



NIGERIA GRANTEE BRIEF

WOMEN'S HEALTH AND ACTION RESEARCH CENTRE

Executive Director: Wilson Imongan

C4C Fellows: Wilson Imongan and Oluwatoyin Owolabi (Program Officer)

Location: Edo State, Nigeria

Organization's annual budget: \$722,339

Champions for Change Grantee since 2014

Total C4C Funding Received: \$40,000

Website: www.wharc-online.org

ABOUT WOMEN'S HEALTH AND ACTION RESEARCH CENTRE

Women's Health and Action Research Centre (WHARC) works to promote the sexual and reproductive health and social well-being of women and adolescents (especially girls) through research, documentation, evidence-based advocacy and service delivery. Programmatic focus areas include maternal, neonatal and child health, adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights, family planning, evidence-based research, and advocacy, strategic health research communication.

RMNCAH ADVOCACY

Project Title: "Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) through Advocacy for Law Enforcement in Edo State"

Project Dates: August 15, 2015 – August 15, 2016

Geographic Focus: Edo State

KEY IMPACTS

- Commitment from Edo State Commissioner for Health to support the dissemination of the FGM law, which has the potential to reduce maternal mortality rates among 1.5 million women.
- Built political support among 27 key stakeholders concerning the importance of effectively implementing the FGM law.

In 2002 Edo State passed the Female Circumcision and Genital Mutilation (Prohibition) Law to eradicate this harmful practice. Under the law, offenders are liable to various fines and jail terms. However, there is no evidence that the law has been disseminated or is being implemented as the practice is still prevalent in local communities. The 2013 NDHS reported that about 16% of children under four years had undergone FGM. Also, there is no report that anyone has been prosecuted under the law in Edo State. Female genital mutilation impacts negatively on the reproductive health and well-being of girls and women. In some cases, girls who survive the practice have to live with a severe and permanent injury of the reproductive system. This project seeks to influence key decision makers to ensure comprehensive dissemination and enforcement of the law at the state and local levels and contribute to a reduction in maternal and infant mortality rates.

The project goal is to advocate for the enforcement of the law against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Edo State to reduce the maternal and infant mortality rate and other RMNCAH complications associated with FGM.

The project's objectives include:

1. Advocate for the dissemination of the FGM Prohibition law against FGM with the Edo State Commissioner of Health by the end of October 2015.
2. Increase the number of prosecutions and reporting of FGM offenders by 20% by June 2016.
3. Increase the demand for prosecution and reporting of FGM offenders by 50% by June 2016.

Rise Up's Champions for Change (C4C) initiative improves the lives and health of women, children, and youth in Sub-Saharan Africa. C4C achieves large-scale impacts by investing in visionary local leaders and organizations through advocacy, leadership development, organizational strengthening, and grantmaking. In Nigeria, C4C's national network is advocating for improved reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health. In Kenya, C4C's national network is advocating to improve young people's health by preventing and combating non-communicable diseases. For more information please visit <http://www.championingchange.org/>

IMPACTS

- WHARC's advocacy efforts resulted in the Commissioner for Health inaugurating a 10-member multi-sector technical committee to lead the implementation of the law aimed at eradicating FGM practices in the state. WHARC was invited to be a key partner and member of the FGM elimination committee.
- 27 key Stakeholders representing senior government officials of MOH, MOWA, Local Government Health Officers, the Judiciary, Police, Community and Religious Leaders, Civil societies including the media held a consultative forum and developed plans of action on the role each of their constituency will play to enforce the FGM law.

SELECTED ARTICLES

- "Edo Chief Judge seeks action against genital mutilation." 20 May 2016 by Patrick Ahanor in the *Blueprint Newspaper*. <http://www.blueprint.ng/2016/05/20/edo-chief-judge-seeks-action-against-genital-mutilation/>
- "Stakeholders examine poor enforcement of laws against female genital mutilation." May 2016 by Osaigbovo Iguabaro in the *People's Daily*.
- "Non-implementation of AFGM law worries Edo CJ." 20 May 2016 by Eghosa Adezi in the *Observer*.