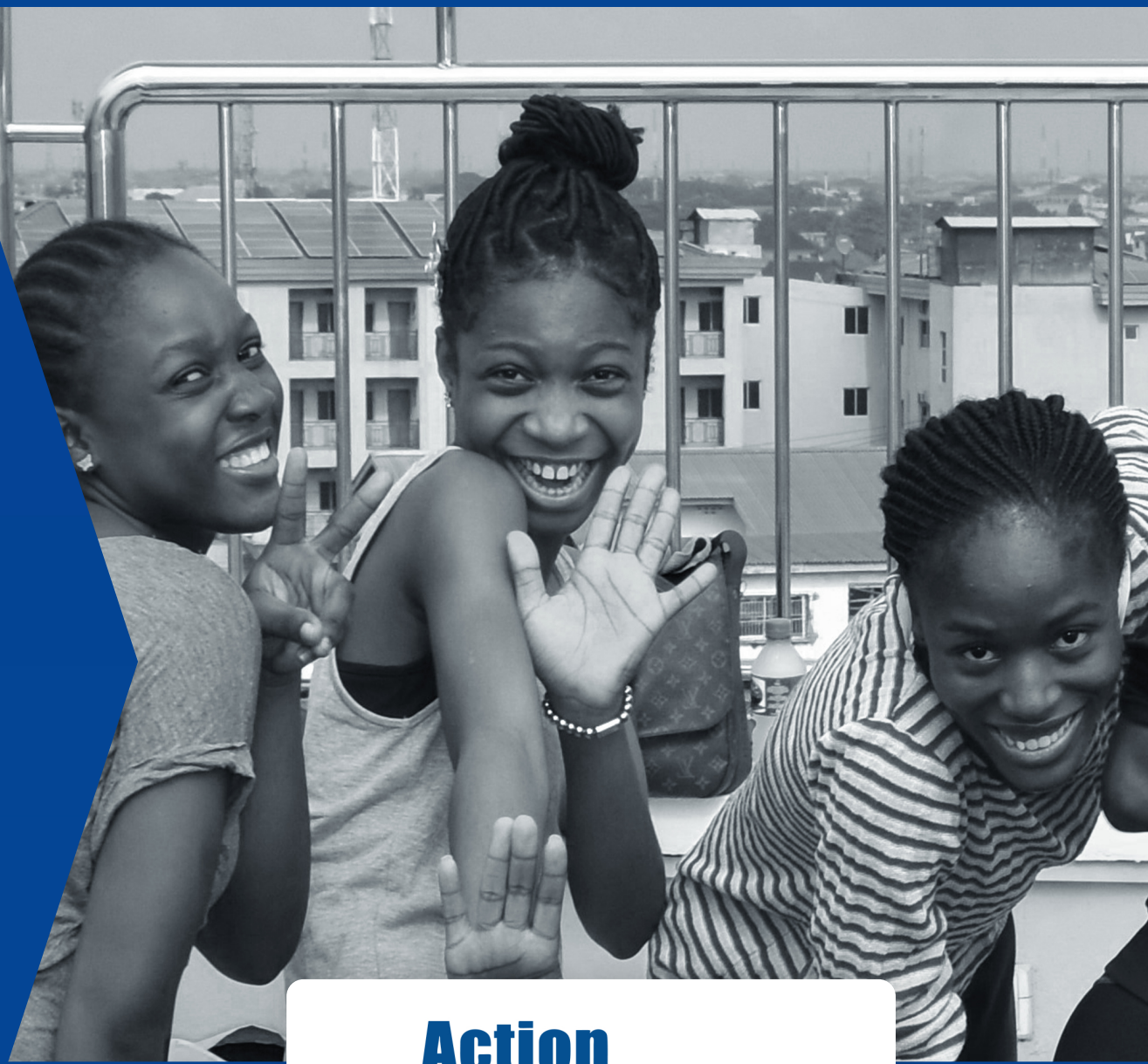


2022

ANNUAL REPORT



**Action
Health** INCORPORATED
RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF NIGERIA'S YOUNG PEOPLE

ABOUT AHI

Action 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, we have 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 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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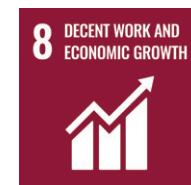
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

It is my pleasure to present our 2022 end-of-year report which is an overview of AHI's work in furtherance of our mission to empower young people especially girls, to assume better control over their lives. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda acknowledges the vulnerability of youth, as well as their potential in attaining global sustainability and unequivocally calls for their empowerment. The Agenda also affirms that realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across the 17 Goals and calls for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against them. The world is already halfway through the 15-year journey to achieving the SDGs and the realization of the targets under the goals of health, education, decent employment and gender remain critical to accomplishing Agenda 2030 and ensuring that no one is left behind.

