

# THE HELPING HAND

SOCIETY FOR WOMEN DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT OF NIGERIA

[www.swoden.org](http://www.swoden.org)



## A360 AMPLIFY: MATASA MATAN AREWA ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

The Matasa Matan Arewa (MMA) project is a component of A360 Amplify in collaboration with SFH and funded by Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The project targeted Adolescent girls aged 15-19 and their husbands with maternal and child health and income generation skills. (Page 4)

## SWODEN Nigeria completes 1st year

World Bank Funded AGILE Project in collaboration with Kano State Ministry of Education impacting over 36,000 adolescent girls with life skills in the State. (Page 7)



SWODEN completed the Behavioral Change Intervention (BCI) Project across 6 States, funded by Nutrition International. (Page 14)

# 29

YEARS OF SERVICE TO HUMANITY



SWODEN in consortium with GGHN, Pathfinder International & SOLINA is implementing the Community component of ACE 2 Project Across 3 States; Bauchi, Jigawa & Kano States with funding from USAID. (Page 11)

## ABOUT US

**Society for Women Development and Empowerment of Nigeria (SWODEN)** is a non-discriminatory, not-for-profit, and non governmental organization founded in 1995 and registered with Corporate Affairs Commission in 2005 with the aim of improving the status of women, children and young people at the grassroots level. SWODEN's Head office is located in Kano State and branch offices in Bauchi, Edo, FCT, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Katsina, Nasarawa and has program officers in Kebbi, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara states with over 2,360 registered members.

We are currently working with over 239 women support groups, 22 support groups of people living with HIV/AIDS, 184 youth groups including street children, 12 KP led CBOs and 12 Internally displaced Persons camps. The organization was established to address current challenges faced by women and youth in accessing basic information and services at the community level that affects their development and also participation in policy development at both micro and macro level. Activities are drawn from their felt needs through grassroots participation and mobilization and use of community structures to ensure sustainability.

SWODEN works with other organizations and government agencies to carry out its various programs across the states and regions we operate.

**"Life's most persistent and urgent question is...**

**'What are you doing for others?'"**

**– Martin Luther King Jr.**

## OUR FOCUS

- Reproductive Health
- Marginalized Groups
- Economic Empowerment
- Adolescent boys/girls
- Education
- Child Nutrition
- Maternal Health
- Gender-Based Violence
- HIV/AIDS

## VISION

**A society with improved standard of living for women, girls and young people.**

## MISSION

**To provide quality health services, decrease malnutrition, improve agricultural interventions, innovative and transforming educational, affordable shelter and economic development opportunities to women and young people in collaboration with other stakeholders to improve their quality of life and their participation in good governance.**

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## FROM THE CEO's DESK



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A warm welcome to our partners, beneficiaries and our readers. We continue to work round the clock to provide life transforming services across our various projects. This quarter represents milestones reached especially in addressing service gaps for women, adolescents and children. While challenges were inevitable, we learned from them and adapted well to the resultant situations that would have otherwise caused others to retreat and/or give up. We have remained focused in deepening the impact of our projects which has led to the immeasurable progress and success SWODEN currently enjoys. We have remained resilient and doubled our efforts in playing a leadership role in addressing the scourge of HIV/AIDS, Malnutrition, TB and other emerging diseases of public health importance, Education, Gender Based Violence and economic empowerment. This would not have been possible without you all. I wouldn't want to spoil the fun... find out for yourselves what we have been doing in the pages inside this newsletter.

Hajjiya Maimuna Y. Mohammed  
CEO/FOUNDER, SWODEN

2023



# A360 AMPLIFY: MATASA MATAN AREWA ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

A PROJECT FUNDED BY THE  
**BILL & MELINDA  
GATES FOUNDATION**

**PROVIDING ADOLESCENT MARRIED GIRLS WITH THE SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND SUPPORT THAT THEY NEED TO PURSUE THEIR ECONOMIC GOALS.**



Beneficiaries went through a two-week mentoring session, which covered important points comprising of “**connecting with myself; creativity in business/entrepreneur visit; my own pathway and overcoming obstacles.**”

