



GRASSROOT
PEOPLE AND
GENDER
DEVELOPMENT
CENTER

A COMPENDIUM OF GBV PROGRAM IN LAGOS



BACKGROUND

In 2013, Grassroot People and Gender Development Center's (GRADE) joined a coalition of Civil Society Organization named "Lagos State Gender Action Team (LASGAT)" to conduct a study on the status of implementation of the Lagos state Protection against Domestic Violence Law of Lagos state passed in 2007. One of the major findings from the study is the low level of citizen's awareness about the existence and contents of the law resulting and lack of capacity to effectively use the law in preventing and seeking redress in law courts in Lagos state. As recommendation to tackle the low level awareness of the law, LASGAT initiated and implemented activities to raise awareness within Lagos populace about the law with relevant MDAs and other stakeholders. Also, there was a proposal to set an agency to address domestic violence and abuse cases in Lagos State. This was adhered to by the then administration to the setting up of Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team DSVRT now Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA)

Introduction

Large populations of citizens residing in Lagos are now aware of the availability of Lagos State Protection against Domestic violence Law (LSDVL) passed in 2007. This was achieved during the one week of against domestic violence organized by the Lagos State Gender Advocacy Team (LASGAT) with support from the Department for International Development (DFID) through its State Accountability and Voice Initiative (SAVI) programme in Lagos State, Nigeria. SOS Children Village, Nigeria, Save the Children, Ministry of Women Affairs, Mirable Center and Partnership for Justice also supported the week of action with Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials distributed to citizens for the campaign. Other organizations providing services on domestic violence participated in the week as partners of LASGAT.

The official week of action against domestic violence in Lagos State commenced on the 13th – 17th of October, 2014 with the theme ***Domestic Violence is a crime: make Lagos state violence free.*** To flag off the week, a media forum was held on the first day of the week involving various media organizations, relevant stakeholders including market leaders of Lagos State, the Police, relevant MDAs and non-governmental organizations working on domestic violence in Lagos State. The main objective of the week of action is to raise awareness about the law and provide information to citizens on how they can prevent and protect themselves against domestic violence.

Outreaches and activities were organized in over 20 Local Governments and communities in Lagos State targeting community leaders, religious leaders, political leaders, school head and the general populace. Social media awareness was carried out via facebook , twitter, blogs (both local and international), radio stations, television and various print media. Some of the activities under taken by partners are: speaker's corners, workshops, town hall meetings and community forums/outreach, school assemble brief, market outreach, door-to-door campaign, church outreach, motorized campaign and more.

Among the IEC materials distributed are 2,000 directories of organizations providing access to support of victims of domestic violence in Lagos, 7000 stickers, 100 T-shirts, 1000 simplified version of the Domestic Violence Law and 1000 handbills. Message of the campaign was communicated in Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo language depending on the target group in attendance.



Also, sign language interpreters were engaged throughout the session to ensure that persons living with disability are not excluded from the message.

Grassroot People and Gender Development Center's (GRADE) embarked on Market outreach and Assembly sensitization of children in primary and secondary schools in Ojo and Alimosho LGAs. GARDE visited - 2 markets: Iyano Oba Market and Egan Market, 8 schools (2 secondary and 6 primary), 6 governments schools (2 secondary and 4 primary) and 2 private primary schools reaching over 2500 citizens. Some private institutions and religious groups were not left out in this campaign. Many of the women at Iyano Oba were excited to learn about the Lagos State Domestic Violence Law which can offer them protection. Copies of the domestic violence law were distributed alongside with stickers, handbills and other IEC materials.

