



Gender and Inclusion Summit 2024

Book of Abstracts

GENDER AND INCLUSION SUMMIT 2024

Reimagining Gender-Inclusive
Pathways and Partnerships for
Poverty Reduction.

Book of Abstracts

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Table of Content

- 11 From pockets to clicks: the influence of wealth status on gendered digital literacy gaps in Edo State
Presenting Author: Oladunni Adenuga
- 12 Dynamics of balancing personal and professional commitments and impact on job satisfaction: evidence from Nigerian women in professional spheres.
Presenting Author: Oluyemi Theophilus Adeosun
- 13 Impact of Women's Economic Empowerment on Household Poverty Reduction in Abuja
Presenting Author: Ayooluwa Femi Aribisala
- 14 Stakeholders' Interventions on Girls' Reproductive Health Needs for Equitable Access to Secondary Education in Niger State
Presenting Author: Eseyin, Emmanuel Olorunleke (Ph.D.), Sarah Oriowo
- 15 Strengthening the School Engagement of Adolescent Girls through Social Support: A Moderation Analysis of Socioemotional Skills.
Presenting Author: Ebuka Christian Orjiakor
- 16 Gender-Responsive and Transformative Review of Cassava Seed Producers Selection and Accreditation Policy Guideline in Nigeria
Presenting Author: Olamide Nwanze
- 17 The impact of Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) on women's economic empowerment in Kano state: A case study of ALDDN.
Presenting Author: Helen Okotie
- 18 Understanding Behavioural Drivers of Political Farming and its Impact on Food Security in Nigeria
Presenting Author: Isaac Oritogun
- 19 Mapping School Insecurity in Nigeria: Addressing Educational Inequity and Enhancing Opportunities for Girls
Presenting Author: Precious Ugochukwu

- 20 An evaluation of the gender-responsiveness of Nigeria's Energy Transition Plan (ETP) targets for the cooking sector.
Presenting Author: Maryam Ibrahim
- 21 Understanding relationships between birth registration and healthcare access in Gombe state, Nigeria
Presenting Author: Abutalib Abdulsalam
- 22 Energizing agriculture: Empowering women farmers through sustainable energy
Presenting Author: Hauwa Ali
- 23 Promoting Gender-Responsive Climate Smart Interventions and Policies in Agrifood Systems in Nigeria; Perspective from Rural Women in Southern Nigeria
Presenting Author: Ifeanyi-obi C.C
- 24 The Impact of Teach For Nigeria on Whole Child Development, Teaching Quality, and School Community
Presenting Author: Ebenezer Akinwale
- 25 Closing the gender gap in Poverty Through Girl Empowerment
Presenting author: Funmilayo Oyekanmi
- 26 Challenges and opportunities for formalizing the informal sector and improving the working conditions of women in South-west Nigeria: A qualitative approach
Presenting Author: Ngozi lyoho
- 27 Policy Formulation and Implementation of Women's Land Rights and Climate Adaptation Policies in Nigeria
Presenting Author: Omosefe Oyekanmi (Ph.D.)
- 28 Educational Inequities in Nigeria; Policy Recommendations for Reducing School Deprivation
Presenting Author: Akinwumi Akinola
- 29 Gender gaps in the Nigerian aquaculture sector: the role of policy framing and implementation
Presenting Author: Temitayo Adeyemo

- 30 Improving Access to Credit for Smallholder Women Farmers to Boost Food Systems Transformation in Nigeria: A Case for Policy and Action
Presenting Author: Vera Onyeaka Onyilo
- 31 Gender Inequality as Constraint on Women Occupying Administrative Leadership Positions in Oyo State Civil Service
Presenting Author: Ademuson Adefolake Olusola
- 32 Predictive Analysis: Clean Cooking and Health of Women and Children in Nigeria.
Presenting Author: Atunde Ahmed Olarewaju
- 33 Empowering Women in African Agriculture: Addressing Marginalisation, Leveraging Technology, and Fostering Partnerships for Sustainable Development
Presenting Author: Akintunde Olugbemi
- 34 Nigerian Women in Political and Corporate Leadership: The Role of Gender Quotas in Enhancing Gender Equity
Presenting Author: Sandra Onyia
- 35 Barriers to women's health joint advocacy and collective action in Nigeria.
Presenting Author: Emmanuel Nwala
- 36 Examining the Multi-Dimensional Impact of Educational Inequality on Almajiri Children in Northern Nigeria
Presenting Author: Iyanu Joseph
- 37 Household Disposable Income and the Girl-child Access to Basic Education
Presenting Author: Christopher Michael Orji
- 38 Gender Transformative Approaches in Agrifood Systems: Building Economic Resilience through Norm Change
Presenting Author: Devis Mwakanyamale
- 39 Exploring "Nwa Girls": Ashake Foundation's Apprenticeship Tool for Sustainable Women Empowerment
Presenting Author: Adegbile Mayowa

- 40 Unlocking Girls' Potential: Harnessing the value of Female Mentorship in Empowering Adolescent Girls and Addressing Gender Inequalities in Northern Nigeria
Presenting Author: Alhassan Alhaji Bulama
- 41 Reducing women's vulnerability and poverty through Saving and financial inclusion; Nigeria for Women project implementation.
Presenting Author: Ehon Anthony Ph.D.
- 42 Policy actions to catalyze sustainable food system transformation in Northeastern Nigeria
Presenting Author: Aisha Hadejia
- 43 Prevalence and Correlates of Sexual Satisfaction and Quality of Life Among Married Adults in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State Nigeria
Presenting Author: Precious Olamide Oyeleke
- 44 Navigating Equity and Empowerment: Exploring Gender Dynamics and Inclusive Leadership in the Creative Arts Sector
Presenting Author: Temitope J. Owolabi
- 45 Preventing female cancers as a stimulus for sustainable economic growth: a narrative review of implementation of Nigeria for Women Project (NFWP)
Presenting Author: Ishak Lawal
- 46 Male Engagement: Transforming Gender Inequalities and Empowering SRH Decision- Making Among Married Adolescent Girls Aged 15-19 in Jigawa State.
Presenting Author: Muhammad Kabir
- 47 Knowledge and Attitude of Blood Donors toward Sickle Cell Anemia in Ibadan
Presenting Author: Uthman Hassan Alao
- 48 Gender Equity in Technology and Innovation: Pathways to Reducing Poverty
Presenting Author: Dr. Comfort Fatimoh Sheidu

- 49 Health inequity as a factor hindering cervical cancer elimination: A case study of the ruga nomadic pastoralist communities in Nigeria
Presenting Author: Umar Umami Musa
- 50 Empowering Rural Women through Financial Inclusion: A Case Study of Nigeria for Women Project (NFWP) in Niger State.
Presenting Author: Victor Patrick
- 51 Abstract on Economic Security and Women's Experience of Climate Change in the Lake Chad Region
Presenting Author: Abigail Ocheni
- 52 Leveraging Partnerships to Enhance Educational Equity and Reduce Poverty: The Impact of the Digital Skills Accelerator for Girls and Women
Presenting Author: Omoniye Miracle Lawson
- 53 Equitable and quality education as a catalyst for poverty reduction in Nigeria
Presenting Author: Josephine Obiageli OPENE-TERRY
- 54 Gender Gap in STEM Disciplines Among Nigerian University Graduates: Implications for Social Equity Outcomes
Presenting Author: Okeke Emeka Paul
- 55 Perception of Female Students on Menstruation-Responsiveness of University of Ibadan Campus
Presenting Author: Alaba Oluwatoyin Oyewusi
- 56 Towards Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Value Chain Analysis of the Aquatic Food System in Edo State, Nigeria
Presenting Author: Sherifat Adegbesan, Ph.D.
- 57 Livelihood Diversification for Sustainable Poverty Reduction Among Rural Women in Nigeria.
Presenting Author: Onyebuchi Nneka
- 58 Equitable access to SRHR: Enhancing well-being for marginalized adolescent girls and young women in Kenya and Africa
Presenting Author: Lilian Mbuti

59

“It is the men who are using it more”: Perceived gender disparity in ICT access and utilization

Presenting Author: Perpetual Nwankwo

60

Inclusive Digital Futures: Ensuring Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in the Assessment of Digital Readiness in Edo State.