One of the primary impediments to meeting the youth and women's empowerment objectives of the SDGs within developing countries is the inadequate and dwindling funds directed at implementing the required actions. However, in spite of this unrelentingly harsh funding landscape, we have been very fortunate at AHI to retain the confidence of our longstanding donor organizations and partner agencies who provided the resources that made our interventions in 2022 possible.

I am glad to report that, leveraging on the unalloyed support we received from our implementing partners, stakeholders and community of volunteers, the performance indicators displayed on the 2022 at-a-Glance page reflect the outcomes achieved. From building adolescents' agency to make informed decisions about sexuality and defending their right to bodily autonomy, expanding work and livelihood skills development opportunities for marginalized youth, to increasing access to sexual and reproductive health services for girls subjected to violence in the humanitarian contexts of North-East Nigeria - including establishing a new One-Stop Centre for women and girls in Dikwa, Borno State, alongside the two in Daware, Adamawa State and Damaturu, Yobe State - offering safe shelter residential facilities, healthcare, psycho-social support, security and access to legal redress to women in need of these services.

AHI's programming contributed to scaling up access to essential life-saving healthcare services, upskilling of humanitarian staff and expanding their capabilities for improved quality for care in primary healthcare facilities and by mobile outreach workers in the IDP camps and affected host communities. Our work to strengthen access to justice for GBV survivors through support to the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Borno Chapter's advocacy also culminated in the State Governor, Babagana Zulum's signing of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Bill into law.





We are deeply grateful to our donor organizations for their investments that have enabled AHI continue with deploying the best processes to ensure our interventions remain impactful and relevant. We are also indebted to key federal and state government ministries and agencies for the partnerships we have established in furtherance of our common agenda for greater resilience and improved wellbeing of young people within our communities.

Finally, I want to express my utmost appreciation to AHI's distinguished Board Members, implementing partners, community of volunteers, as well as, our tireless and passionate staff and management team for their dedication and support in advancing this agenda. I thank you for your steadfast commitment to creating better life options for young people in Nigeria.

— Adenike Esiet

2022 AT A GLANCE

EMPOWERING ADOLESCENTS WITH LIFESAVING EDUCATION

55,983
Adolescents reached
directly with sexuality
education sessions



30
Girl Leaders benefitted
from personal coaching
and practical mentoring
to champion advocacy in
support of girls' rights



3.03
Million

People reached
with GBV prevention
messages on social
media and radio

SUPPORTING YOUTH TRANSITIONING TO PRODUCTIVE ADULTHOOD

6

Teenagers benefitted from a **one-year work internship** and learning journey to self-discovery



6,648

Marginalised adolescents built resilience through access to life skills, financial literacy and improved livelihood opportunities



59

Next generation **doctors and nurses trained** in youth-friendly services provision



RESPONDING TO NIGERIA'S HUMANITARIAN CRISIS



24

Health facilities received drugs, equipment and medical consumables

6,070

beneficiaries accessed dignity kits, hygiene kits and delivery kits



1

GBV One-Stop Centre established in addition to 2 others already providing safe residential facilities and access to justice for survivors



33,251

people reached with SRH/GBV information and **5,736 GBV survivors** received GBV and Psychosocial Support Services



422

Health personnel and volunteers trained on MISP, MHPSS, GBV management & referral pathway system



1,104

Safe deliveries by adolescent girls attended by skilled birth attendants in IDP Camps



100

in-school girls' acquired basic computer operation and coding skills and **200** out-of-school girls trained in traditional cap making for income-generation in IDP camps.





EMPOWERING ADOLESCENTS WITH LIFESAVING EDUCATION

AHI is passionately committed to responding to young Nigerians' need for accurate and timely information and services about their sexuality, wellbeing and total development, particularly 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.

