



Spotlight Initiative
Eliminate violence against women and girls



GENDER VIOLENCE AWARENESS PROJECT (G-VAP) 2021 – 2024 REPORT

**AN AWARENESS PROJECT TO INCREASE THE KNOWLEDGE CAPACITY OF THE
CENTRE FOR GENDER STUDIES, VERITAS UNIVERSITY ABUJA ON GLOBAL
RESOURCES FOR THE PREVENTION OF VAWG**

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EF	Egunec Foundation
EU	European Union
G-VAP	Gender Violence Awareness Project
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PED	Private, Education and Development
SRGBV	School Related Gender Based Violence
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WARIF	Women at Risk International Foundation
WHO	World Health Organization

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1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The World Health Organization (WHO) states that violence against women is a public health concern of pandemic proportions. It starts alarmingly young and is associated with serious short and lifelong physical, sexual and mental health for women and has significant social and economic costs for communities and nations.

The WHO Global Database on Prevalence against Women reveals that across their lifetime, 1 in 3 women, around 736 million, are subjected to physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence from a non-partner – a number that has remained largely unchanged over the past decade.

The database further reveals that Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is by far the most prevalent form of violence against women globally affecting around 641 million. Analysis of 366 studies involving more than 2 million women reached an estimate that 27% of women aged 15 to 49 have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a male partner in their lifetime. One in seven women (13%) – almost 500 million globally – had experienced domestic violence within the last year of the research being conducted.

This already bad situation was made even worse because of the COVID-19 pandemic which intensified all types of violence against women and girls. According to the Gender Equality Index 2021, social distancing and restrictions on movement to contain COVID-19 trapped women and girls at home with their abusers. Anti-COVID-19 measures compounded and connected different intersecting forms of discrimination against women belonging to vulnerable and marginalized groups. If victims of violence had legal and social support networks, these were shattered during the pandemic. The COVID-19 crisis exposed and exacerbated serious pre-existing gaps in the prevention of violence against women.

As a result of these troubling realities, the Centre for Gender Studies, Veritas University Abuja together with her project partners saw an urgent need for increased knowledge, partnerships and projects that can help prevent violence against women from becoming a culture in her community.

**SPEAK UP
AGAINST RAPE &
SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

 **Spotlight
Initiative**

2. SOLUTION

The problem statement raises one very important design question;

- ❖ How can we increase the knowledge capacity of the Centre for Gender Studies Veritas University Abuja on global resources helping to prevent violence against women?

To respond to this design demand, the Centre for Gender Studies Veritas University Abuja engaged her NGO partner Egunec Foundation (EF) to design a project to achieve this goal. This gave birth to the Gender Violence Awareness Project (G-VAP). Gender Violence Awareness Project (G-VAP) is an orientation project designed to strengthen the knowledge and awareness of the Centre for Gender Studies Veritas University Abuja on the global resources and platforms that support and strengthens the capacity of the Centre to play a more active role in addressing violence against women. G-VAP focused on establishing an advocacy relationship between the Centre and development partners relevant to addressing violence against women. This led the Centre to the Spotlight Initiative Project.

3. SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE PROJECT

The spotlight initiative is a global initiative embarked on by the European Union (EU), the United Nations (UN), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) to eliminate all forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). It brings focused attention on the issue of VAWG, moving it to the spotlight and placing it at the center of efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in line with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.



3.1. WHY SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE

There were several directions the Gender Violence Awareness Project (G-VAP) could go. We chose the Spotlight Initiative Project. Bearing in mind the knowledge gap of the Centre on the global direction when it comes to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), the Spotlight initiative was an ideal project to orient the Centre for Gender Studies, Veritas University Abuja on global development efforts on VAWG. This orientation will then guide the Centre and her project partners as it designs and develops long term capacity building approach for her and her community.

In 2022, the Centre for Gender Studies, Veritas University Abuja was selected by Women at Risk International Foundation (WARIF) as one of the platforms to receive orientation on the Spotlight Initiative Project and its relevance in helping young women to live a life free of any form of harassment and Gender Based Violence.



Representatives of WARIF with the Vice Chancellor, Veritas University Rev. Fr. Prof. Hyacinth Ichoku (pictured in the middle) and Director Veritas University, Centre for Gender Studies Abuja Dr. Angela Ngozi Dick (left handside of the Vice-Chancellor).