Presenting Author: Sandra Ogini

61

Reimagining Gender-Inclusive Pathways and Partnerships for Poverty Reduction

Presenting Author: Amb. Dr Laiatu Augustine Bamaiyi

62

Transforming How Communities Perceive Adolescent Girls Agency to Access Antenatal Care Services

Presenting Author: Joy Ede

63

Reimagining Policy Design Using Gender Transformative Approach to Address Digital Exclusion among Women-Led MSMEs

Presenting Author: Sandra Onefuwa Ogini

From pockets to clicks: The influence of wealth status on gendered digital literacy gaps in Edo State

Presenting Author: Oladunni Adenuga

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Summit Track: The intersection of Gender and multidimensional poverty

Abstract

Digital transformation has numerous benefits and has become a major requirement for boosting economic growth. However, despite the rapid uptake of digital technology, a huge divide still exists in digital literacy. This study provides insights into the gender and wealth dimensions of digital literacy, to inform digital interventions and investments in Edo State.

This abstract was drawn from the quantitative component of a larger mixed-methods study aimed at understanding perspectives regarding digital transformation. Data was collected from 7,220 citizens at the household level across 18 local government areas of Edo State. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics, Student's t-test, logistic regression and Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition analysis. The results highlighted a significant gender divide in digital literacy with women comprising 63.5% of those with low digital literacy. Households headed by females showed a higher percentage (88.6%) of low digital literacy compared to those headed by males (74.4%). Student's t-test indicated that males had significantly higher digital literacy scores (0.36 ± 0.28 points) than females (0.27 ± 0.24 points) at $P < 0.05$. Regression analysis showed that males were 1.963 times more likely to have high digital literacy than females. The Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition analysis further confirmed this disparity, with males scoring higher (0.308) than females (0.207) at $p < 0.005$. Also, wealth differences significantly explain 0.020 of the disparity ($p < 0.05$). The interaction effect of wealth on digital literacy was non-significant, suggesting similar wealth-digital literacy relationships across genders. The study found a significant gender divide in digital literacy, which was exacerbated by wealth differences, with non-economic factors also contributing substantially as shown by the decomposition analysis. These findings highlight the complexity of gender inequalities in digital literacy and emphasize the need for comprehensive strategies to address economic and socio-cultural factors and promote equitable digital access.

Keywords: Digital Literacy, Gender Divide, Wealth Differences, Digital Transformation, Blinder-Oaxaca Decomposition

Dynamics of balancing personal and professional commitments and impact on job satisfaction: evidence from Nigerian women in professional spheres

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Summit Track: Creating Secure Livelihoods and Decent Jobs for All

Abstract

In today's rapidly evolving digital era, the dynamics of balancing personal and professional commitments have become increasingly complex, particularly for Nigerian women in professional spheres. This study explores the strategies Nigerian female professionals use to balance personal and professional demands and their impact on their job satisfaction level. This study is important as it addresses important intersections including decent work, gender equality and securing women's livelihoods which have implications for economic growth. This study employed a quantitative research design, specifically a predictive survey research design. We used a convenience sampling approach to obtain the data for this study through professional online networks and online survey questionnaires. A total of 412 female professionals across various industries from Nigeria responded to the questionnaire.

The analysis of the gathered data was conducted using multinomial logistic regression. The study identifies strategies like flexible work arrangements and time management techniques that were leveraged by Nigerian female professionals to manage demanding work-life conflicts and aiding their career progression prospects. The study also found that more time for personal commitments is strongly associated with higher job satisfaction. However, higher overall life satisfaction and more skills development are associated with higher job satisfaction. This study suggests the importance of personal time, workplace flexible programs and the need to address potential challenges with skills development and overall life satisfaction of women in the workplace context. Policymakers and organizations should advocate for gender equality and raise public awareness to create a more balanced future. The findings can inform policies to improve career satisfaction and progression, contributing to discussions on work-life balance, gender equality, and career management in Nigeria.

Keywords: Digital Literacy, Gender Divide, Wealth Differences, Digital Transformation, Blinder-Oaxaca Decomposition

Impact of Women's Economic Empowerment on Household Poverty Reduction in Abuja

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Summit Track: Gender Equity: A Catalyst for Poverty Alleviation

Abstract

Women's economic empowerment has been recognized globally as a crucial factor in reducing household poverty and promoting sustainable development. In Abuja, Nigeria's capital city, the relationship between women's economic empowerment and household poverty reduction remains an important yet understudied area. This research examined the relationship between women's economic empowerment and household poverty reduction in Abuja and identified key factors influencing its effectiveness. A structured questionnaire was administered to 384 women in Abuja, with 202 valid responses analyzed. Multiple regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between women's economic empowerment indicators and household poverty reduction, while the Relative Importance Index (RII) was employed to identify key factors influencing the effectiveness of women's economic empowerment. Regression analysis revealed significant positive relationships between women's economic empowerment indicators and household poverty reduction ($R^2 = 0.68$, $F(5,196) = 83.23$, $p < 0.001$). Access to credit ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$), employment ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.001$), education ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.01$), entrepreneurship ($\beta = 0.19$, $p < 0.01$), and decision-making power ($\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.05$) were significant predictors. The RII analysis identified access to affordable credit (RII = 0.85), skills training programs (RII = 0.82), and supportive government policies (RII = 0.79) as the most influential factors in enhancing the effectiveness of women's economic empowerment for poverty reduction. The findings indicate that women's economic empowerment significantly contributes to household poverty reduction in Abuja, with access to credit having the strongest impact. Policymakers should prioritize improving women's access to credit, skills development, and implementing supportive policies to enhance the impact of women's economic empowerment on poverty reduction. Future research should explore the long-term effects of these interventions on sustainable poverty alleviation in the region.

Keywords: Women's Empowerment, Poverty Reduction, Economic Development, Gender Equality

Stakeholders' Interventions on Girls' Reproductive Health Needs for Equitable Access to Secondary Education in Niger State

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Summit Track: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities.

Abstract

Access to quality reproductive health services contributes to the general development of the girl child. The inability to access these services affects the enrollment and regularity of these children with long-term effects on their academic performance and economic competitiveness. In Niger State, more boys than girls are still in school prompting the need to investigate stakeholders' interventions on girls' reproductive health needs for equitable access to secondary education in Niger State. The population of the study consisted of over 60, 000 female public senior secondary school students in Niger State. 397 students were sampled for the study using a stratified random sampling technique across the 23 LGAs in the State. The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane minimum sample size determination formula. The instrument used for data gathering was a structured questionnaire which was validated and tested for reliability. The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of the study indicated fair access to sanitary pads and pills. There was a fair reproductive health intervention from the Ministry of Health and NGOs while other stakeholders' intervention was low. The inability to access reproductive health needs resulted in absenteeism at school and lack of concentration in class while challenges in the process of accessing reproductive health needs included lack of information and cultural beliefs. The study concluded that there is a low level of stakeholders' intervention in the reproductive health needs of the girl child in secondary schools and this can hinder their full participation and outcome in educational activities in school. The study recommended the establishment of functional health centres in these schools to increase access to reproductive health services for girls for equitable secondary education in the State.