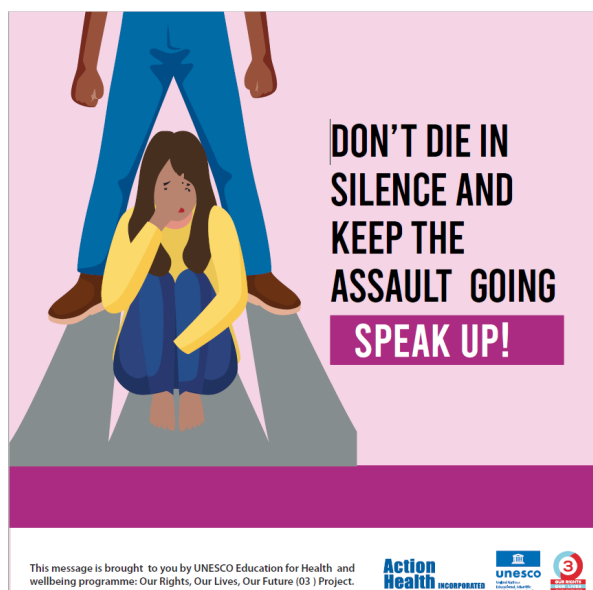
Our social and behavior change communication (SBCC) sessions respond to the needs of young people by providing information

on their sexual health and equipping them with life skills that will enable them to better navigate challenges and opportunities. These sessions were conducted as scheduled gatherings and walk-ins at the AHI Youth Centre, school assembly outreaches and through the WhatsApp online messaging platform. The walk-in sessions at the centre are open to young people between the ages of 10 and 19 years and are held in the afternoons, after school hours. In 2022, AHI reached over 20,674 adolescent girls and boys with our SBCC activities.

Addressing School-Related Gender-Based Violence

In response to the disturbing phenomenon of school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV), AHI with support from UNESCO worked with the Lagos State Ministry of Education's District 3 and 4 principals, guidance counsellors and teachers in 30 public junior secondary schools to strengthen the effective delivery of the Family Life and HIV Education (FLHE) Curriculum. The goal of this intervention was to ensure that younger adolescents are empowered to make informed decisions about their sexuality and proactively respond to any incidents of SRGBV by speaking up. Over the course of our intervention, 26,140 adolescent girls and boys (14,498 females and 11,642

males) in the project schools were reached with structured delivery of comprehensive sexuality education in class, using the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE) concepts. Complaint boxes were also set up in the 30 project schools to enable students anonymously report cases of SRGBV. The complimentary co-curricular activities included students' commemoration of relevant UN Day observances, as well as, developing GBV prevention messages for posters that were used to drive an online advocacy campaign that reached and engaged with over 3 million people on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



Focus on Adolescent Girls

Creating more opportunities for girls and young women to emerge as leaders and advocates is a priority for us at AHI. We connect girls to resources and capacity building opportunities, to build their agency, so that they can protect themselves. We also encourage their participation and leadership through a variety of programmes including our Girls' Fora, which provide a safe space for groups of 12 - 15 girls to learn about and 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. In 2022, a total of 76 girls connected with each other, shared their life experiences and busted myths and misconceptions on various SRHR topics. Many of the girls also got the opportunity to participate in community conversations, voicing their concerns and ideas about issues affecting them.

The Girl Leaders from our 2020 Girls' Voices Initiative (GVI) also returned this year, expanding into peer advocacy and mentorship at Wesley Girls Junior Secondary School, Yaba. "With funding from Cummins Inc., they led conversations with younger peers and conducted activities to advance equity and equality issues, girls' rights, and wellbeing. As a result of this intervention, the 30 Girl Leaders have further developed their session facilitation and group coordination skills. Through their weekly meetings, they reached another 988 adolescent girls with information about their rights, leadership, and life skills.

Some of them like Victoria Benedict and Ayomide Ajibola have emerged as champions in their communities, speaking out against harmful practices such as child marriage, advocating for human rights, and promoting young people's development. Some of the girls they reached are also helping to grow the Girls' Voices Initiative network in their school clubs and communities.

Celebrating and Advancing Youth Creativity

After a two-year interruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Teenage Festival of Life (TFL), AHI's flagship edutainment platform held in 2022. The theme was "Ending Gender-Based Violence" and it provided a platform for young people to showcase their creative talents and expressing their views on a critical issue that concerns them. The event involved over 12,800 young people across the scriptwriting workshops, pre-judging, and grand finale stages. Young people learned about the dimensions, drivers, and consequences of gender-based violence (GBV); shared strategies to mitigate GBV at the individual, school, and community levels; and learned about various organizations offering protection services and access to justice for those seeking redress such as the Mirabel Centre and the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency.



SUPPORTING YOUTH TRANSITIONING TO PRODUCTIVE ADULthood

Central to AHI's mission is the creation of youth health, education and socioeconomic capacity development opportunities, and since 1992 the Youth Skills Development Programme (YSDP) at AHI has served as a veritable avenue to accomplish this goal. The YSDP is a 12-month programme that provides secondary school leavers aged 16-19 years, an opportunity for self-discovery while developing core competencies and skills required to succeed in the adult world of work and living.

