



Hello Supporters!

Welcome to our Q1 Newsletter!

In this edition, we are excited to share key updates on our programs and activities. As a valued stakeholder, your continued support means everything to us. It fuels our mission to empower women, girls, and other vulnerable groups to reach their full potential and live in dignity.

## Featured Story: CWSI at the 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69)



In March 2025, the Centre for Women Studies and Intervention (CWSI) participated in the global dialogue on gender equality by organizing a side event during the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69). The hybrid event was held both in person at the United Nations Headquarters and virtually.

Gender equality remains a pressing concern, as systemic barriers and harmful cultural practices continue to marginalize women and girls, fueling violence and discrimination.

Our session explored the theme: “Advancing the Beijing Conference Resolutions in Africa: Addressing Issues, Overcoming Challenges, and Paving the Way Forward.” Key strategies highlighted included strategic advocacy, strengthening legal frameworks to promote women’s inclusion in governance, and protecting women from gender-based violence.

Chioma Chigozie- Ugwum, one of the panelists, emphasized that achieving gender equality goes beyond the efforts of NGOs and governments. She stressed the importance of involving family systems by educating boys to respect and protect the rights of women and girls. “I’ve been raising my sons to uphold and defend the rights of women,” she shared. This reflects CWSI’s inclusive approach to advocacy—engaging men and boys—a strategy that has led to measurable impact across our projects.

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## Quick Updates

### • Strategic Planning Meeting (January 2025)



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CWSI kicked off the year with a strategic planning meeting to define our focus for 2025–2029. Our key strategic areas include: Human Rights and Governance, Migration and Movement of People, Economic Empowerment and Poverty Alleviation, Climate-Smart Agriculture, Disability Inclusion, Research and Documentation, and Institutional Strengthening

We remain committed to an integrated approach in addressing the diverse needs of women, girls, and other vulnerable groups. We aim to achieve this by ensuring our interventions reach the most marginalized communities in Nigeria while also promoting climate action to protect the environment.

- **International Women’s Day (March, 2025)**



In collaboration with the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), CWSI commemorated International Women’s Day under the theme “For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment.”

It was a shared learning and impact story event featuring testimonials from beneficiaries of our various programs. One beneficiary shared how vocational training in tailoring has become a steady source of income: “The skill I acquired has helped me immensely—I now sew my own clothes and earn money from clients.”

Stories like this inspire and motivate us to keep implementing tailored programs that address the specific needs of vulnerable populations in Nigeria.

- **STEM Education Sensitization Workshop**





Women and girls remain underrepresented in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields. To bridge this gap, CWSI partnered with Girls in Tech Nigeria to organize sensitization workshops at Government Secondary Schools in Kuje and Karu (FCT).

Targeting both STEM club members and new learners, the workshops introduced participants to practical STEM areas such as graphic design and programming. The students will also be enrolled in STEM courses of their choice to equip them with lifelong skills and future career opportunities

## • Economic Empowerment Scheme



CWSI's Economic Empowerment Scheme continues to alleviate economic pressures faced by women entrepreneurs. Recently, the organization provided grinding machines to the Maria Daughters Empowerment Foundation and other women-led groups. In addition, CWSI has been offering grants and interest-free loans to established groups and cooperatives formed through its projects.

This initiative is part of CWSI's broader commitment to promoting income-generating activities and strengthening the economic resilience of women—particularly in light of the ongoing economic challenges in Nigeria. Through this support, the women beneficiaries have gained financial independence and are now able to make critical decisions both within their households and in their respective communities.

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## Projects Corner

- **Disability Inclusion Project**



### **Funded by: Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD)**

As part of the “Action to Promote Disability Inclusion in the Campaign to End Violence Against Women in the FCT” project, the Centre for Women Studies and Intervention (CWSI), in collaboration with the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD), organized a community road walk in Gwagwalada community, to raise awareness on disability rights and garner support for ending violence against women and girls with disabilities.

A particularly heartwarming moment occurred when bystanders spontaneously joined the walk, demonstrating solidarity with the disability community. This act of unity highlights that full disability inclusion is attainable when all stakeholders collaborate meaningfully.