Keywords: Education, Girls, Reproductive, Health, Stakeholders.

Strengthening the School Engagement of Adolescent Girls through Social Support: A Moderation Analysis of Socioemotional Skills

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Summit Track: Educational Equity: Building Foundations for a Prosperous Future

Abstract

School engagement among girls in Nigeria faces persistent challenges due to cultural norms favoring male education, economic constraints, and early marriage. Despite efforts by the Nigerian government and international organizations, progress remains slow, particularly in rural and northern areas. This study explores how social support networks and socioemotional skills (self-esteem, self-efficacy, personal initiative, negotiation, decision-making, and communication) directly influence secondary school girls' engagement and investigates how these skills might moderate the impact of social support. The study utilized data from the World Bank's Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment (AGILE) project, specifically the impact evaluation of the safe space-based life skills training and digital literacy training programmes conducted in 2023. The sample included secondary school girls aged 15 to 20 years from rural and semi-urban schools in Kaduna, Kano, and Katsina states. Multiple regression analyses, including the Hayes PROCESS macro, were employed to assess the direct and moderating effects of social support and socioemotional skills on school engagement, controlling for demographic variables. Results showed that higher levels of social support from family, friends, and special persons positively influenced school engagement, with family support being the most significant. Self-esteem significantly moderated these relationships, enhancing the effects of support, particularly for students with moderate to high self-esteem. General self-efficacy moderated the relationship between support from special persons and school engagement. Personal initiative and communication skills also positively influenced engagement and moderated the impact of social support. These findings highlight the importance of strong social support networks and socioemotional skills in promoting school engagement among Nigerian girls. Interventions should focus on enhancing both external support systems and internal competencies, which are crucial for improving educational outcomes and reducing gender disparities in education.

Keywords: Girl Child Education, Secondary Education, Support Networks, Socioemotional Skills, Nigeria

Gender-Responsive and Transformative Review of Cassava Seed Producers Selection and Accreditation Policy Guideline in Nigeria

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Summit Track: Creating Secure Livelihoods and Decent Jobs for A

Abstract

The National Agricultural Seed Policy (NASP) in Nigeria focuses on enhancing seed standards to improve access to improved seed varieties. The policy recognizes the vulnerabilities of women in the farming system and promotes decentralized seed production within communities. This study established gender and policy gaps in the NASP, CSPs selection criteria and accreditation using the gender integration continuum framework, thorough policy analysis using the Gender in Agricultural Policies Analysis Tool (GAPo) and narrative review of relevant literature. Preliminary results indicate that current CSPs selection criteria and accreditation guidelines are gender-blind, towards women's joint and low ownership of land, which limits their participation as cassava seed entrepreneurs/producers (CSEs). The criteria for selection, such as minimum land size and financial capital, disadvantaged women, youth, and migrant farmers. Furthermore, informal seed-sourcing systems perpetuate these inequalities, as women and marginalized groups have less access to improved seeds through formal channels. The GAPo assessment highlighted aspects of the NASP that require improvement and revision to reflect gender responsiveness and transformative potential. The policy analysis showed that the NASP overlooked some indicators, specifically failing to adequately address women's roles, agency, access, and ownership of agricultural productive resources. The NASP partially recognized the challenges women face in sourcing improved varieties and did not specify measures to address gender inequality or increase the participation of women, youth, and migrants as CSEs. Research revealed the necessity of policy revision and integrating gender-responsive strategies into the CSP selection criteria by implementing institutions and light-touch accreditation guidelines by the National Agricultural Seed Council (NASC), to ensure equitable participation, access to improved cassava varieties and support the livelihood empowerment of women, youth, and marginalized farmers in Nigeria.

Keywords: Gender-Equity, Cassava, Seed-system, Policy-review, Nigeria

The impact of Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) on women's economic empowerment in Kano state: A case study of ALDDN

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Organisation: Sahel Consulting Agriculture and Nutrition Limited

Summit Track: Creating Secure Livelihoods and Decent Jobs for All

Abstract

In many parts of Nigeria, women dairy farmers face significant barriers such as patriarchal norms, access to financial inclusion and stereotypes, which create significant barriers to women's economic empowerment, especially in rural communities where strong odds worsen the situation. Many women's roles as caregivers and home managers are often limited due to limited access to formal financial institutions. This lack of credit and savings opportunities hampers their ability to invest, improve their livelihoods, and support their families. The VSLA methodology has been instrumental in transforming the lives of women dairy farmers in Kano state by creating a safe and supportive environment, fostering social cohesion, promoting a savings culture, and providing access to credit and insurance, thereby enhancing the entrepreneurial capacity of their communities. This study involved 197 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and 4133 farmers across 74 communities in Kano state. It examined the groups' financial literacy, credit access, and income-generating activity commencement. The study employed a random sampling method to select a sample size of 304 women from 131 SHGs. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics. The study's findings showed improvement in the services (saving, credit and insurance) offered by SHGs as members of the groups saved together using the VSLA methodology. While some members of the SHG accessed loans to establish new businesses, such as on-farm activities like poultry and goat rearing and off-farm activities like petty trading, soap and petroleum jelly making, sewing, etc., others expanded their businesses. Some bought foodstuffs during harvest season to store and retail during the lean season. Many women have attested to the positive impact of VSLA, citing improved income and living conditions as tangible outcomes. Given the significant role of VSLA in the economic empowerment of rural women, more organisations must embrace this concept across various value chains, thereby contributing to poverty alleviation.

Keywords: Women empowerment, VSLA, Financial literacy

Understanding Behavioural Drivers of Political Farming and its Impact on Food Security in Nigeria

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Organisation: Policy Innovation Centre, Abuja

Summit Track: Collaborative Strategies for Achieving Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Abstract

Political farming is an emerging concept where individuals falsely claim to be farmers to access agricultural incentives from the government. In 2019, Nigeria ranked 94th out of 113 countries on the Global Food Security Index, highlighting the country's significant food insecurity. Insecurity, climate change, poverty, infrastructural deficits, and poor policies severely impact Nigeria's food security. This study explored the behavioural drivers of political farming and its implications on food security. We employed exploratory and participatory qualitative research to understand the social norms driving corruption in the agricultural value chain. Key behavioural drivers and norms affecting food security efforts were identified using tools such as Vignette, Key Informant Interviews (KII), and Focused Group Discussions (FGD). Participants were selected using non-probability sampling, targeting farmers, agricultural officers, farmers' organizations, and government stakeholders. We engaged 10 government and non-governmental stakeholders and 20 smallholder farmers to highlight experiences regarding corruption. FGDs and KIIs with government stakeholders further validated behaviours, norms, and key reference groups. We obtained informed consent to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using Nvivo. Political farmers indulged in market manipulation by hoarding farm inputs and grains, inflating prices, and hesitancy to implement price control policies. These behaviours were driven by economic, systemic and social factors, including an opportunity to make extra cash, poor accountability and transparent systems, mutual expectations and a sense of compliance among social groups, maintained by actual or anticipated fear of social exclusion. Some reiterated reasons why the behaviours are perpetuated, 'As it was, so it shall be' – a perception that portrays a cyclical behaviour. Key reference groups include government officials, traditional and community leaders. Smallholder farmers, particularly women, were disproportionately affected by political farming, limiting their contributions to food security. Addressing these issues is essential for Nigeria's goal of becoming one of Africa's top three food-secure countries and one of the top 20 exporters of agricultural produce by 2023-2027.