The 2022 YSDP beneficiaries were: Ifeoluwa Oresajo-17 years, Maryam Bello-17 years, Abiodun Salamade-18 years, Praise Ogbonna-18 years, Samuel Elijah-18 years and Ishola Qudus-18 years.

As youth staff (Youth Programme Assistants), they provided programme and administrative support for AHI's work: receiving and interacting with youth clients at the AHI Youth Centre Library, and Youth-Friendly Clinic; and implementing social and behavior change communication (SBCC) programmes including school assembly outreaches, commemorative day observances, and holiday programmes for in-school youth.



It is exciting to report that all the Youth Assistants (except Qudus Ishola who had already passed and was already awaiting admission to the Lagos State University) prepared for and all scored good grades on the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examinations (UTME) while serving on the 2022 programme.

Our Experience on the Youth Skills Development Programme

Ifeoluwa Oresajo

My main goal for 2022 was just to pass the UTME while doing whatever I could manage to do with all the work we had been informed we would be responsible for on the YSDP. However, here I am, 12 months down the line –a far better version of myself! I have not only passed the UTME, I have greater self-awareness and self-confidence. I am proud of my ability to coordinate various activities, a skill I developed from learning to plan for and lead SBCC sessions at the Youth Centre and school assembly outreaches. Imagine me, a very shy girl in January, being nominated to serve as a compere at the annual Teenage Festival of Life with an audience of over 2,000 people in November of the same year!

Maryam Bello

When I joined the YSDP, I already had a laptop, but I had no idea of all the possibilities I could accomplish with this piece of equipment. At AHI, I had free internet access throughout office

hours and right now, I can use several software applications for diverse tasks including database management and graphics design. On my shift at the AHI Office reception/front desk, I was responsible for managing the database of the youth centre facility users, and designing flyers for SBCC sessions. I was also privileged to meet and interact with different people from various backgrounds and different ideological perspectives. One major personal asset I developed during this period was patience especially from having to deal with young people who came for after-school activities at the youth centre – I can truly testify that my patience was tried and tested, but I overcame!

Abiodun Salamade

I had planned to go through the YSDP, learning what I could learn, while also preparing for the UTME. However, at AHI, I had to write out my goals, as well as, the steps I would take to accomplish them in our personal journals at the beginning of the programme. We also held monthly meetings with the Executive Director to track our progress and she was on my case because I was not spending enough time studying after work. I did not plan to take extra lessons after work hours but we were all required to register for tutorial classes in preparation for the UTME. From being an average student, I became one of the top students in my tutorial class and did excellently in the UTME. I have also made new and true friends with whom I proudly associate. I am also improving on forming my first impression about other people –I no longer rush to make judgements about others –that used to be my major flaw.

Ms. Praise Oghonna

One of the goals I set for my personal project on the YSDP was to reach 1,000 young people via our community outreaches, but I far exceeded that target and this was beyond my own expectation. My personal project was to mobilize clients for the AHI Youth-Friendly Clinic and I was able to double the number of clinic users through the help of clinic ambassadors that were selected from different secondary schools and the support I received from AHI's undergraduate interns from Babcock University. My journey on the 2022 YSDP has made me a believer that anything is achievable if I set my mind to do it.

Samual Elijah

I am a talented visual artist and my ambition is to study architecture in university. I joined the YSDP wanting to become computer literate and gain better interpersonal communication skills. One question I was asked during our initial goal setting session, was whether or not I knew about computer-aided design (CAD) and my answer was – No. I was encouraged to include learning how to use CAD software on the list of goals I would work to accomplish during the year. Working with AHI has been amazing – I have acquired essential skills I need to advance my personal interest in the visual arts. I can boldly say that I have developed intermediate expertise in the use of

computers for completing varied graphic design tasks and much more. As my personal project, I trained 20 people on how to paint faces and we painted the faces of about 900 participants on the 2022 Teenage Festival of Life grand finale day - it was a huge achievement for me!

Qudus Ishola

Although, I had already gained admission to study Law at the Lagos State University (LASU), resumption on campus due to the admissions backlog at the time, was not likely to be for another 9 months so, I opted to join the YSDP when I successfully scaled through the screening process. My main goal was to be a proud ambassador of AHI and I achieved this through the community outreaches and external official assignments I got to execute. I was even delegated to represent AHI at Human Development Initiative's (HDI) 25th Anniversary, and was highly commended for representing the organization well. Before I left the programme to resume on campus, I had learnt how to write and send formal letters, social media content development, report writing and project concept development.

