

**Report of the UNIFEM/OSIWA Integrated Empowerment Programme in
Enugu State May 10th – July 12th 2007**

Executive Summary

1. Background Information

This is a report on the UNIFEM/OSIWA Integrated Empowerment Programme in Enugu State coordinated by CIRDDOC Nigeria. The project arose from the need to engender development and poverty reduction strategies in Nigeria. The development of NEEDS 2 and SEEDS 2 provides an opportunity to integrate gender equality objectives in the strategies and articulate how women's needs, benefits and rights are relevant to the development activities being proposed and implemented. This project therefore aims to empower women and women's groups to engage in transforming SEEDS for wealth creation and the eradication of feminized poverty.

The project consists of a mapping of stakeholders who have recorded experience in engaging with the SEEDS processes in the state; an empirical research and a one-day Consultative Workshop.

The report of the research is attached as **Appendix 1**. The workshop which was held at the Dannic Hotel Enugu, on the 12th of July 2007 to validate the research report and make recommendations on strategies to use SEEDS as an entry point for gender equality and elimination of violence against women was attended by participants drawn from CSOs, Government representatives, the academia, community groups, traditional rulers, donor agencies etc. Welcoming them, Ms. Lewis-Tamoka UNIFEM Programme Specialist explained that the workshop would review assessment of initial report of the mapping exercise conducted in Enugu State by CIRDDOC Nigeria, and would provide working responses to the questions on how to move from Enugu SEEDS blueprint to the "blue action", through which platforms can CSOs partner with government in the realization of gender equality via SEEDS, how stakeholders can participate in SEEDS, NEEDS

or LEEDS for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, how to begin to see the effects of violence against women both as an economic loss and as a hindrance to the meaningful development of Nigeria.

The representative of the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (*OSIWA*), Mr. Peter Ocheikwu, expressed *OSIWA*'s appreciation of the quality of CIRDDOC's work in human rights and gender issues, and thanked the workshop participants and guests for finding the time to be a part of the OSIWA-supported project.

The Secretary to the State Government, Mr. Martin Ilo, (who was the anchor person for Enugu SEEDS in the previous administration) gave a keynote address, well-augmented with an audio-visual presentation, which covered statistics and concepts as contained in the SEEDS document about Enugu State's profile.

There was a round of self introductions by participants laced with yes/no answers as to whether their organizations have actively engaged with Enugu SEEDS document. A representative of the Coalition of Eastern NGOs (CENGOS) in Enugu State presented the coalition's work with DFID on the SEEDS document tracking the Enugu State budget to determine its conformity with SEEDS.

In her presentation, the Resource Person, Prof. Obioma Nwaorgu, the Executive Director of Global Health Awareness and Research Foundation (GHARF) and a lecturer at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State spoke on **Engaging the SEEDS Document as an Entry Point for Achieving Gender Equality and Eliminating Violence Against Women**. She identified gaps in SEEDS as it relates to the issue of violence against women and made recommendations on the way forward.

The consultant, Oby Nwankwo presented the **Draft Report on the UNIFEM/OSIWA Integrated Empowerment Programme for Women on Promoting**

Women's Economic Empowerment Through SEEDS detailing the results of the findings from the research which consisted of a desk review of the SEEDS, NEEDS, and relevant documents, data collection through structured questionnaires, FGDs, and interviews. The conclusion was that SEEDS could be used as an entry point for the campaign for gender equality and elimination of VAW. **Some of the recommendations** from the research are:

- Production and distribution of the SEEDS document (if possible, translate SEEDS into Igbo language).
- Documenting & integrating VAW data into SEEDS 2 document
- Introducing SEEDS to private sector organizations
- A 'Women's Empowerment in Politics Campaign'
- Integrating gender concerns into the entire budget process
- Training government officials and developing their capacity to work in gender-sensitive ways
- Promoting media intervention from an informed perspective
- Educating & sensitising traditional rulers & communities on the Widowhood Law of Enugu State
- Building Capacity of women, lawyers and judges on the use of the widowhood law to enforce their rights.
- Advocating for the enactment of laws on equal opportunities and VAW
- Changing negative mindset of the institutions and individuals through advocacy, sensitization and awareness creation.
- Building confidence of government to partner with CSOs
- Promoting Joint Government/CSO consultative forums
- Breaking down gender stereotypes and promoting non-stereotyped images of women and men in the media and educational materials.
- Empowering women to be full partners in development through education, skills building and support.

Suggested entry points for advocacy on gender and women's empowerment for SEEDS prioritization in Enugu State include

- Increase in employment opportunities of women,
- Provision of soft loan to widows and ejected women,
- Involving more women in decision-making,
- Poverty reduction strategies e.g. micro-credit,
- Gender mainstreaming in all areas of SEEDS,
- Establishment of gender budget processes,
- Setting aside funds and developing plans to ensure they are having an impact on gender equality,
- Use of the expertise of CSOs to research issues,
- Increase community participation in SEEDS planning activities.

Capacity gaps were identified in the areas of advocacy, monitoring and evaluation, budget analysis & tracking. Respondents suggested the following to address the capacity needs - access to micro-finance, CSO participating as major stakeholders, increased government/CSO partnership, Training workshops.

2. Project Results

OUTPUT: A one-day workshop for stakeholders identified from consultant's study was held. Two resource persons – one, a very senior Government official (the Secretary to Enugu State Government and former head of the SEEDS Committee) and a Professor spoke on violence against women as a priority for engagement through SEEDS in Enugu State.

The report of the research was presented at the workshop for validation and it was the consensus of the participants that the report reflected the true state of affairs in the state. Contributions were also made to the report on the way forward – as detailed under the heading of recommendations above.

Participants endorsed the recommendation from the research that for optimum results, UNIFEM should collaborate with the Enugu State branch of the Coalition

of Eastern NGOs (CENGOS), an umbrella organization of CSOs operating in the old Eastern region of Nigeria to implement its proposed programme.

Outcome: This includes increased awareness of CSOs on the need to engage in transforming SEEDS for wealth creation and the eradication of feminized poverty; more knowledgeable participants on the contents of SEEDS as well as the focus for empowerment of women; increased capacity of participants; identification of strategies for engaging SEEDS, and strengthened Government/CSO partnership.

3. Successful strategies and challenges

Identification of stakeholders who have engaged with the SEEDS and mobilising for the workshop and research were made easier by partnering with Enugu State CENGOS and using the structure of the CIRDDOC Community Information Centres located across the three senatorial zones of the state.

There had just been a change in government and staff of the government house were in the process of changing batons at the time of the project. It was therefore difficult to reach key government officials needed to complete the questionnaires and participate in the FGDs during the research. The team had to make use of previous personal contacts to achieve results.

4. Conclusion and Lessons Learned

The workshop was non-residential so it affected attendance as participants did not arrive on time. The time allotted for the research - 16 days – is inadequate for a thorough work to be done, particularly in collation and analysis of data for optimum results. Retrieving of questionnaires on time and within deadline is a big challenge as respondents are not eager to spend time for something they perceive as not beneficial to them.