After going through the mentoring sessions, these beneficiaries were able to choose their preferred vocation and then they were paired with their trainers where they learnt from a range of skills offered by the professionals for 8 weeks. Some of the hands-on skills they learnt include;

- Tailoring (duvets, throw pillows, baby dresses etc.)
- Catering (confectionaires)
- Body beautification , Traditional incense (turaren wuta) and body perfumes (humrah) etc.
- Soap making (liquid and solid washing soap, body wash, shampoo, disinfectants etc.)
- Bag making
- Shoe making
- Bead making
- Knitting
- Fish farming and poultry
- Photography
- Event planning

**Adolescent 360 (A360)** was a project funded by the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)** and **Children Investment Foundation Funds (CIFF)**. The project was led and implemented by **Population Services international (PSI)**, **Society for Family health (SFH) in Nigeria**, and **SWODEN** as the Implementing partner. The project provided adolescent girls with the skills, knowledge, and support needed to pursue their economic goals.

The **Matasa Matan Arewa (MMA)** project was a component of A360 that reached married Adolescent girls aged 15-19 and their husbands through maternal and

child health and income generation skills. The adapted MMA program had two (2) packages – the primary Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health (ASRH) and secondary package Economic Empowerment (EE) through a 9-month pilot program conducted within four (4) communities in Kaduna across two (2) LGA's - Zaria and Sabon-gari LGAs of Kaduna state.

The implementation of the A360 Amplify EE curriculum (secondary package) reached 2,220 married adolescent girls with economic empowerment intervention across the 4 communities and successfully link them to market place.



# ACTIVITES OF THE A360 AMPLIFY: MMA PROJECT



Mentoring session between the mentors and mentees of the A360 MMA Pilot Project.



Shoemaking cross-section of the beneficiaries during the A360 MMA Project.



Hand bags making session by some of the participants of the A360 MMA Project.



Some of the beneficiaries from the tailoring class with samples of clothes sown during the project.



Bedsheet making class



A Group of Catering Class Beneficiaries during the Project Sessions

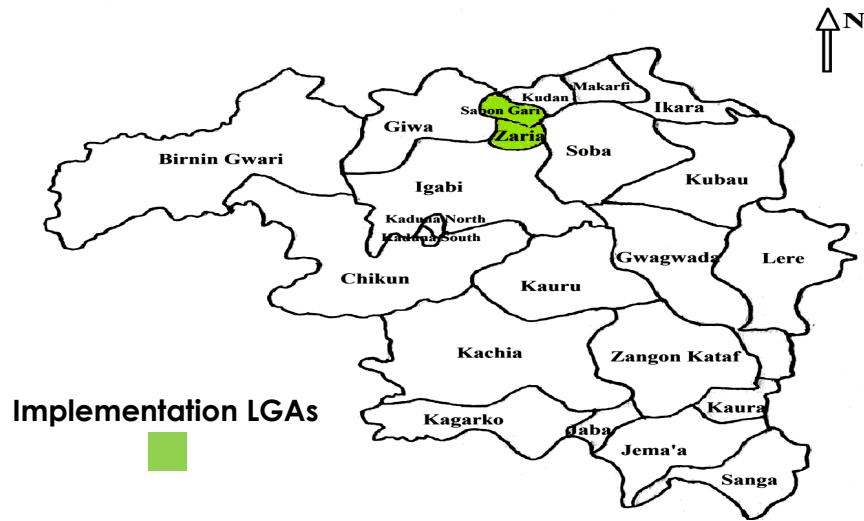


# Business Development & Certification

# A360 Matasan Matan Arewa (MMA) Project

## COACHING

During the final part of the EEP component, beneficiaries were taught how to budget; start savings and also how to develop business plans/group businesses. They were also taught on how to start their own business at their levels based on the skills they have acquired.



Presentation of Training Certificates to some of the beneficiaries by dignitaries in attendance.



Executive Chairman of Sabon-gari LGA presenting a cash donation to support beneficiaries with capital.



Presentation of Special Gift to the Emir of Zazzau, HRH Amb. Ahmad Nuhu Bamalli by the beneficiaries .



Cross-section of certified beneficiaries at the closing of the MMA Project.



# Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment Kano (AGILE)



## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The project implementation and kickoff began with meetings with J-PAL, CGE, & CSAGE, school level advocacy with principals, recruitment and training of mentors, training of trainers, facilitators, enrollment and commencement of safe spaces in pilot and treatment schools, supportive supervision, and distribution of learning materials.

AGILE focuses on improving secondary school education opportunities for girls in targeted areas of Kano State. It is a five-year project funded by the World Bank through the Kano State Government with SWODEN as the Implementing Partner (IP) for the Life Skills component of the overall project.

## LIFE SKILLS

Adolescent girls in Nigeria are generally faced with peculiar challenges which either exclude them from education or prevent them from completing secondary education amongst other things. These challenges include Gender-based Violence (GBV), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Rape/ Early Marriage, Cost of schooling etc.

A total of 42 pilot schools and 58 treatment schools during the first year were reached with life skills training modules which includes; Education, Labour, Adolescent Health & Nutrition, Reproductive health, Gender-based Violence and Climate Change.

The Life Skills component empowered and prepared adolescent girls to successfully navigate the different stages of life by equipping them with life skills (negotiation skills, conflict resolution, self-esteem leadership skills, financial literacy and adolescent health and nutrition).



Meeting with J-PAL, CSAGE, CGE and SPIU



Sensitization meeting with Pilot Schools' Principals



2nd Quarter Project Review Meeting with SPIU



## AGILE Cascade Training of Facilitators

Following the signing of the AGILE project contract between SWODEN and the consultants, project staff were recruited and onboarded. The Key expert positions currently filled include: the Project Manager/team lead, GBV specialist, Communication specialist, Climate Change/Environmental Specialist, Adolescent Health specialist, Religious (Islamic/Christian) Scholar and Monitoring and Evaluation Manager.



The mentors and facilitators were recruited using our recruitment process, adverts were placed in strategic places, applications were collected and collated. Shortlisted candidates were interviewed and recruited for effective delivery of activities. Mentors were recruited and trained on the life skills manual, GBV, Climate change. Similarly, Facilitators were screened and engaged to deliver the concept to the girls at schools level.



**A cross section of facilitators training on the modules of Life Skills before commencement of schools engagement**



# Schools' Engagements, Achievements & Success Stories of the AGILE Project

Enrollment of eligible beneficiaries from SS1 and SS2 was done based on selection criteria provided.

Eligible facilitators within the school and communities were assigned cohorts with a maximum of 60 students per cohort to conduct the Life Skills' safe space sessions as planned.

Safe spaces were created for the enrolled students to feel safe in sharing what they know and in return get proper guidance and counselling from their assigned facilitators. The number of cohorts per school depends on the number of enrolled students and subject to parent's consents submitted.



## PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

- ⇒ Over 36,000 adolescent girls reached with Life Skills Component of the AGILE Project.
- ⇒ Completed safe space sessions to students in 58 Treatment Schools and 42 Pilot Schools.
- ⇒ Sensitized over 150 community & religious leaders, parents, youth & mother groups on the benefits of the AGILE project.
- ⇒ Changed the mindset of the average secondary school girl child on the need to stay in school & complete their education.
- ⇒ Improved girls and schools' sanitation and hygiene practices.
- ⇒ Enhanced girls awareness on Gender-based violence and referral.
- ⇒ Improved knowledge on climate change.



# A Parent's declaration on the Impact of the AGILE Project

## "The Transformation: A Mother's Journey with AGILE"

**Theme:**

### **"Empowering Through Understanding and Support"**

Aisha, a devoted mother to Khadija, reflects with pride and joy on the remarkable transformation she has witnessed in her daughter. It all began with the introduction of the AGILE project, a catalyst for profound changes in Khadija's life.

Aisha praises her daughter, saying, "I am truly amazed by her positive changes." AGILE sparked Khadija's newfound passion, propelling her toward academic excellence as well as personal development. I am now not only her mother but also her best friend and confidante."

Aside from her academic achievements, she has grown into a self-assured individual who is not afraid to express her opinions in public. Aisha is astounded by her daughter's "AGILE has been a beacon of light in Khadija's journey," Aisha proudly declares. These are invaluable qualities.