The Gender Violence Awareness Project (G-VAP) in Partnership with Egunec Foundation (EF), Women at Risk International Foundation (WARIF) and the Spotlight Initiative Project comprised of a general symposium and Capacity Building workshop geared towards strengthening the knowledge of the Centre for Gender Studies, Veritas University to eradicate all forms of School Related Gender Based Violence (SRGBV).

4. VISUAL STORY OF THE GENDER VIOLENCE AWARENESS PROJECT (G-VAP)

Below are some of the pictures from the symposiums and capacity building workshops carried out under the Gender Violence Awareness Project (G-VAP).











5. LESSONS

Participating in the Spotlight Initiative Project under the umbrella of our Gender Violence Awareness Project (G-VAP) was an enlightening journey for us at the Centre for Gender Studies, Veritas University Abuja. During the experience, we were able to pick up on several nuggets relevant to us a platform for gender equality development. There are;

1. The importance of Partnerships in addressing violence against women
2. The need to focus on a Sub-theme within the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) theme.
3. The need to strengthen the facilitation capacity of student community to carry out the Mandate of the Centre
4. The need to incorporate more HeforShe partners into our project design process



5.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIP IN ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

During the Gender Violence Awareness Project (G-VAP), we learnt the role of strategic partnerships in addressing violence against women. This was clearly demonstrated in the partnership foundations of the Spotlight Initiative. The Spotlight Initiative Project is a collaborative effort between the United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF).

The Partnership structuring of the Spotlight Initiative Project taught us that partnership is critical pillar needed to address violence against women as no one entity can solve the challenge on its own. With more hands on deck, more assets and will-power will be on deck to address the challenge of violence against women.

5.2. THE NEED TO FOCUS ON A SUB-THEME WITHIN THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG) THEME

One of the things we observed during G-VAP is that the scope of Gender Based Violence is broad. We observed that a core strategy of the Spotlight Initiative Project was to streamline and channel attention on the issues of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). Focus is key. As a platform, we learnt that for the sake of effectiveness and efficiency, it is important for us to focus on a sub-theme most relevant to our target audience. This gender equality strategy will help us to build capacity faster and galvanise needed partnership and resources needed to support the constituent we exist to serve.

At the Centre for Gender Studies, Veritas University Abuja, our constituents are the students of Veritas University. With the knowledge gained from G-VAP, we were able to identify the sub-theme of intimate partner violence as the direction we want to focus on as a platform.

While Violence against women is pervasive, the WHO Global Database reveals that intimate partner violence is by far the most prevalent form of violence against women globally affecting around 641 million. According to the WHO findings, the prevalence of intimate partner violence was highest among ever-partnered adolescent girls and young women aged 15 to 19 and 20 to 24, with 16% or one in six having experienced domestic violence within the last 12 months of the research. Young women in university communities fall within this demographic and this demographic is our constituency at the Centre for Gender Studies, Veritas University Abuja.

During the Spotlight Initiative Project, we learnt that the high number of young women experiencing intimate partner violence is alarming, as adolescence and early adulthood are important life stages when the foundations for healthy relationships are built. We agree with this. Young women in University are at a formative age when it comes to the exploration of intimate partner relationships and without sufficient relationship consciousness are at a danger of abuse by an intimate partner either physically, emotionally or psychologically. With the potential vulnerability they face in this kind of relationships, this is a pivotal time where their capacity to enter healthy and mutually respectful relationship should be developed. We believe we have a responsibility to strengthen the capacity of our constituency to prevent intimate partner violence.

We also learnt at the Spotlight Initiative Project that intimate partner violence is preventable and more needs to be done to develop and invest in effective community- and school-based interventions that promote gender equity and reduce young women's risk of being subjected to violence from a partner. Our goal under our renewed focus is to design and develop innovative solutions that will reduce the risk of our demographic from being subjected to intimate partner violence.

5.3. THE NEED TO BUILD THE FACILITATION CAPACITY OF OUR STAFF AND STUDENT COMMUNITY

One of the things we observed about the Spotlight Initiative Project was how it sought to build the advocacy capacity of partner CSOs. This empowered CSOs like Women at Risk International Foundation (WARIF) to spread the message of the project. While the EU and UN Women were foundational bodies driving the Spotlight Initiative Project, WARIF was a local implementing partner enabling the message of project reach platforms like ours.

