



Welcome to the latest edition of South Saharan Social Development Organization's (SSDO) quarterly newsletter. As we reflect on the second quarter of 2024, it is clear that our communities are at a pivotal moment in addressing some of the most pressing social issues. This newsletter highlights our ongoing efforts and unwavering commitment to fostering sustainable development, empowering vulnerable groups, and promoting a more equitable society.

In this edition, we emphasize the critical importance of focusing on youth empowerment, climate action, and the acquisition of green skills. Our initiatives are designed to equip the younger generation with the tools and opportunities they need to thrive in a rapidly changing world. By prioritizing environmental sustainability, we aim to combat climate change and promote practices that will ensure a healthier planet for future generations.

Additionally, gender equality and economic empowerment remain at the forefront of our mission. We continue to champion the rights of women and children, striving to create safe and inclusive communities where everyone has the opportunity to succeed. Through strategic partnerships, advocacy, and community engagement, we are making significant strides in tackling issues such as gender-based violence, poverty, and educational disparities. We invite you to explore this edition and join us in celebrating the remarkable progress we have achieved together.



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SSDO Implementing Families Matters Program in Enugu and Imo State



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values and expectations about sexual behavior, and to communicate to their children important messages about HIV, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and pregnancy prevention.

Understanding this challenge, South Saharan Social Development Organization in partnership with Caritas Nigeria is implementing the Families Matter! Program (FMP). The program is an evidence-based intervention for parents and caregivers of 9-12-year-olds that promotes positive parenting practices and effective parent-child communication about sex-related issues and sexual risk reduction.

It is a community-based, group-level intervention that raises awareness about the sexual risks teens face today. The project improves parents' ability to effectively communicate with their children about sexuality and sexual risk reduction.

Over the last quarter, the implementation of a new session has commenced in Imo and Enugu states. The teams conducted advocacy visits and mobilized five cohorts in each of the assigned Local Government Areas (LGAs). They also reached out to various community and religious leaders and stakeholders to emphasize the program's impact and sensitize them to its importance.

SSDO Partners With the Enugu State Ministry of Child, Gender, and Social Development



South Saharan Social Development Organization is collaborating with the State Ministry of Child, Gender, and Social Development. This partnership has formed the building block of tackling issues around areas of shared interest - gender-based violence, empowering women, and protecting the rights of vulnerable groups, especially children.

SSDO's team led by the Executive Director, Dr. Stanley Ilechukwu, had a planning meeting with the Commissioner of the Enugu State Ministry of Children, Gender Affairs, and Social Development, Hon Mrs. Ngozi Enih.

Key areas for deliberations were:

- Exploitative Child Domestic Work (CDW)

Other stakeholders present include the ministry's heads of department, SSDO's Head of Programs, Udochukwu Egwim, and the Gender Programme Lead, Blessing Uchendu.

Jacob's Well Empowers Women Entrepreneurs to Combat GBV and Poverty



We understand that poverty lies at the heart of unreported cases of Gender-based violence (GBV) and women's empowerment is one of the practical solutions to reducing the cases of violence against women. Understanding this, South Saharan Social Development Organization, through its Jacob's Well program is providing micro-credit to female-owned small businesses. This will help women achieve financial independence and reduce poverty.

So far in 2024, 33 beneficiaries across four registered cooperatives got loans to grow their businesses. As part of our commitment to financial literacy, they were trained in risk management, savings culture, business record keeping, and cooperative management using the GIZ Nigeria & ECOWAS resource manual to help sustain and grow the venture. In addition, we've printed and commenced distribution of 1000 copies of our Business Record Book to enhance record-keeping practices among loan collectors, ensuring efficient management of finances and resources.

A sum of 8.3 million naira was disbursed to these women with no collateral required leveraging the social trust within the cooperative mechanism to ensure compliance across the board. We are happy to report that the various businesses are thriving and the beneficiaries are doing tremendously well.

South Saharan Social Development Organization participated in a technical session and stakeholder engagement with the Enugu State Government organized by ActionAid Nigeria. This 2-day event helped parties discuss areas of shared interest in tackling poverty and improving socioeconomic opportunities in the state, map out new areas of collaboration, and action plans to improve partnership with the state government.

SSDO's Executive Director, Dr. Stanley Ilechukwu highlighted the need for policies addressing the need of specific demographics like youth, women, and children to be drafted and legalized. In the long run, subsequent governments can run with it. Thus, guaranteeing the security and sustainability of interventions.