"AGILE has been a beacon of light in Khadija's journey," says Aisha with pride. "It has instilled in her the belief that with unwavering dedication,



she can achieve any goal. I will be there for her as she pursues her dream of becoming a doctor, providing unwavering encouragement and support."

Aisha's experience with AGILE demonstrates the value of parental involvement and informed decision-making. Instead of quickly responding to outside opinions and approving or rejecting a project based on them. Aisha and her husband made an alternative decision. They had meaningful discussions with Khadija, and her father actively tracked her progress and helped her with

assignments. This collaborative approach not only empowered Khadija, but also ensured that their decisions were based on a thorough understanding of her requirements and goals.

Aisha advises parents to listen to and understand their children's aspirations. "Before making decisions, spend time engaging with them and understanding their dreams and desires. When we had doubts about AGILE, we turned to Khadija for answers. Her passion and conviction persuaded us to fully embrace the project.

Today, Aisha beams with pride as she watches Khadija's remarkable journey unfold. "I urge other mothers to follow suit," she says. "Engage with your children, support their dreams, and witness the incredible transformations that AGILE can bring into their lives."

In Aisha's story, the theme of empowerment through understanding and support shines through. It captures the essence of her journey with Khadija and emphasizes the importance of parental involvement and informed decision-making in creating a brighter future for their children.



# Accelerating Control of the HIV Epidemic (ACE 2)



Bauchi State <  
Jigawa State <  
Kano State <

The **Accelerating Control of the HIV Epidemic (ACE) Cluster 2** is a 5-year project funded by the **President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)** and the **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**, with a period of performance from 2022 to 2027. It focuses on accelerating the achievement of HIV epidemic control in Nigeria through the delivery of high

impact HIV prevention, care and support services to populations that are most at risk of acquiring HIV. The project which is being implemented in Kano, Jigawa and Bauchi states also aims to improve the quality and effectiveness of high-impact, evidence-based HIV/AIDS interventions to meet Nigeria's state/LGA-specific goals and objectives.

## PARTNERS

ACE 2 is being implemented by a consortium of four partners led by **Georgetown Global Health Nigeria (GGHN)**.

### GGHN

- Prime awardee

### SWODEN

- Local entity & Sub-Partner

**Solina Centre for International Development and Research (SCIDaR)**

- Local entity & Sub-Partner

**Georgetown University**

- International Entity/Sub-Partner

**Pathfinder International**

- International Entity/Sub-Partner

## GOALS

- Improved HIV/AIDS Testing Services (HTS)
- Provide coverage and access in underserved LGAs in Bauchi, Jigawa and Kano states.

## OBJECTIVES

- Increased Resiliency, Responsiveness, and Accountability of the Health System.
- Increased uptake and retention of HIV/AIDS/TB services,
- Improved Access and Provision of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment Services within Primary Health Care Interventions .