Quotes

"I am so happy to see things happening in Nigeria since after the CSW in Beijing." - Mrs. Akanji Mobolaji, proprietor of Toluwani Montessori School, Egan Igando

I will not distribute this handbill here (banking hall), I will take it home cos my neighbours will need it. The other day, one of my neighbour used a pair of opened mouth scissor to pierce the head of the wife, leaving her with two openings on the head. He locked her up in the house with the bleeding, it was the little boy of about 5 years that opened the door at about 2am and started shouting round the compound “my mummy is dying, my mummy is dying” before people had to know about the incidence. The husband is even a banker and the woman is also educated, the quarrel and fight everyday. The other person, the husband thrown her out of the house and she slept under the staircase with her 9months baby where everyone generators was in used. Uju, banker

Domestic violence occurs always even in the school. She advised the pupil to stop fighting within and outside the school. She also encouraged those who has been sexually molested and harassed to report to the school counselor. She calls on more organizations to take the campaign to the riverine schools in Lagos State. -Mrs. Ojo, LGEA counselor, Ojo Local Government,

Women are beaten due to their nagging behavior and when she refuses to stay where her husband wants her to say—Mr. Chidi, trader

GRADE continued its outreaches and advocacy in Lagos in partnership with other networks and coalitions

BREAKING THE SILENCE INITIATIVE - Preventing Gender-Based Violence, Empowering Survivors and Building Safe Communities

Programme Overview

The **Breaking the Silence Initiative** is Grassroot People and Gender Development Center's (GRADE) flagship programme for the prevention of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). The initiative seeks to empower women, girls, children, men, and communities with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to prevent violence, challenge harmful social norms, support survivors, and promote a culture of dignity, equality, and respect.

The initiative was developed in response to the growing prevalence of gender-based violence in Nigeria and the widespread culture of silence that often prevents survivors from reporting abuse or accessing support. Many women and girls continue to experience domestic violence, sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation, harmful traditional practices, emotional abuse, and other forms of violence because of stigma, fear, discrimination, and limited awareness of available protection mechanisms.

Through education, advocacy, community engagement, and strategic partnerships, GRADE works to break this silence by promoting prevention, encouraging safe reporting, and strengthening community responsibility for protecting women, girls, and children.

Background

Gender-Based Violence remains one of the most significant human rights and public health challenges affecting women and girls in Nigeria. Violence not only causes physical injuries but also has lasting emotional, psychological, educational, social, and economic consequences.

Many survivors remain silent due to fear of retaliation, shame, family pressure, financial dependence, or lack of confidence in available support systems. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable because they often lack accurate information about consent, healthy relationships, personal safety, and reporting mechanisms.

Recognizing these challenges, GRADE established the Breaking the Silence Initiative to promote prevention before violence occurs while also creating awareness of survivors' rights and available support services.

In 2024, Grassroot People and Gender Development Center participated in Agency Development and Leadership Certification Program- Sub-grant from **Women Inspiration Development Centre** with support from **Girls Opportunity Alliance of Obama Foundation** supported the project "**Agency Development and Leadership Certification Program to enhance the capacity of girls and reduce the culture of silence and Gender Based Violence** (January 2024 to December 2024) which enabled us to train **300 adolescent girls** on breaking the culture of silence surrounding gender-based violence. The project strengthened girls' confidence to recognize abuse, seek support, and advocate for safer schools and communities.

Goal

To reduce the incidence of gender-based violence by empowering individuals and communities to prevent abuse, speak out against violence, support survivors, and promote gender equality.

Objectives

The initiative seeks to:

- ✚ Increase public awareness of Gender-Based Violence and its consequences.
- ✚ Promote positive social norms that reject all forms of violence.
- ✚ Strengthen the confidence of women and girls to report abuse safely.
- ✚ Educate adolescents on consent, healthy relationships, and personal safety.
- ✚ Build the capacity of schools, communities, media practitioners, and community leaders to prevent and respond to GBV.
- ✚ Promote survivor-centred and rights-based responses.
- ✚ Encourage collective action to end violence against women and girls.

Programme Components

- ✚ Community Awareness Campaigns - GRADE conducts community dialogues, sensitization campaigns, road walks, town hall meetings, and public education sessions to challenge harmful gender norms, reduce stigma, and encourage communities to take collective responsibility for preventing violence.

Topics include:

- Understanding Gender-Based Violence
- Harmful Social Norms
- Domestic Violence
- Sexual Violence
- Child Sexual Abuse
- Early and Forced Marriage
- Prevention Strategies
- Safe Reporting Mechanisms
- Community Responsibility
- ✚ School-Based Prevention Programme - Recognizing that prevention begins early, GRADE works with schools to educate girls, boys, teachers, and parents about creating safe learning environments.