Key stakeholders present include the Commissioner for Finance, Hon. Dr. Nathaniel E. Urama, Commissioner for Children, Gender Affairs, and Social Development, Hon. Mrs. Ngozi Enih, Commissioner for Human Development and Poverty Eradication, Hon. Dr. Malachy Agbo, Special Adviser on Donor Relations, Hon. Dubem Onyia. After the technical session, the team proceeded on a courtesy visit to the Enugu State Deputy Governor, Hon. Barr. Ifeanyi Ossai to intimate him on the plan and get his assurances on the state's support.

SSDO Establishes VSLA in Three Communities

Research shows that agriculture contributes about 25 percent to Nigeria's GDP and employs nearly 70 percent of the country's population. However, farmers still struggle with low productivity, the adverse effects of climate change, and limited financial access for smallholder farmers. This isn't any different in Enugu state as farmers are plagued by limited resources and access to financial services, making it even more challenging for farmers to adopt sustainable farming practices.

Understanding this need, South Saharan Social Development Organization in partnership with ActionAid Nigeria, through the Strategic Partnership Agreement II program established three Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) in its project communities: Umuogili, Oduma Achara, and Ihenyi to help with the financial constraint.

VSLA is a self-select savings group that uses members' savings to lend to each other so they can grow their businesses. VSLAs offer a community-based financial platform that empowers farmers to invest in sustainable agricultural practices. Through these community-driven financial solutions, farmers can secure the necessary funds to implement sustainable farming techniques, thereby contributing to the resilience and prosperity of agricultural communities in the region.

The VSLAs has been successfully set up and farmers trained in financial literacy and entrepreneurship. The group has selected its executives and is fully operational. The group will be monitored to proffer technical assistance and guarantee the

Mapping out Strategies to Eradicate GBV, Child Abuse, and Trafficking in Enugu State

South Saharan Social Development Organization participated in a stakeholder meeting and sensitization visit organized by The Ministry of Children, Gender Affairs and Social Development Enugu for Enugu West Senatorial District to deliberate and map out ways to eliminate Gender Base Violence, Child Abuse and Trafficking and Promotion of Child Education in Enugu State.

SSDO's Executive Director, Dr. Stanley Ilechukwu, at the stakeholder meeting, highlighted the need to engage the local government more on policy reform and formulation as they're the closest governing body to the people. He emphasized the need to domesticate gender policies by tailoring them for better applicability to suit the needs of rural communities.

The sensitization visit to Udi LGA was an opportunity to build the capacity of the community on rape, child defilement, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to report cases of abuse. SSDO's Gender Programme Lead, Blessing Uchendu, facilitated a session to educate the community on Female Genital Mutilation, its effects, how to report it, and the need for it to be clamped out in its totality.

SSDO Partners With Enugu State Ministry of Youth and Sports

South Saharan Social Development Organization is collaborating with the State Ministry of Youth and Sports. This partnership has formed the building block for tackling issues around areas of shared interest - youth empowerment, skill acquisition, and development.

During the past quarter, SSDO's Executive Director, Dr. Stanley Ilechukwu, and the Head of Programs, Udochukwu Egwim, paid a courtesy visit to the Commissioner for Youth and Sports, Barr. Lloyd Ike Ekweremadu Jr.

The visit helped both parties discuss shared interests in youth development and empowerment. As well as strategize on areas where SSDO can support the ministry, especially as regards policy development and framework formulation.

The Honorable Commissioner assured the team of a sustained partnership and the Executive Director guaranteed the organization's support to help improve youth empowerment and skill development in the state.

Sister Guardian Initiative Establishes VSLA In Awha-Ndi Agu and Ibute-Nze Communities

We understand that poverty lies at the heart of unreported cases of Gender-based violence (GBV). Most women are often afraid they will lose their economic support if they report. Women have a huge role to play in nation-building. Gender inequality, unpaid care, and a largely unskilled women's group are some issues to name a few that hold them back.

Women's empowerment is one of the practical solutions to reducing violence against women. Understanding this, South Saharan Social Development Organization, through its Sister Guardian Initiative is empowering women in both communities by establishing a Village Savings and Loans Association.

VSLA is a self-select savings group that uses members' savings to lend to each other so they can grow their businesses. VSLAs offer a community-based financial platform that empowers women to invest in sustainable businesses. Through these community-driven financial solutions, women can secure the necessary funds to grow their enterprises.

The VSLAs have been successfully set up and women trained in financial literacy and entrepreneurship. The group has selected its executives and is fully operational. The group will be monitored to proffer technical assistance and guarantee the sustainability and effectiveness of the VSLA operations.

SSDO, WaterAid Conducts In-Program Evaluation and Monitoring Exercise

South Saharan Social Development Organization, in partnership with WaterAid Nigeria conducted a monitoring visit and assessment of the ongoing construction site in Mboshi-Aji community, and Ukwuinyi water scheme in Igbo-Eze North Local Government Area.