For the Centre for Gender Studies, Veritas University Abuja, our implementing partners are the staff and students that work with us to achieve the vision of our platform. Participating in the Spotlight Initiative Project made us realize the importance of the capacity building pillar. There is a need to enhance the facilitation capacity of our staff and student partners so they are more equipped to be ambassadors and advocates of our Gender Development Mandate.

5.4. THE NEED TO INCORPORATE MORE HEFORSHE PARTNERS INTO OUR PROJECT DESIGN PROCESS

It was very interesting to see that a lot of the facilitators that spoke with us during the Spotlight Initiative Project were HeforShes. This for us was a reiteration of the importance of the Pillar of Gender Unity in addressing violence against women. This is even more true for us because at the Centre for Gender Studies, Veritas University Abuja, we have always had the unequivocal support of the Vice Chancellor of the University who is a man. This gives us hope and promise of what is possible when women and men come together to fight gender based violence. This lesson has inspired us as a platform to be more intentional in incorporating HeforShe's into our programs so that we can utilize a gender partnership approach in addressing violence against women.

6. NEXT STEPS



Having Learnt a lot from the Spotlight Initiative under our Gender Violence Awareness Project (G-VAP), it is important for us to translate our knowledge to concrete actions. After due reflections and consultation with our project partners, we were able to identify three approaches that will guide us in the next 3 years. They are;

1. Strengthen the Project Development Capacity of our Staff Members
2. Strengthen the Gender Policy Advocacy Capacity of our Student Partners
3. Develop Strategic Consortium Partnership

6.1. STRENGTHEN THE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY OF STAFF MEMBERS

In line with the capacity building needs of our staff, we plan on strengthening the capacity of staff who are members of the centre on project development so they are better equipped to serve as ambassadors of the centres vision and mandate within the school. This will also ensure that the staff are on the same page with the centre for accelerated impact.

6.2. STRENGTHEN THE GENDER POLICY ADVOCACY CAPACITY OF OUR STUDENT PARTNERS

Gender Policies are guiding instruments that support the drive for an equitable culture within communities. There is a need to increase our awareness of policies that challenge gender stereotypes. A Gender Equity Policy Project within the university is needed to domesticate and implement local and international instruments that address Gender Inequality. The Gender Equity Policy Project will serve as a cornerstone that drives our gender equity mandate within the university community.

The focal point of our proposed Gender Equity Policy Project will be our student partners who will be trained as advocates, facilitators and ambassadors of gender equity policies within the university. This project will strengthen our organizational capacity and strengthen the advocacy and facilitation capacity of our student community who are key to the success of our gender equity mandate.

6.3. DEVELOP STRATEGIC CONSORTIUM PARTNERSHIP

To strengthen our capacity to meet our gender development mandate, we plan on utilizing a Private, Education and Development (PED) consortium approach going forward. We have chosen this approach to strengthen our capacity to access grants and other partnership resources needed for us to strengthen our Gender Policy Infrastructure and our mandate in general. We have asked our Consultant Facilitator to identify aligned development partners whose assets can help us achieve our policy development goals in this phase of our evolution. We are looking at development

partners interested in supporting us strengthen our policy and organizational infrastructure as we work towards challenging gender stereotypes and preventing the challenge of Intimate Partner Violence amongst the young women in our university community. As a Centre for Gender Studies Resident in a University, we are a fertile ground for sustainable projects on gender equity. With sufficient development support, we will be better positioned as a key player in addressing violence against young women.

7. PROJECT PARTNERS

7.1. Centre for Gender Studies, Veritas University Abuja

Centre for Gender Studies, Veritas University Abuja is a multi-disciplinary academic and research unit in the office of the Vice-Chancellor, Veritas University, Abuja established to carry out the gender development objectives of Veritas University Abuja. The Centre provides research and capacity building services to young undergraduate women on gender sensitive themes affecting the society and the nation.

Centre for Gender Studies, Veritas University Abuja is the project host of G-VAP.

7.2. Egunec Education Support Foundation (EF)

Egunec Foundation (EF) is a registered NGO formed in April, 2013 that exists to provide education support on gender, child, youth and environmental development. Under its gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) Program arm, it exists to equip and empower young women with the capacity to provide sustainable peace education, empowerment and development to their respective communities. Egunec Foundation (EF) is registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), Universal Basic Education Board, FCT- Abuja and the Ministry of Education.

