facilities and women-/girl-friendly safe spaces around the states, essential COVID-19 protective supplies and information materials were widely distributed, functional handwashing stations were installed at entry points/focal areas, and continuing awareness-raising was conducted on the importance of adhering to COVID-19 prevention measures during regular outreaches.

In addition, the report of the research conducted by Action Health Incorporated and the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) on *"The Sexual and Reproductive Health Context of an Internally Displaced Persons' Camp in Northeastern Nigeria: Narratives of Girls and Young Women"* was published in *Frontiers of Reproductive Health Journal*. The research report highlights contributions to and gaps in the provision of essential protection, health, and skills acquisition services for residents of the Muna Garage IDP Camp in Borno State. It also provides further insights into potential interventions to advance the well-being of adolescent girls and young women in similar settings. In 2022, AHI will disseminate the research findings and work alongside other stakeholders to integrate the lessons from the study into their work. ■





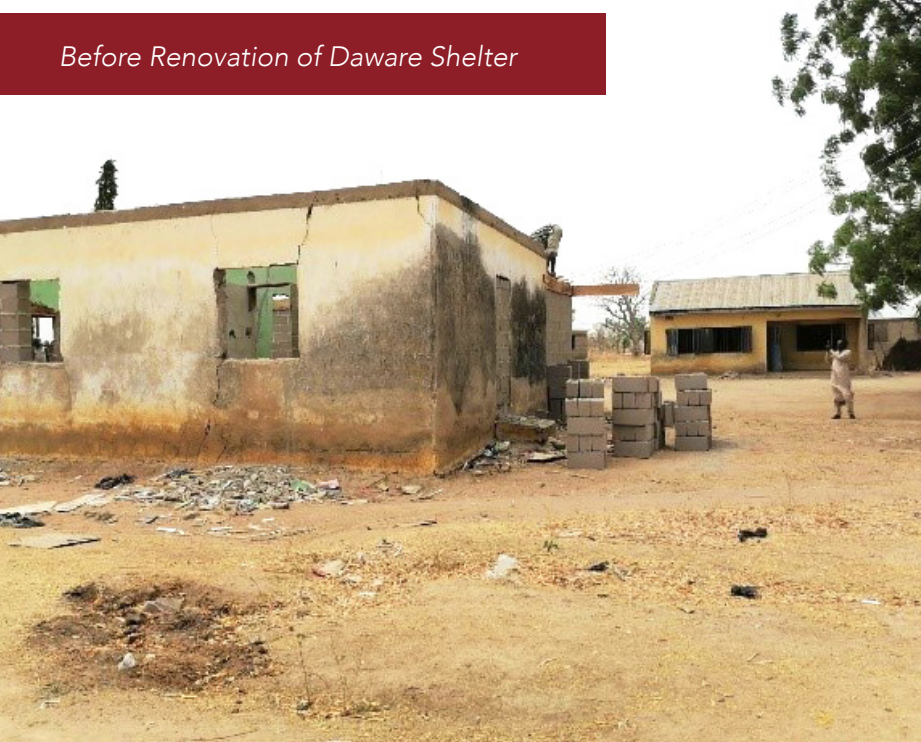
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*I will like this facility to be known as The Laughter Centre because of the respite and joy I am sure that the services offered here will bring to the women beneficiaries.*

*Hajiya Lami Fintiri, First Lady of Adamawa State at the opening of the One-Stop Centre for survivors of gender-based violence in Daware Community.*



*Before Renovation of Daware Shelter*



*After Renovation of Daware Shelter*







Outreach in Daware IDP Camp



Handing over of COVID-19 PPEs



Packaging of Hygiene Kit supplies



Delivery by skilled birth attendant



Health workers training session



Group counselling session in IDP Camp

# Our Funders



Canada

MacArthur  
Foundation



**OCHA**

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