Community HIV Testing Outreach by Field CTs and DECs





Field testing at NYSC Orientation Camps



Community/Facility field testing for HIV/AIDS by CTs

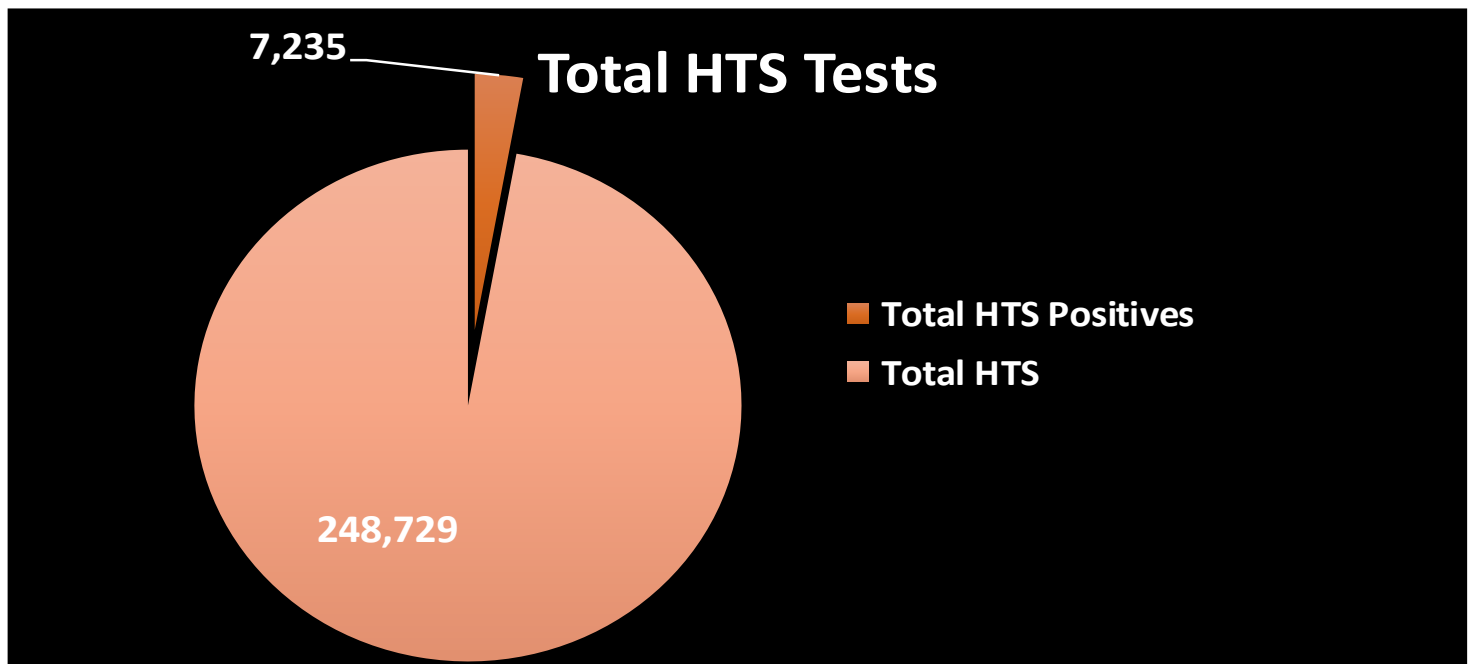




## KEY INTERVENTIONS

- ⇒ Created demand for HTS Services amongst the general populations in Bauchi, Jigawa & Kano States.
- ⇒ Optimized HTS services amongst paediatric and adolescent population in the 3 states.
- ⇒ Provided HTS coverage targeting pregnant women at communities through PMCT congregational approach across the 3 states.
- ⇒ Increased linkage of positive clients to ART centers for management.

## PROJECT RESULTS FOR YEAR 2023





# Behavioral Change Intervention (BCI) Project

**Nourish Life**

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

As part of an ongoing effort to realize the BCI objective of exhaustive coverage of IFA and Zinc Lo-ORS in Northern Nigeria, project activities have been implemented with the urgency and resources needed to address high cases of maternal anaemia among pregnant women and diarrhoea disease in children below ages five extant in Northern Nigeria.

The BCI is predicated on the fact that poor access to proper

information that inspires a positive attitude most certainly result in poor health seeking by pregnant women and mothers/caregivers. While efforts have been put in place and implemented to increase uptake of IFA and Zinc Lo – ORS coverage, but gender issues present barriers that negatively impact access to healthcare services. These Issues include: stereotypes, gender-based violence, gender norms, myths and misconceptions that contribute to the factors that inhibit women's health-care

seeking behavior. This stems primarily from the significant gender gap in women's access to information. Male dominance, leadership, and supposed superiority widen social and economic gaps also subjugate women to poverty, illiteracy, vicious cycle of undernutrition and other vulnerabilities that make them too dependent on their male counterparts for the permission and resources to seek the appropriate health care.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The project implementation states include Jigawa, Katsina, Kebbi, and Yobe for the IFA implementation, while Kano and Sokoto implement the Zinc Lo – ORS component. The project activities, which were designed to address the gender issues disrupting ANC contacts, IFA, and Zinc Lo-ORS uptake, drew on a multi-sectorial approach of exploring the power of effective engagement of all necessary actors towards their ownership of the project. As part of state entry for the BCI, advocacy visits were paid to key stakeholders of project implementation states by engaging with the relevant MDAs, community gatekeepers (religious and traditional heads), and health facilities.