Keywords: Agriculture, Corruption, Food Security, Political Farming, Social Norms

Mapping School Insecurity in Nigeria: Addressing Educational Inequity and Enhancing Opportunities for Girls

Presenting Author: Precious Ugochukwu

Organisation: DO Take Action, Abuja

Summit Track: Educational Equity: Building Foundations for a Prosperous Future

Abstract

In Nigeria, persistent security challenges, affecting girls, have severely hampered educational equity and quality, consequently impeding poverty reduction efforts. This study investigates the landscape of school insecurity in Nigeria since the 2014 Chibok abductions, focusing on its impact on the educational environment, especially for female students while also spotlighting the hotbed of school insecurity in specific Northern Nigerian states where over 2,000 children have been abducted from their schools leading to poor educational outcomes and a consequent reduction in efforts to effectively combat poverty. The research aims to identify vulnerabilities, analyze existing interventions, and propose strategies to enhance educational opportunities for girls through strategic partnerships. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining media monitoring of newspaper reports from 2014 to 2024 and analysis of existing research conducted by international organizations such as UN Women, World Bank, UNICEF, and UNESCO. We examined types of educational vulnerabilities, security challenges, and their impacts on education. Additionally, we evaluated government initiatives, international NGO responses, and community engagement strategies aimed at improving school safety and educational access. The study revealed that over 1,730 school children, including 800 girls, have been kidnapped since 2014, with 723 schools shut down across 9 states due to security concerns. The research identified several vulnerabilities contributing to school insecurity. Government responses, including the Safe School Initiative and the National Policy on Safety, Security and Violence-Free Schools, have been implemented but face challenges in execution. International partnerships, such as the World Bank's \$700 million AGILE project, have shown promise in increasing girls' enrollment from 900,000 to over 1.6 million in participating states. The study highlights the critical need for comprehensive, gender-responsive measures to address school insecurity and promote educational equity in Nigeria. Recommendations include enhancing multi-sectoral coordination, implementing school-based risk identification, and ensuring continuity of learning through innovative platforms. The research highlights the potential of partnerships between government, international organizations, and local communities in creating safer learning environments and expanding educational opportunities for girls. These efforts are crucial for breaking the cycle of poverty and building a foundation for a more prosperous and equitable future in Nigeria.

Keywords: School Insecurity, Quality Education, Nigeria

An evaluation of the gender-responsiveness of Nigeria's Energy Transition Plan (ETP) targets for the cooking sector

Presenting Author: Maryam Ibrahim

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Organisation: Law Hub Development and Advocacy Centre, Abuja, Nigeria

Summit Track: Gender-Responsive Climate Action for Sustainable Development

Abstract

Nigeria's Energy Transition Plan (ETP) outlines a roadmap towards achieving a net-zero energy system by 2060. It targets significant reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, particularly from the building sector. Traditional cooking remains the largest source of building emissions in Nigeria, with 68.3% of households relying on solid biomass as of 2021. This paper critically evaluates the gender implications of the ETP's ambitious target to reduce building emissions by 98% by 2050 through a shift to biogas-based and electric cooking, focusing on barriers hindering the adoption of clean cooking methods. It seeks to gather Indigenous data on how the burden of traditional cooking fuel disproportionately impacts women, to inform effective policy interventions and sustainable development programmes tailored to local contexts. To tackle these objectives, this paper employs a qualitative approach involving semi-structured interviews with women, representatives from clean cooking enterprises and policymakers, and an in-depth review of ETP-related research and academic literature. The preliminary findings reveal gaps between women's lived realities and clean cooking solutions such as solar stoves and electric cookers. The paper identifies poverty as a significant barrier compounded by the high upfront costs associated with adopting clean cooking technologies. Limited access to clean fuel sources in rural areas, and the incompatibility of clean cooking stoves with cultural cooking practices further impede progress. Leaving these barriers unaddressed places women at risk of experiencing inequitable outcomes in Nigeria's energy transition. The paper concludes by advocating for a gender-responsive approach to energy transition, emphasising women's empowerment as pivotal agents of change. It calls for policies prioritising women's needs and perspectives, aiming to dismantle identified barriers and ensure the ETP's success in achieving emission reduction targets within the cooking sector. Recommendations include a comprehensive review of Nigeria's ETP through nationwide Gender-Disaggregated Data Analysis, and fostering substantive engagement of women in designing and implementing sustainable energy solutions.

Keywords: Climate, sustainable development, gender equality.

Understanding relationships between birth registration and healthcare access in Gombe state, Nigeria

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Contributing Authors: Afeez Olajire¹, Deborah Ukeje¹

Organisation: ¹ACE strategy and consults ltd

Summit Track: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

Gombe state in Nigeria lacks adequate vital population statistics, such as birth registration, crucial for health planning and resource allocation. This issue is especially pronounced in conflict-affected areas. We conducted an ecological study to understand the challenges of birth registration and its effect on equitable access to health services, analysing year-round birth registration data in the state. Birth registration data was sourced from Rapid SMS Outreach, National Population Commission (NPOPC) outreach data, NPOPC sites, and health facilities. The data was collated, validated, and analysed using Microsoft Excel, leading to insights and recommendations. Birth registration reporting varied across facilities in the eleven Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the state with a near uniform drop at year-end. Rural areas had higher registration rates than urban areas, and education level did not affect registration rates. No correlation was found between gender and birth registration, but an indirect correlation was observed with birth order. Data limitations included an incomplete expected gender ratio of live births, with 60,884 male and 58,006 female registrations in 2022, and insufficient data on access to health services. Most registrations occurred in Maternity Homes, Primary Healthcare Centres, and NPOPC offices. The analysis was constrained by a lack of data from previous years and overall birth coverage for the year. Birth registration indices need to be expanded to include consistently completed and validated gender ratios. Health facility data tools should be reviewed to collect adequate data on access to health services. Stakeholders, especially the Gombe State Primary HealthCare Development Agency (GSPHCDA), must make concerted efforts to understand and address barriers to registration through digitalization and sensitization.