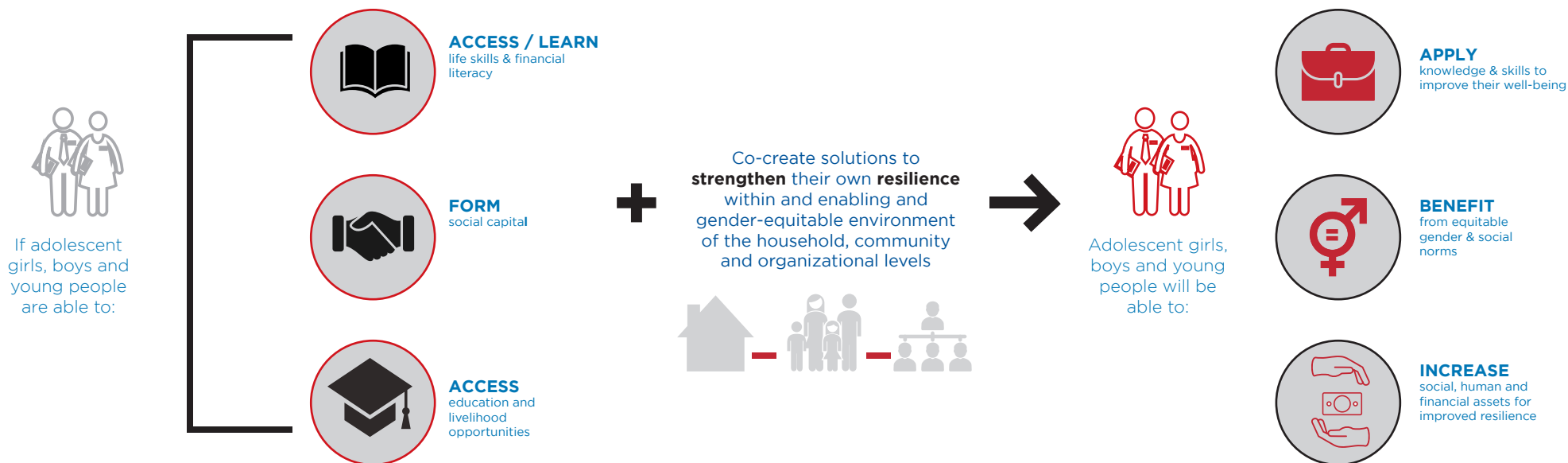


Fostering Opportunities for Marginalized Youth

Beginning in August 2022, AHI became an implementing partner on the Girls Improving Resilience Through Livelihood and Health (GIRL-H) Project, a 12-month project initiated and sponsored by Mercy Corps. The programme aims to reduce the illiteracy and poverty levels among 14,000 marginalized adolescent girls and boys in Lagos State, by fostering pathways to their formal education,

economic opportunities, and civic engagement. It is being implemented in five local government areas - Alimosho, Epe, Kosofe, Ojo, and Somolu-Bariga.

The GIRL-H programme's theory of change for transforming gender and social norms and fostering opportunities for education, safe livelihoods and financial inclusion for young people is illustrated below.





Although the programme got off to a rocky start with challenges encountered in recruiting the targeted number of candidates for the first cycle of trainings, significant progress has been made with over 6,648 beneficiaries successfully completing the 12-weeks of life skills and financial literacy training across the five local government areas. The partnership fostered by AHI with the State Universal Primary Education Board and the Agency for Mass Education has facilitated access to conducive learning spaces where beneficiaries' safety can be guaranteed.

In 2023, project activities will focus on enrolling an additional 7,350 beneficiaries into the programme, commencing short-term skills training in trades related to beauty, garment and textiles, carpentry, plumbing, etc., as well as, establishing linkages with public and private sector partners to create further access and transitioning into diverse economic/ livelihood pathways.

Internship for Babcock University Undergraduates

Every year, AHI in partnership with various higher educational institutions provides the opportunity for undergraduates to undergo work-based learning internships in our youth health and development programming. We consider these internships an avenue for participants to learn about what it takes to work in this sector.

