

FIFTY - FIFTY (50<>50) ACTION WOMEN ADVOCACY GROUP:

Right-holders -Driven Approach for a Cost Efficient and Effective Strategy to Impactful Advocacy



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Training & Inauguration of one of the Fifty-fifty (50/50) Action Women Groups

BACKGROUND TO FIFTY-FIFTY (50/50) ACTION WOMEN GROUP (AWG)

The Action Women Group is an outcome of a project implemented by Women Aid Collective (WACOL) with the goal of eliminating violence against women and girls in the south East and South-South by investing in initiatives that address the key drivers of violence against women. These include socio-cultural norms, customs and harmful practices perpetuating sex stereotypes and gender inequalities. The project adopted a right-holders (women and girls) empowering, community-driven, integrated, and inclusive approach to build capacities and support women/girls to own, lead and drive review of existing negative norms, customs and harmful practices which are perpetuating gender inequalities.

Membership of the groups emerged following a targeted training of women. The trainees were systematically selected, across socio-economic, educational, political and religious strata; and are willing and committed to interrogate existing socio-cultural norms, customs and harmful practices against women and girls, such as *male-child preference*, embargo on women leadership/decision-making roles, restriction imposed by culture and religion, denial of rights to inheritance, harmful

widowhood practices, Female Genital Mutilation, Marriage choices and rites, among others, reaffirmed by a field *study conducted at project inception*.

The research findings also, indicated that despite plenitude of existing Laws/policies and provisions from international conventions Nigeria committed to, in protecting Women and Girls' Rights, communities are not taking intentional steps to review/revert prevalent norms, customs and traditions enabling violations of rights of women and girls.

Action was taken to establish that there exists traditional rulers and community leaders willing to transform their norms, customs and practices towards protecting the rights of women and girls in their domains/communities, and who would expedite action from a push by a committed group.

Subsequent to training women at each intervention location, the Fifty-fifty (50/50) Action Women Advocacy Group was birthed, inaugurated and charged with mandate to drive advocacy to relevant stakeholders/change agents towards dismantling enablers/sustaining factors of violence against women and girls deep rooted in existing cultural norms, customs and harmful practices within their geographical area of operations.

GOAL

To advance women's transformational leadership, take actions to collectively fight and prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG), harmful practices and socio-cultural norms sustaining discrimination and promoting gender inequality in all spheres of life.

SPREAD

Currently functioning in all three senatorial zones in Abia, Anambra, Delta, Ebonyi, Edo, Enugu, and Imo states. Other states are welcome to replicate building on successes recorded in the pioneering states. New members would be trained on Women's Rights, Leadership and Advocacy and supported to embark on the necessary action to raise women's voices and demand gender accountability.

ROLE

- Taking ownership of issues of VAWGs in their localities
- Driving the process of advocacy for change in social norms and practices promoting gender inequality.
- Advocating to relevant stakeholders for review of norms and harmful practices.
- Facilitating processes to bring Women's and Girls Rights to the front burner.

STRATEGIES

Identify specific existing norms/practices enabling VAWGs via meetings, word-of-mouth, victims's/survivors' interactions, media accounts etc.

Interrogating existing norms/practices through interactive approaches like interviews.

Joint planning of activities and resource pooling.

Identifying relevant stakeholders to engage – conduct quick analysis on the stakeholder to ascertain interest and influence; this is to ensure right target, development of appropriate messages and use of right medium for effectiveness.

Conducting/executing advocacy engagement.
Managing knowledge (documentations -pictures, reports, postings on social media).

EXCERPTS OF OUTCOMES OF ADVOCACIES SO FAR

1. The groups identified and are following -up on progressive Traditional Rulers who expressed willingness to expand their Cabinet to include women in decision-making body in their communities.

2. Getting positive commitments from traditional rulers with respect to the review of traditions hindering women and girls' enjoyments of human rights existing in their governance domains/respective communities.

3. Empowering/enlightening more women to understand their human rights and also to harness opportunities when available to take-up leadership and participate in decision-making, especially in their communities

4. Got six (6) traditional rulers in three states in south-east Nigeria, to indicate interest to review their community constitutions in order to be able to outlaw Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), Child Marriage, Harmful Widowhood practices and dis-inheritance of girl children and women.

5. Increased awareness and actions of stakeholder and strategies to curtail negative cultural practices in the intervention zones/states.

6. Awareness of stakeholders, including traditional rulers, that adopted a communique to end harmful cultural practices in Anambra State.

7. Increased participants' knowledge on the Harmful Cultural Norms against women and girls and their negative impact on community development.

MENTORSHIP

Women Aid Collective (WACOL) through instrumentality of Ford Foundation West Africa, supports and mentors the group through variety of ways, such as:

established virtual meeting, sharing and learning platforms (WhatsApp) for each group and a generic one for networking. provides technical direction and support on need basis for the groups. supports groups with logistics on need basis. supports the groups with brokerage of high-level engagements if they find it difficult to get a foot in the door.

MENTORING ORGANISATION

Inquiries:

Head Office:

Women Aid Collective (WACOL)

WACOL Women House (Ulo Umunwanyi), No 9 Dr. Mathias Ilo Avenue, New Town, New Haven Extension. P.O. BOX 2718, Enugu, Enugu State

WACOL National hotlines:

(1) +2349060002128; (2) 09091333000; (3) 09092777000.

Website: www.wacolnigeria.org

Social Media Handles:

Facebook Account: WacolTamarSarc

Facebook Page: Women Aid Collective-WACOL

Twitter: WACOLTamarSARC

Instagram: wacoltamarsarc



50/50 Action Women Group advocacy to Paramount Ruler, Igwe Kingsley Chime of Abia Town, in Udi LGA of Enugu State



50/50
ACTION WOMEN
...PUSHING TO END CULTURAL NORMS
AND PRACTICES REINFORCING VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS.



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