Keywords: Birth registration, health access

Energizing agriculture: Empowering women farmers through sustainable energy

Presenting Author: Hauwa Ali

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Organisation: Sahel Consulting Agriculture & Nutrition Limited

Summit Track: Collaborative Strategies for Achieving Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Abstract

In Nigeria, collaborative partnerships between cooperatives, donor organizations, and private businesses are working to enhance women's smallholder farmers' (SHF) access to sustainable and renewable energy. These initiatives aim to boost agricultural productivity by empowering women to cultivate their lands more efficiently. Renewable energy can also power processing equipment, reducing post-harvest losses and adding value to farm products. Consequently, this can improve income levels and economic stability for women farmers. Sahel Consulting, in partnership with one of its clients, conducted a study to gain insights into the needs, aspirations, challenges, spending behaviors, and energy needs of SHFs. The study utilized a combination of secondary and primary research methodologies. The secondary research comprised literature reviews, online sources, and market research reports, while the primary research involved surveying 615 respondents, conducting 15 focus group discussions, and 35 individual interviews. The findings revealed that women smallholder farmers earn an average monthly income of \$33.27 compared to their male counterparts, who earn \$49.56. Additionally, it was found that women smallholder farmers spend an average of \$16 on business expenses, with 44% allocated to energy which includes electricity bills or diesel and petrol costs. These rising costs of power and the lack of access to finance for procuring energy resources continue to impede the growth and scaling of women's enterprises. The study highlights the critical need for targeted interventions and supportive policies to ensure women SHFs are empowered with the tools, knowledge, and skills to adopt, install, maintain, and repair renewable energy options. This can create employment opportunities, foster gender equality, and support women to make decisions that lead to sustainable agricultural development outcomes. The findings emphasize the importance of a multi-faceted strategy that involves government support, private sector engagement, and community-based initiatives to drive the adoption of renewable energy technologies and foster sustainable agricultural practices among women smallholder farmers.

Keywords: Sustainability, Women, Efficient, Effective, Livelihood

Promoting Gender-Responsive Climate Smart Interventions and Policies in Agrifood Systems in Nigeria; Perspective from Rural Women in Southern Nigeria

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Summit Track: Gender-Responsive Climate Action for Sustainable Development

Abstract

Gender-responsive policies are key to successful climate change adaptation as they provide a strong platform for equitable and inclusive climate actions. Climate change is not gender neutral, it impacts men and women differently hence needs gender transformative approaches for successful adaptation to occur. The study assessed key factors militating against the integration of gender into climate change interventions and policies from the perspective of rural women. Three hundred and ninety-four rural women were selected for the study using a multi-stage sampling procedure. Questionnaire administration and Focused Group Discussion (FGD) were applied to collect data for the study. A stakeholders' workshop was organised to triangulate the data collected. Analyses of data were done using mean scores and ranking. Poor representation and participation of women at decision-making levels and inadequate budgetary allocation for implementation of gender commitments in agricultural policies were ranked as two top factors militating against the integration of gender into climate change interventions and policies from the perception of rural women while poor income earning capacity of women and gender insensitive nature of some climate-smart technologies ranked top as constraining factors to the uptake of climate-smart agricultural practices and technologies. The study concludes that for inclusive policy to be developed, rural women's perspective must be integrated as this provides real-time and deeper insight to policymakers. It recommends the development of equitable and inclusive approaches to climate-smart financing by finance institutions and government to empower women and enhance their participation in climate change discourse.

Keywords: Climate change, Gender responsiveness, policy.

The Impact of Teach For Nigeria on Whole Child Development, Teaching Quality, and School Community

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Organisation: Teach For Nigeria, Lagos

Summit Track: Educational Equity: Building Foundations for a Prosperous Future

Abstract

Teach For Nigeria (TFN) is a nonprofit organization and part of the global Teach For All network, dedicated to recruiting and developing future leaders to teach in Nigeria's underserved schools. TFN aims to ensure all children have equitable access to quality education. In 2021, TFN revised its approach to foster students' social and emotional learning (SEL) alongside academic achievement, emphasizing self-awareness, growth mindset, collaboration, and communication in its Theory of Change for Whole Child Development. TFN and Teach For All commissioned the RAND Corporation for an independent, mixed-methods quasi-experimental impact evaluation to explore the effects of TFN fellows on whole child development, teaching quality, and school-level transformations. The study analyzed student and teacher data from both TFN and comparison classrooms, corroborated by qualitative data from school community members. The study revealed that students taught by TFN teachers experienced an estimated growth of 2-3 months in literacy (approximately 0.11 standard deviations higher) and 2-5 months in mathematics (approximately 0.07 standard deviations higher) compared to students in non-TFN classrooms. Second-year TFN teachers demonstrated significantly larger positive effects on student learning compared to first-year teachers. Qualitative feedback indicated marked improvements in students' literacy, numeracy skills, and SEL competencies under TFN teachers' guidance. Although no significant quantitative differences were observed, qualitative findings suggest that students taught by TFN teachers showed enhanced social and emotional skills, consistent with TFN's Theory of Change. Regarding teaching quality, the study found that TFN teachers adopted a student-centred approach, creating supportive and inclusive classroom environments. They were recognized for their willingness to support colleagues, openness to feedback, and humility, fostering strong collaborative relationships with non-TFN teachers. Additionally, TFN teachers built strong, communicative relationships with parents, contributing to a supportive school community. This study provides insights into supporting teachers in developing holistic student leadership outcomes and offers lessons on implementing targeted SEL interventions and improving school climate. It also highlights how programs, particularly in the African region, can learn from evidence to make programmatic improvements and position themselves for effective scaling.

Keywords: Teacher Training, Equity, Social-Emotional Learning

Closing the gender gap in Poverty Through Girl Empowerment

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Organisation: Human and Social Sustainability Network (HSSN) Africa

Summit track: Educational equity: Building foundations for a prosperous future

Abstract

Research shows that girls in Nigeria face more multidimensional poverty due to several social and cultural factors, including child marriage, teenage pregnancy, gender-based violence, limited access to education, unemployment, hiring discrimination, and low wages. While numerous interventions have attempted to address these issues, the results reflect their isolated approach. The rationale for this study lies in the understanding that closing the gender gap in poverty requires a holistic strategy, with education being the fundamental component. By analysing various data sources, this study aims to redefine 'quality' and 'equitable' education and evaluate effective partnership models to enhance educational opportunities for girls. It also seeks to establish the importance of a well-rounded, equitable education system in empowering girls to make informed choices for their future. The study employs a multi-method approach, combining observations from a pilot project involving 150 girls aged 12–14 years and reviews of extant literature and data. The findings identify six key areas of development that qualify education as 'quality' and 'equitable': STEM education, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) rights, gender-based violence, leadership and innovation, academic excellence, and financial literacy. These areas collectively equip girls with the tools to overcome poverty. Additionally, it demonstrates that achieving educational equity demands effective collaboration among various stakeholders. This includes government ministries and agencies, the private sector, civil society and advocacy groups, non-governmental organizations, policymakers, educational institutions, academic and research bodies, international organizations, and community groups. This synergy would facilitate the implementation process and ensure its scalability and sustainability. In conclusion, this study recommends a slight diversion from Nigeria's existing primary and secondary education system, which has proven inadequate in addressing poverty for girls. It advocates for a strategic, gender-responsive approach to educational planning that acknowledges and addresses the significant barriers faced by girls. By ensuring early access to education in the six identified areas of development, girls will have a stronger foundation that will pave the way for their prosperous futures.

Keywords: Multidimensional poverty, Gender-responsive education, partnerships.

Challenges and opportunities for formalizing the informal sector and improving the working conditions of women in South-west Nigeria: A qualitative approach

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Summit Track: Creating Secure Livelihoods and Decent Jobs for All.