**WHAT IS A BEHAVIOUR CHANGE INTERVENTION?**

**“Providing people with the information they need to make healthier choices.”**

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH BY SERVICE PROVIDERS

Training of community volunteers outreaches and counselling using the IEC materials for BCC was held across six implementing states to increase access to reproductive health services by women using male involvement to address gender norms and religious misconceptions. gender.

The project was implemented in collaboration with FAcE-PaM, across the six states. Community outreaches were conducted across communities by male motivators and community health providers targeting Majalisas, male groups, adolescent groups, and women groups to sensitize

communities on the negative social norms that negatively preventing women from access health services. Household influencers such as grandmothers and mother in-laws were also targeted through home visits. Gender sensitive BCC materials were distributed by providers.



BCI material development workshop in Kebbi State



BCI material development workshop in Jigawa State

### PROJECT OUTPUTS

- ⇒ 678 service providers were trained on community outreaches
- ⇒ 300 PHCs across the implemented states were provided with guides and IEC material for BCC strategy.
- ⇒ Success stories were birthed from the project implementation
- ⇒ 600 male motivators were trained on gender sensitive behavioral communication, counselling skills, community outreaches (home visits), across 6 states on both qualitative pre and post ANC, IFA uptake, and Zinc Lo ORS.

### OUTCOME

- ⇒ Over 50% increased number of male participation in women's health at household and facility levels.

### KEY INTERVENTIONS

- ⇒ Advocacy to the Stakeholders for their roles towards successful project implementation across board.
- ⇒ Training of health providers on gender mainstreaming.
- ⇒ Training of male motivators from the implementing LGAs to address the gender issues.
- ⇒ Engaging community traditional and religious leaders for awareness creation to address gender gaps.
- ⇒ Capacity building for existing male, adolescent, and women groups on gender mainstreaming.
- ⇒ Community outreaches & home visits to create awareness on gender mainstreaming.



# Activities and Achievements of the BCI Project



**SWODEN visit to traditional leaders**

The project worked closely with traditional and religious leaders, community service providers who can use their influences and authority to inspire the desired change and at the time of the project.

Great positive impact in the community and the facility with higher numbers of engagements, more male supporting their women to seek care at the facility, more sensitization was recorded during the project cycle by community gatekeepers and religious leaders using behavioral change communication on the risk of not getting the right or quality service only a health care facility can give.



**Community outreach by Male Motivator**



**Community outreach by health providers at a wedding**

# Success Stories

I am very glad that this project was brought to us because I have learned a lot. It has improved my capabilities in engaging mothers and pregnant women towards having the desired behaviour in using Zinc Lo ORS for the treatment of diarrhoea disease in children under age 5.

It has improved my knowledge on gender and how to integrate some of

the gender concepts into the service delivery. I now understand how gender issues affect access to care, so we are finding ways to address the barriers they present by applying some of its concepts to my work in line with our culture and beliefs. "This has led to visible increase in uptake of Zinc Lo ORS among mothers of under 5 children and male involvement in care seeking for their partners as couple counselling during the ANC visits and other hospital visits,

we have recorded more male presence and escorts."

**- Hadiza Ibrahim Gwarzo  
(Community Health Worker)**

Abdullahi, another Community Health Worker from Suwkaya community in Dutse LGA of Jigawa State, narrate a success story of a client husband, who brought his wife to the clinic by himself, coming to the clinic late for the ANC check-up, to their surprise he came pleading for his wife to be checked, Abdullahi was impressed with the husbands' desire to have his wife checked. The health worker went the extra

mile to see that she was checked. Abdullahi told him that he was happy with the way he stood up for his wife to be treated. The husband of the client said that during the Friday prayer the Imams sermon moved him on the right of their wife over them especially on health issues and decision making, which also remind him on their community reach out which the health work and the community leaders did on the BCI message which

made him change his behaviour toward his wife and family.

**- Abdullahi Sani  
(Community Health Worker)**