Training covers:

- Understanding abuse
- Consent and bodily autonomy
- Healthy friendships and relationships

- Personal safety
- Online safety
- Reporting abuse to trusted adults
- Respect and equality

🚩 Girls' Empowerment - Girls are equipped with knowledge and practical skills that help them:

- Build confidence
- Recognize abusive behaviours
- Develop healthy relationships
- Speak out against violence
- Support peers
- Become advocates for safer communities



OTHER ACTIVITIES

Digital Storytelling Against GBV

GRADE trains girls and young women to use storytelling, photography, creative writing, videos, and digital media to raise awareness, challenge harmful stereotypes, and amplify survivor-centred messages.

Digital storytelling enables young people to become advocates who inspire positive social change while promoting respectful, evidence-based conversations about violence prevention.

Media Engagement

The media plays a vital role in shaping public attitudes toward Gender-Based Violence.

GRADE has trained journalists and media practitioners on:

-  Gender-sensitive reporting
-  Ethical reporting of violence
-  Survivor confidentiality
-  Responsible language
-  Human rights principles
-  Reducing stigma

This component helps strengthen public understanding while encouraging accurate and responsible media coverage.

Community Leadership Engagement

GRADE collaborates with:

-  Traditional leaders
-  Religious leaders
-  Community Development Associations
-  Parents
-  Teachers
-  Youth leaders
-  Women's groups

These stakeholders are equipped to become champions of violence prevention and advocates for safer communities.

Advocacy and Policy Engagement

The initiative supports campaigns that:

- ✚ Promote awareness of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act and other relevant laws.
- ✚ Strengthen referral pathways for survivors.
- ✚ Encourage implementation of child protection and safeguarding policies.
- ✚ Promote coordinated responses among government institutions and civil society organizations.

Target Beneficiaries

The initiative serves:

- ✚ Adolescent girls
- ✚ Women
- ✚ Boys and young men
- ✚ Teachers
- ✚ Parents and caregivers
- ✚ Community leaders
- ✚ Faith leaders
- ✚ Media professionals
- ✚ Civil society organizations
- ✚ Government institutions



Implementation Approach

The initiative adopts a rights-based, survivor-centred, gender-transformative, and community-led approach.

Programme activities include:

- ✚ Interactive workshops
- ✚ Community dialogues
- ✚ School outreach
- ✚ Public campaigns
- ✚ Peer education
- ✚ Leadership training
- ✚ Digital advocacy
- ✚ Media engagement
- ✚ Stakeholder consultations

Achievements

Since its launch, the Breaking the Silence Initiative has:

- ✚ Conducted Gender-Based Violence sensitization programmes in schools and communities across Lagos State.
- ✚ Trained **3000 adolescent girls** through the Obama Girls Alliance sub-grant project.
- ✚ Equipped girls with knowledge on prevention, reporting, and access to support services.
- ✚ Trained media professionals on gender-sensitive reporting and ethical coverage of GBV.
- ✚ Increased community awareness of violence prevention and survivor support.
- ✚ Encouraged open conversations that challenge stigma and harmful social norms.

Impact

The initiative has contributed to:

- ✚ Increased awareness of Gender-Based Violence among women, girls, and community members.
- ✚ Improved confidence among girls to report abuse and seek support.
- ✚ Better understanding of consent, healthy relationships, and personal safety.
- ✚ Strengthened community ownership of violence prevention efforts.
- ✚ Improved media reporting that respects survivors' dignity and rights.
- ✚ Greater collaboration between schools, families, community leaders, and civil society organizations to create safer environments.

Sustainability

GRADE promotes long-term impact by:

- ✚ Training peer educators and youth champions.
- ✚ Building the capacity of teachers and community volunteers.
- ✚ Strengthening partnerships with government agencies and civil society organizations.
- ✚ Integrating GBV prevention into school and community structures.
- ✚ Encouraging continuous community dialogue and advocacy.