Abstract

The informal sector in Nigeria presents various challenges, including the lack of formalization and poor working conditions for women. This has resulted in limited access to social and financial resources, making it difficult for women to thrive in this sector. The purpose of this study was to determine the challenges and prospects for formalizing the informal sector and enhancing the working conditions of women in Nigeria. A cross-sectional research design was used for the study. Purposive sampling was utilized to select 20 participants, 20 years of age and older, who engaged in some selected informal economic activities in the two states in Southwest Nigeria from January to March 2024. Data collection was through 10 in-depth interviews comprising the market women traders, artisans, farmers, and so on who are working in some selected informal sectors. Six key informant interviews were conducted with government officials, union leaders, and farmers, among others. This is based on their knowledge and role in the informal sector activities. 4-5 focus group discussions were also conducted. The data gathered was transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis to ascertain themes and patterns. The results showed that women in the informal sector are faced with numerous challenges, comprising poor infrastructure, restricted access to capital, and a lack of business acumen. Despite these difficulties, there is an aspiration among many women to formalize their business. However, anxieties about increased taxation, bureaucratic hurdles, and job insecurity discourage them from taking this step. The study also revealed the opportunities for formalization, such as Government support programs, capacity-building initiatives, and market linkages. However, the study concludes that formalizing the informal sector in Nigeria is critical for improving the livelihoods of women workers. Again, effective policies and interventions are required to address the identified challenges and create an enabling environment for women-led businesses. Based on these results, the study concludes that by providing access to finance, training, and support services, the government should facilitate the transition from the informal to formal economy, which will lead to increased economic empowerment and social protection for women.

Keywords: Challenges, formalization, informal sector, opportunities, women.

Policy Formulation and Implementation of Women's Land Rights and Climate Adaptation Policies in Nigeria

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Summit Track: Gender-Responsive Climate Action for Sustainable Development

Abstract

Despite several interventions at promoting women's rights and reducing poverty, there remains a significant gap between policy formulation and effective implementation of women's land rights and climate-adaptation policies in Nigeria. This gap fails to adequately address the intersecting needs and vulnerabilities of women, pushing over 60% of rural women in Nigeria into poverty. Women's land rights and climate adaptation policies represent a complex issue with profound implications for gender equity, livelihoods, and environmental sustainability. This paper examines the existing legal frameworks and policy mechanisms governing women's land rights and climate-adaptation in Nigeria, assessing their implications on rural women's human rights, particularly access to land, livelihoods, and resilience-building strategies. Rural women play a significant role in agriculture and natural resource management but often face systemic barriers to land ownership, access, and control. Climate change exacerbates these challenges, disproportionately affecting women who rely heavily on natural resources for their livelihoods and food security. Using a qualitative research design, the paper employs Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and discourse analysis to gain insights from key stakeholders and recipients of government policies on land rights and climate adaptation. The study covers the period from 2016, when the National Climate Change Policy and Response Strategy (NCCPRS, 2016) was implemented, to date. Focusing on data from policymakers, legal experts, representatives from Non-Governmental Organizations, community leaders, and women farmers, the study population includes individuals with direct knowledge and experience related to women's land rights and climate-adaptation policies in Nigeria. Data analysis involved content and discourse, systematically coding interview transcripts and relevant documents to identify recurring themes, gaps, and challenges in the current policy landscape. Findings reveal the lack of comprehensive and integrated policy frameworks, as well as delays or inconsistencies in translating policy objectives into actionable programs at the local level. Urgent reforms are recommended to streamline policy implementation processes and foster coherence across sectors.

Keywords: Climate-adaptation Gender-equity Poverty, Policy-formulation, Policy-implementation

Educational Inequities in Nigeria; Policy Recommendations for Reducing School Deprivation

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Organisation: Policy Innovation Centre, Abuja

Summit Track: Educational Equity: Building Foundations for a Prosperous Future

Abstract

In Nigeria, despite legislative frameworks like the UBE Act 2004 aimed at ensuring free and compulsory 9-year education, the National Bureau of Statistics reported in 2018 that about 10.5 million children are not in school, with a notable gender disparity as over 6 million of these children are girls. UNICEF defines learning poverty as when a child cannot read and understand simple text by the time, they are 10 years old. The percentage of elementary-aged children not attending school (schooling deprivation, or SD) and the percentage of pupils not proficient in reading (learning deprivation, or LD). Globally, UNESCO estimates that 59 million primary school-age children and 62 million lower secondary school-age children are not attending school due to various factors. This paper aims to inform policies and programs to reduce school deprivation for all children in Nigeria and bridge the educational inequality gap. This study employs a qualitative methodology using a Participatory Learning and Action Approach (PLAA) to explore the context of school deprivation among out-of-school children (OOSC) across six regions of Nigeria. Utilizing participatory learning tools, Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues (MSD), Key Informant Interviews (KII), and Focus Group Discussions (FDG), were designed to understand the drivers of school deprivation. We found that economic barriers and gender-discriminating norms, particularly in northern regions, exacerbate the issue, and long distances to school, physical punishment, and poor infrastructure, are key contributors to the high rates of OOSC. Findings indicate that institutional, community, interpersonal, and individual-level factors intersect to drive school deprivation. The universal basic education should be free of additional charges and levies imposed to ameliorate the economic impediment and establishing schools in rural areas would reduce the commute time to school. Addressing harmful social and gender norms and providing non-formal education opportunities are also crucial for inclusive education strategies.

Keywords: Learning poverty, school deprivation, out-of-school children, Nigeria, Educational Inequities

Gender gaps in the Nigerian aquaculture sector: The role of policy framing and implementation

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Summit Track: Collaborative Strategies for Achieving Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Abstract

Transforming food systems requires the holistic participation of all stakeholders within the different sectors, prompting such calls for sustainable food systems in many global and national developmental goals. The focus on the Nigerian aquaculture subsector is due to its fast growth rate and potential to meet protein adequacy, create employment and provide sustainable livelihoods for many households. The sector however has low traction in inclusivity and hence continues to present persistent gender-based constraints and unequal opportunities along its value chain. The study used mixed methodology-qualitative gender-based policy analysis and a quantitative secondary data analysis. The policy analysis was conducted using the Gender in Agricultural Policy Analysis (GAPo) tool, which provides a framework to analyse the extent to which gender integration in agricultural policies/strategies/programs are stated, and implemented. Two relevant policies- the National Aquaculture Policy (2008); and the National Gender Policy in Agriculture (2012) were analysed. Quantitative data for aquaculture-based households was obtained from the Living Standard Survey/ Integrated Survey on Agriculture (LSMS-ISA), 2018. The National Aquaculture policy "Gender Blind", is lacking in any gender component. The National Gender Policy in Agriculture is only "Gender Aware" with respect to the aquaculture subsector. The policy is generalized for the objectives of mainstreaming gender in the aquaculture subsector, albeit lacking specific objectives towards ensuring gender goals in aquaculture. The data shows that males were mainly producers, and women in marketing. Adult males and youth were more likely to own land and acquire inputs than adult females. Revenue generated was least for young females (N18, 625); when compared to young males (N49, 000); adult males (N27,227); and adult females (N23, 937).

Thus, critical gender gaps exist in the opportunities, participation, and benefits derived from the aquaculture subsector. The recommendation is geared towards integrating and implementing gender base objectives in policy frameworks in the aquatic systems in Nigeria; especially ensuring that the proposed National Aquaculture policy is gender transformative.