Egunec Foundation (EF) is an NGO partner of G-VAP.

7.3. Women at Risk International Foundation (WARIF)

Women at Risk International Foundation (WARIF) is a non-profit organization incorporated in 2016 in response to the high incidence of sexual violence, rape and human trafficking occurring amongst young girls and women across Nigeria and Africa. The foundation was established to raise awareness and address the prevalence of this problem through the "WARIF Approach" – a unique holistic method of tackling Gender Based Violence through the development and implementation of a series of initiatives, targeting both the intervention/treatment of affected women, as well as providing preventive measures in education and community service to reduce the high incidence. WARIF is an NGO partner for G-VAP.

7.4. Osegi Albert Chuks (Jnr)

Osegi Albert Chuks (Jnr) is a Partnership, Equity and Inclusion (PEI) Facilitator, Organizational Development Specialist, Clarity and Leadership Coach with over seven years' experience as a Gender Equity and Inclusion specialist. As a Partnership, Equity and Inclusion (PEI) Facilitator, he facilitates mainstreaming of Partnership, Equity and Inclusion (PEI) in institutions, organizations, platforms and careers.

He has a degree in Law, certification in Mediation and Project Management as well a decade Multi-sector experience consulting for Public, Private, Policy, Education and Development sectors.

Osegi Albert Chuks (Jnr) is the Gender Inclusion Policy, Partnership and Peacebuilding Facilitator for the Centre for Gender Studies and Lead Consultant G-VAP.

8. CONCLUDING REMARKS FROM THE DIRECTOR

The past two years under the Gender Violence Awareness Project (G-VAP) has been an eye opener for us at the Centre for Gender Studies, Veritas University Abuja. It has



given us a clear insight into global standard of practice when it comes to addressing the challenge of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

As the Director of the Centre for Gender Studies, Veritas University Abuja, I am assuring you that we will

build on the lessons learnt from G-VAP to make the Centre better for the student community at Veritas University Abuja.

I am extremely excited at the policy development direction of our next phase. A gender equity policy advocacy project will consolidate the amazing work we have been doing in the past 7 years. For this next phase of our evolution, we will be needing your support as we navigate familiar and uncharted territories. As we learnt from G-VAP, the movement to prevent Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is not for only one person or platform, it is a collaborative effort. So as we take our responsibility as a gender equity development platform, we ask that you support us in whatever way you can so together we can build an equitable world.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank the individuals and organizations that made G-VAP a success. I would like to first of all thank the Vice Chancellor of Veritas University Abuja, Rev. Fr. Prof. Hyacinth Ichoku for his support. He has been our HeforShe supporting, challenging and inspiring us and for that, we are extremely grateful. A special thank you to our primary NGO partner; Egunec Foundation (EF) for supporting us in the design and development of G-VAP.

I would also like to thank our development partners at Spotlight Initiative Project for partnering with us to make G-VAP a success. Thank you Women at Risk International Foundation (WARIF), thank you UN Women, thank you EU. We look forward to continuous collaboration in the next phase of our evolution. I will like to thank my team for the tireless work and commitment to ensure the Centre achieves its mandate. Special thanks to Osegi Albert Chuks (Jnr) who was the Consultant Facilitator of G-VAP and the author of this report. We look forward to an exciting new chapter with the policy development project.

To you reading this report, thank you for joining us in this journey. I hope you go beyond reading and reach out to support our gender equity policy development project with your resources so together we can address violence against women and girls and build a more equitable world. You can visit us at Veritas University Campus, Bwari, Abuja or send a mail to the Consultant Facilitator of G-VAP at coachheal1990@gmail.com

Till next time.

Dr. Angela Ngozi Dick

Director, Centre for Gender Studies, Veritas University Abuja

9. AUTHORS BIO

Osegi Albert Chuks (Jnr) is a Partnership, Equity and Inclusion (PEI) Facilitator, Organizational Development Specialist, Clarity and Leadership Coach with over seven years' experience as a Gender Equity and Inclusion specialist. As a Partnership, Equity and Inclusion (PEI) Facilitator, he facilitates mainstreaming of Partnership, Equity and Inclusion (PEI) in institutions, organizations, platforms and careers.

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