AHI hosted seven Public Health undergraduates of the Babcock University for the final year internship in fulfilment of their degree requirements. The six-week internship commenced with one week of capacity building sessions to improve the interns' knowledge and skills on the concepts of Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Adolescent/Youth Friendly Service Provision to enable them serve as informed advocates in this regard. Subsequently, they were assigned responsibilities that



included school outreach health talks, documentation and organization of AHI's resource materials inventory for library users, as well as, online and community mobilization of clients to increase utilization of the clinical services available at AHI's Youth Friendly Clinic.

In the course of the internship, each intern had the opportunity to make a presentation to AHI's Programme Team on the SDGs and how they could contribute to advancing the SDG of their choice. By the end of the programme, the interns' understanding of the interconnectedness of the environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainable development had improved and they were all very motivated to become involved in contributing to the required actions. Each intern also identified their focal SDG of interest and made personal commitments for action on these issues following the internship.

Training of Next Generation Doctors and Nurses

AHI also invests in building the capacity of health service providers and in 2022, AHI collaborated with the Department of Community Health and Primary Care at the College of Medicine University of Lagos (CMUL) to conduct the training of 37 penultimate-year (500-Level) medical students as well as 12 resident doctors undergoing post-graduate training at the Department of Community Health. We also provided training on youth-friendly service provision to 10 Post-Basic Psychiatric/ Mental Health Nurses.

RESPONDING TO NIGERIA'S HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

The humanitarian crisis in north-east Nigeria has caused great hardship and displacement in the region over the years and Nigeria's 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) stated that at least 8.3m people in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY States) will need humanitarian aid during the year. The most critical needs prioritized in the national HRP include access to food, water, healthcare services, as well as, protection needs of affected people – especially women and girls, many of whom experience sexual and gender based violence when trying to secure essential services and livelihoods.

In line with these identified priorities for the region Action Health Incorporated's interventions were squarely focused on alleviating the burden of disease, reducing gender based violence and improving livelihoods opportunities within inaccessible communities, internally displaced people (IDP) camps, and affected host communities.

AHI with support from UNFPA, OCHA and IDRC:-

- Provided and maintained essential life-saving healthcare services in priority locations including IDP camps and scaled up health services in hard-to-reach and underserved communities.



- Scaled-up sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and related maternal and neonatal care, HIV/AIDS, clinical care and mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) for gender based violence (GBV) survivors and ensured that all services were provided in a timely and well-coordinated manner.
- Strengthened health system recovery and enhanced resilience including capacity building for healthcare workers to improve access and quality of care, as well as ethical behavior among humanitarian workers through training on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)
- Improved access to integrated multi-sectoral GBV and MHPSS to women and girls affected by the crisis in hard-to-reach, areas including provision of confidential, survivor-centred GBV services through case management process (especially clinical and psychosocial) and through referrals.
- Responded to the heightened incidences of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) by establishing a new one stop centre for women and girls in Dikwa in addition to those in Damaturu and Daware, bringing to three, the total number of one-stop centres established and being managed by established AHI with funding from UNFPA and OCHA. 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.
- Raised awareness about SGBV and referral mechanisms; provided emergency materials including dignity kits to



LAST MILE DISTRIBUTION

of life saving & antenatal care drugs, delivery kits and medical supplies in hard-to-reach communities.



A NEW ONE-STOP CENTRE

was established and equipped in Dikwa (Borno State) in addition to those already being managed in Damaturu (Yobe State) and Daware (Adamawa State).



BUILT THE CAPACITY OF HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

on CMR, MPHSS, MISP, PSEA, GBV case management, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of waterborne diseases.

reduce the vulnerability of women and girls to violence, connected them to GBV related information and response services

- Strengthened community resilience and systems to prevent GBV by addressing negative social-cultural norms through mass awareness campaigns, trained men and boys to become allies and agents of change on GBV prevention and response.
- Strengthened access to justice for GBV survivors through support to the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Borno Chapter's advocacy which culminated in the State Governor, Babagana Zulum's signing of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Bill into law.
- Enhanced the capacities of vulnerable young women and girls including persons living with disability in the IDP camps and affected communities to engage in safe socio-economic and income generation activities to facilitate economic independence and restore their dignity and hope, thereby reducing the risk of resorting to negative coping mechanism in the bid to secure essential services and livelihood.

Lessons learned from our work to generate and use evidence to improve the design and delivery of SRHR services among adolescent girls and young women in Muna Garage IDP camp, Borno State, were published in two journals, as well as, presented at the **10th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights (ACSHR)** in Sierra-Leone.





APPRECIATION

We are deeply grateful to all the individuals,
institutions and donor organizations who supported
AHI's work over this period.



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