Keywords: Agrifood-system, Aquaculture, GAPo, Male, Female

Improving Access to Credit for Smallholder Women Farmers to Boost Food Systems Transformation in Nigeria: A Case for Policy and Action

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Organisation: IFAD-Value Chain Development Programme

Summit Track: Collaborative Strategies for Achieving Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Abstract

Smallholder women farmers contribute about 70 per cent of food production in the country, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO 2017). This is an indication that women are now very crucial to making foods available in our markets and homes contributing to Agri-food systems transformation. In Nigeria, a major constraint faced by women in the agricultural sector is lack of access to formal credit. This challenge is felt more acutely by women than men. According to a 2022 report by ActionAid, 77% of Nigerian women in the agri-food systems lack access to government credits like those in the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and other financial institutions. As a result, this study examined gender equality in access to credit. Qualitative research methods were employed, utilising secondary data and sources like policy documents, journals, documentation review and the internet. The data were subjected to thematic analysis, using the Gender in Agricultural Policies Analysis tool (GAPo) to scrutinize how gender responsive were government policies on access to finance for women in the agricultural sector. The findings of the study revealed that since 1973 eight credit schemes have been introduced by the government to simplify access to credit for smallholder farmers across the country. None of the schemes was gender sensitive and responsive. Access to these funds by women farmers remained low. For instance, 270,545 farmers benefited from the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme Fund (ACGSF) between 2012 – 2016. 29.77% of beneficiaries were female while 69.89% of beneficiaries were male. (ActionAid 2017).

The study recommends integration of gender in the allocation of funds in the new National Agricultural Development Fund (NADF) to boost economic empowerment of smallholder women farmers through access to credit. The study proposes that at least 40% of the fund is reserved for smallholder women farmers.

Keywords: Financial Inclusion, Gender, Food Systems

Gender Inequality as Constraint on Women Occupying Administrative Leadership Positions in Oyo State Civil Service

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Summit Track: Collaborative Strategies for Achieving Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Abstract

Globally, in Africa, and particularly in Nigeria, top leadership positions are seen as the exclusive rights of men. Females are traditionally perceived as subordinates to men and this has been a common norm across all Social, religious and cultural groups within the Society, hence the Nigerian system is characterized by the Patriarchal system. However, in recent decades some women who are able to transcend cultural barriers and attain leadership positions are gaining more visibility and recognition, though the percentage is relatively few or lower when compared to that of their male counterparts. The study premised on the Liberalist Feminist's theory and a cross-sectional survey design, focused on women in the Civil Service in Oyo State, located at Agodi Ibadan, in the South West geo-political zone of Nigeria. Twenty out of the 27 ministries in the study location were purposively selected. A sample size of 513 women who are either Permanent Secretaries, Directors, Assistant Directors, Heads of Departments and other Principal officers constituted the study population. The questionnaire and interview guide were employed to elicit information on their perception about the promotion procedure, the nature of constraints confronting them and their coping strategies. Quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28, while the qualitative data was content-analyzed. The findings revealed that women have not been offered the privilege to enjoy promotion towards occupying administrative leadership positions in Oyo State Civil service despite, possessing various academic qualifications and working experiences as their male counterparts that could serve as major propellers towards enjoying such benefits. Coping strategies employed by women for success included but not limited to self-reliance, gaining more academic qualification at workplace to be able to motivate themselves towards occupying various leadership positions in the Oyo State Civil service. The need for eliminating stereotypes from the collective conscience and the involvement of women in decision making process, at the Oyo state civil Service was recommended.

Keywords: Gender inequality, Leadership positions, Oyo State Civil Service

Predictive Analysis: Clean Cooking and Health of Women and Children in Nigeria

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Summit Track: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

In Nigeria, the health of women and children is significantly impacted by cooking practices, with a large proportion of households, particularly in rural areas, relying on solid unclean fuels such as wood and charcoal. These fuels contribute to a range of health issues, including respiratory problems, low birth weight, and adverse pregnancy outcomes. This study aims to evaluate the broader health impacts of clean cooking on women and children in Nigeria through a combination of logistic and linear regression analyses using secondary data from various sources, including the 2018 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (DHS). We analyzed data on birth outcomes, respiratory symptoms, and cooking fuel types. Logistic regression models assessed the association between cooking fuel type (clean vs. unclean) and health outcomes such as stillbirth, low birth weight, and preterm birth. Additionally, linear regression models examined the relationship between cooking fuel type and continuous health indicators like birth weight and pregnancy duration. Our logistic regression results indicated that the use of unclean fuels was significantly associated with higher odds of adverse birth outcomes: stillbirth (OR = 1.14, 95% CrI: 0.08 to 0.20), low birth weight (OR = -0.09, 95% CrI: -0.31 to 0.10), and preterm birth (OR = -0.01, 95% CrI: -0.33 to 0.31). Linear regression analysis further supported these findings, showing a negative association between unclean fuel use and both birth weight and pregnancy duration. In terms of respiratory disease, the logistic regression model for women showed an odds ratio of 14.81 (95% CI: 1.79 to 122.51) associated with the use of candles, highlighting additional risks from poor indoor air quality. These findings highlight the substantial health benefits that could be realized by transitioning to clean cooking fuels. Policymakers should promote the adoption of clean cooking technologies, such as LPG and biogas, through subsidies and educational campaigns, particularly in rural areas where unclean fuel use is most prevalent. This shift could improve birth outcomes, reduce respiratory diseases, and enhance overall health for women and children in Nigeria, leading to a better quality of life and reduced healthcare costs.

Keywords: Health, Women, Clean-cooking, Children, Nigeria.

Empowering Women in African Agriculture: Addressing Marginalisation, Leveraging Technology, and Fostering Partnerships for Sustainable Development

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Organisation: WGCo

Summit Track: Collaborative Strategies for Achieving Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Abstract

Women constitute a significant share of the agricultural labor force however they have faced persistent marginalisation due to our patriarchal society. Despite their active participation, most women do not have access to nor control over land, capital or productive resources. The objective of this research is to explore women's experiences and propose collaborative strategies to eliminate gender inequality in achieving food security and sustainable agriculture. Some of the collaborative strategies identified through this research include partnerships with agribusinesses, agric-tech startups, research institutes, and non-profits. For example, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture's Youth Agripreneurs program provides essential training and support, empowering women and changing perceptions of agriculture as a viable business option. The research underscores the importance of technological advancements in bridging the gender gap in agriculture. Digital platforms and mobile applications can provide women with access to market information, financial services, and modern farming techniques. Programs like the One Acre Fund, partnering with digital platforms such as M-Pesa, exemplify the success of integrating technology with microfinancing to support women farmers. The research used a two-pronged approach in its survey targeted at smallholder farmers and agric-focused organisations in eleven countries; Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. 29,954 youths, 299 smallholder farmers and 110 agric-focused organisations participated in this research. Case studies reveal the nuanced experiences of women in agriculture, with most women not in total control of productive resources and when they are, they do not have control over their earnings or harvest. These insights highlight the complexities and varied dynamics within women's roles in agriculture. In conclusion, achieving food security and sustainable agriculture in Africa demands a gender-inclusive approach. By fostering partnerships, leveraging technology, and providing targeted support, stakeholders can empower women, ensuring their active participation and contribution to the agricultural sector, thereby driving economic growth and poverty reduction

Keywords: Women in Agriculture, Gender Inclusion

Nigerian Women in Political and Corporate Leadership: The Role of Gender Quotas in Enhancing Gender Equity

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Summit Track: Gender Equity: A Catalyst for Poverty Alleviation