WaterAid's Country Director, Evelyn Mere, was on the ground to assess the project facilities and visited stakeholders encouraging them to see WASH as not just a developmental issue but an opportunity to create job opportunities.

The team also conducted an in-program evaluation of the hygiene behavior change campaign to assess the progress, challenges, and outcomes of the campaign among community members in Mboshi-Aji community, Igbo-Eze LGA.

This helped the team to identify key knowledge gaps and understand how targeted hygiene behaviors have been adopted and sustained within the community. As well as to identify key barriers in areas where the hygiene behaviors have not been adopted.

SSDO Supporting Enugu State to Develop the Enugu State Youth Policy

Research shows that about 60% of Enugu state population is under 30 with 23% specifically aged 15 to 29. This burgeoning demographic presents an opportunity and a challenge for the state. Currently, youths struggle with unemployment, poor

Understanding this challenge, South Saharan Social Development Organization in partnership with ActionAid Nigeria is facilitating the development of the Enugu State Youth Policy. The proposed Enugu State Youth Policy aims to address critical issues the youth face and create an enabling environment for their growth and development.

Members of the Technical Working Group include Technical Adviser to the Enugu State Commissioner for Youth and Sports Development, Director, Planning, Research and Statistics, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Technical Adviser, Enugu State Economic Planning Commission, civil society organizations, and media.

SSDO Commemorates World Environment Day at The University of Nigeria

Climate change, driven by greenhouse gas emissions from human activities, is a global crisis manifesting in rising temperatures, altered precipitation patterns, severe weather events, and sea level rise. These changes pose significant risks to ecosystems, human health, food security, water resources, and economic stability.

In Nigeria, the impacts of climate change are evident in desertification, land degradation, increased flooding, and reduced agricultural productivity. Enugu State faces challenges such as disrupted agricultural activities, soil erosion, land degradation, and an increased prevalence of waterborne diseases due to altered rainfall patterns and rising temperatures.

South Saharan Social Development Organization with support from ActionAid understanding this challenge took the initiative to implement a one-day sensitization outreach and climate policy dialogue session at the Faculty of Environmental Studies, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus.

The aim of the event was to enhance environmental sustainability, raise awareness, and encourage proactive environmental stewardship among students. This is crucial for promoting sustainable development and building resilience against the adverse impacts of climate change. [Continue Reading](#).

SSDO Commemorates Menstrual Hygiene Day 2024

South Saharan Social Development Organization, in partnership with WaterAid Nigeria, commemorated Menstrual Hygiene Day under the theme, "Together for a Period Friendly World." The team organized a 2-day menstrual hygiene management education and sanitary pad-making program at Community Secondary School, Iva Valley, Enugu.

Stakeholders present include Commissioner for Water Resources, Dr. Felix Nnamani, Commissioner for Children, Gender, and Social Development, Hon. Mrs. Ngozi Enih, Special Adviser on Donor Relations, Hon. Dubem Onyia, Senior Special Assistant on Social Culture, Dera Okenwa, WaterAid Country Director, Evelyn Mere represented by the Enugu State Team Lead, Mr. Solomon Akpanufot among other dignitaries.

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understanding of menstrual hygiene, debunked myths and misconceptions, and challenged stigmas surrounding menstruation.

Students were taught in a participatory and inclusive approach how to make reusable sanitary pads. The school outreach was an opportunity to raise awareness and promote proper menstrual hygiene practices among female students. Male students were also sensitized as brothers, future fathers, and uncles so they knew how to help out.

SSDO Organizes a Green Skills Boost Workshop and Internship Program

Plastic waste is a growing global concern, with millions of tons of plastic ending up in landfills, oceans, and the environment annually, with an estimated 300 million tons of plastic produced annually, half of which is designed for single use.

In Nigeria, 32 million tons of waste are generated annually, of which 2.5 million tons are plastic. In Enugu State, plastic waste is a significant contributor to environmental pollution, clogging waterways, and posing health risks to communities.

Understanding this challenge and the need to remediate it, South Saharan Social Development Organization in partnership with ActionAid Nigeria organized a Green Skills Boost Workshop and Internship program. The initiative aims to address the dual challenge of youth unemployment and environmental degradation. [Continue Reading.](#)

Upcoming Event

Tax audit management and compliance are crucial aspects for NGOs to ensure transparency, accountability, and adherence to legal requirements. Effective tax audit management and compliance help NGOs avoid legal penalties and build trust with donors and stakeholders, thereby supporting their mission and operational sustainability.

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For more real-time updates on our projects and activities, visit our website, southsaharan.org.

Our projects are specifically tailored to aid growth at the community level. Help us achieve more.

Sincerely,
South Saharan Social Development Organization Team.

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