Participants with disabilities expressed their appreciation, stating that the road walk made them feel heard, seen, and valued. They also affirmed that the use of handbills, banners, and other Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials helped shift community perceptions about disability. They remain hopeful that this awareness will lead to greater inclusion in protection frameworks, community decision-making, and access to essential services.

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[Click here to read previous updates on the project](#)

- **Empowering Women and Youth Smallholder Farmers in the Groundnut Market System Development in the FCT**



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### **Funded by: Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD)**

As part of its effort to strengthen the economic resilience of smallholder farmers, the Centre for Women Studies and Intervention (CWSI) organized a market linkages workshop to connect project beneficiaries with agro service providers in two targeted communities—Paiko (Gwagwalada Area Council) and Bamishi (Kuje Area Council), FCT.

Findings from the baseline survey revealed that beneficiaries faced limited access to farming inputs and equipment within their communities. This challenge compelled them to purchase essential items at higher retail prices, often from distant locations. To bridge this gap, the workshop brought together key players in the agribusiness value chain—including processors, exporters, agro-dealers, and local marketers—to engage directly with the project beneficiaries.

This platform not only facilitated direct interaction between farmers and agro service providers but also provided an opportunity for knowledge exchange, networking, and the establishment of mutually beneficial business relationships. The project beneficiaries, many of whom are now organized into functional cooperatives, are better equipped to collectively negotiate fairer prices, favorable trade terms, and more efficient service delivery.

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- **Women Religious as Collaborators with the Catholic Women Organization to End Violence against Women and Girls Project**



### **Funded by: Conrad N. Hilton Foundation**

CWSI facilitated intergenerational dialogues on ending Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in the Jos and Port Harcourt ecclesiastical provinces. These sessions served as inclusive platforms where individuals across different age groups—youth, adults, and elders—came together to share perspectives, experiences, and propose practical solutions to combat GBV in their communities.

Participants highlighted the importance of conscious parenting, emphasizing the need to instill mutual respect between boys and girls from an early age and to promote gender equity within the household as a foundation for social change.

In addition, there were strong calls for community-led action, including the enactment of local by-laws to prohibit and penalize acts of GBV. The dialogues also underscored the vital role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in GBV prevention and response. Participants recommended enhanced collaboration among CSOs to ensure swift case handling, survivor support, and coordinated advocacy efforts.

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- **Inform Parents and Children Together On Sexual and Gender Based Violence (IMPACT\_ON\_SGBV)**



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### **Funded by: African Women Development Fund (AWDF)**

CWSI continues to implement the Inform Parents and Children Together on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (IMPACT\_ON\_SGBV) project in both Cross River and Benue States. This intervention targets the reduction of early pregnancies and other forms of SGBV, which were prevalent prior to CWSI's intervention in the project locations. Through extensive sensitization and the active involvement of men and boys, there has been a significant decline in early pregnancies and incidents of SGBV.

CWSI recognizes that achieving sustainable impact requires inclusive engagement. Men and boys are integral to the success of the project. By including them in awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives, they have come to understand that practices once considered 'normal'—such as impregnating adolescent girls or perpetrating gender-based violence—are now viewed as violations of fundamental human rights.

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- **Community Mobilizing to Stop Gender-Based Violence and Human Trafficking (GBV\_HT)**



### **Funded By: Development and Peace-Caritas Canada**

CWSI's Ongoing Interventions against Gender-Based Violence and Human Trafficking in Cross River and Benue States have restored the dignity of women and girls, including refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS).

One of the critical issues addressed by CWSI is the longstanding prohibition of intra-marriage within the Alege community in Cross River state. This cultural taboo has historically resulted in violence and discrimination against children born from such unions, denying them social recognition and legitimacy. During Phase I of the project, CWSI successfully facilitated the enactment of customary laws that abolished the prohibition of intra-marriage in the project communities. As a result of this intervention, children from these unions are now acknowledged by their fathers as legitimate.

Despite this progress, the prohibition persists in the Alege community due to a deep-rooted fear of ancestral repercussions among indigenes who dare to marry within their own tribe. To fully eliminate this traditional practice, CWSI is strengthening its advocacy and engaging strategic stakeholders to lift the restriction completely in the Alege community.

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## Support What We Do

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