Abstract

This study analyses how the implementation of gender quotas will enhance political and corporate leadership diversity in Nigeria. The participation of Nigerian women in political and corporate leadership roles remains abysmal despite constituting nearly half of Nigeria's population. In the 2023 elections, women were elected to 3.7% of the seats in the National Assembly, far below Africa's regional average of 27% and the global average of 26.9%. The aim of implementing gender quotas is to address the disparities and mandate a minimum representation of women in leadership positions. Within political contexts, this can serve as an instrument to promote the participation of women in legislatures and executive bodies. Using a mixed method approach, this study combines quantitative analysis of representation data from various regions and sectors with qualitative interviews of key stakeholders in politics and corporate leadership. Data sources include election results, corporate board compositions, policy documents, a comprehensive analysis of existing literature, and interviews with women leaders and policymakers. The results demonstrate that in regions where they have been implemented, gender quotas have significantly increased women's participation in political bodies and corporate boards. A case study indicates that Rwandan women held 67% of parliamentary seats in 2023, an advancement upon breaking the world record in 2003 with a result of 30%. Likewise, in corporate settings, the implementation of gender quotas on boards and senior management positions increased gender equality, leading to an overall improvement in decision-making and organizational efficiency. This paper also examines the challenges and criticisms of gender quotas, including potential tokenism and resistance to implementation. Ultimately, the results emphasize the urgent need to adopt comprehensive strategies to combine gender quotas with broader initiatives aimed at cultural change and institutional support, to achieve sustained progress in gender parity in leadership.

Keywords: Gender quotas, political leadership, corporate leadership, inclusion, governance.

Barriers to women's health joint advocacy and collective action in Nigeria

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Contributing Authors: Somawina Nwegbu, Adetayo Adetunji

Organisation: Policy Innovation Centre, Abuja

Summit Track: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

Mobilising collective action from interest groups, technical working groups, and coalitions requires an understanding of the landscape and prioritizing them for increased benefits. In Nigeria, health advocacy efforts have yielded some results in the improvement of funding and adoption of policies. Yet, gaps persist as Nigeria launches her sector-wide approach to programming (SWAp). This paper explored barriers and opportunities to implementing joint advocacy and collective action for women's health priorities in Nigeria. A mixed method design involving a quantitative (survey) and qualitative (key informant interviews and focus discussions) was used to explore barriers and opportunities for advancing women's health priorities in Lagos, Kaduna, Kano and national level. The study was guided by two theoretical frameworks (advocacy strategy and advocacy coalition frameworks). We used Nvivo software (version 12) and SPSS version 23 to analyse the qualitative and quantitative data respectively. There are limitations to the impact and scale of women's health joint advocacy including limited funding, political alignment, bureaucratic inertia, poor contextual relevance and a siloed approach to advocacy. Our study found a critical shortage of advocates with requisite skills, and technical capacity gaps exist across all study locations. Approximately 39% of the respondents were from professions that are not health-related, and there was no indication that they had acquired additional health certifications that would position them better as women's health advocates. Regarding advocacy capacity, there were geographic differences - the incidence of poor communication skills was higher in Kano (79.8%) and Kaduna (67.5%) than in Lagos (36.3%) and national (62.1%). Addressing these barriers is critical in scaling women's health joint advocacy and collective action in Nigeria. It is also important to contextualize efforts in resolving the barriers and align with the country's sector-wide approach.

Keywords: Joint advocacy, collective action, Women's Health.

Examining the Multi-Dimensional Impact of Educational Inequality on Almajiri Children in Northern Nigeria

Presenting Author: Iyanu Joseph

Organisation: Organisation- Independent Researcher

Summit Track: Educational Equity: Building Foundations for a Prosperous Future

Abstract

The Hausa-Fulani, Northern Nigeria's largest ethnic group, face significant socioeconomic challenges compared to the Southern regions. Historical, religious, and socio-political factors contribute to this disparity, further exacerbated by geographical issues. Urban children generally achieve higher education levels than their rural counterparts due to school accessibility. The Almajiri education system, rooted in Islamic traditions, was not recognised as adequate during British colonial rule. In 2010, 9.5 million Almajiri children attended traditional Islamic schools, representing a significant portion of Nigeria's out-of-school children. This suggests a critical link between educational outcomes and the Almajiri population, warranting further exploration.

A mixed-method approach is used to analyse data from 1999 to 2019, to assess the impact of Universal Basic Education (UBE) and Education for All (EFA) policies on Almajiri children. Indicators such as attendance, dropout rates, and years of schooling were examined. Due to gaps in government datasets, data is sourced from external organisations. The study indicates a significant educational gap between Northern and Southern Nigeria, influenced by ethno-religious tensions and historical factors. The EFA policy aimed to 'Africanise' education post-independence fails to improve outcomes for Almajiri children. Parental attitudes towards Western education and the lack of integration between Almajiric and secular education contribute to low attendance. Ethnic and human capital considerations also affect educational outcomes, with Hausa-Fulani prioritising ethnic ties over formal education. Girls face higher rates of educational exclusion, exacerbated by gendered roles and Boko Haram's anti-Western ideology, as seen in the Chibok girls' kidnapping. Educational inequality in Northern Nigeria is shaped by historical, ethno-religious, and socio-political factors. State interventions have been insufficient, perpetuating disparities. The impact of insurgency on gender equity in education has been overlooked. The study calls for culturally sensitive policies and better integration for Almajiri children. Recommendations include addressing parental attitudes, improving teacher quality, and ensuring security to mitigate insurgency's impact on education.

Keywords: Ethno-Religious Tensions, Almajiri Education, Socioeconomics.

Household Disposable Income and the Girl-child Access to Basic Education

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Organisation: Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER)

Summit Track: Educational Equity: Building Foundations for a Prosperous Future

Abstract

The access of the girl-child to basic public education is seemingly circumscribed, and the present reduction in household disposable incomes may be exacerbating the situation. Again, it is projected that by 2050, 1 (one) of every 13 births globally will occur in Nigeria. So, if these future mothers are poorly educated a vicious circle of multi-dimensional poverty may be unwittingly entrenched over time. Hence, free and compulsory Universal Basic Education -UBE, was introduced. However, access to basic education remained a function of household resource (disposable income) availability. If households' level of disposable income guarantees access to basic education, thereby reducing persistent inequality, what are the factors driving these levels of income? Therefore, this study centred on social exclusion theory and was carried out in Kano and Ibadan metropolises, which were purposively selected. The respondents (Kano 75 and 60 from Ibadan) were purposively selected. The sampling involved expectant mothers who have a girl-child in junior secondary school. They were sampled as attendees in the ante-natal clinics in the primary health centres at Fegge, Taurani, Ibadan North, and South West LGAs respectively. Specifically, a research hypothesis guided the study at a 0.05 level of significance. Factors affecting disposable income were analysed; the absence of policy on family support programme, parental level of education and family size (having school-age-children) were all significant factors. Again, the hypothesis, indicated; a positive, moderately significant relationship between the household disposable income and the girl-child access to basic education ($r = 0.69$, $p=0.05$). Also, the result revealed that the level of disposable income availability had a significant positive relationship with access to public basic education for the girl-child. Recommendations were made regarding strengthening the political will on the girl-child's basic educational issues, and effective coordination of the child rights protection framework that are beneficial to parents and the girl-child in line with the study's findings.

Keywords: Household income, Girl-child, basic education, Nigeria.

Gender Transformative Approaches in Agrifood Systems: Building Economic Resilience through Norm Change

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Contributing Authors: Steven Cole, Sarah Msita and Olajumoke Adeyeye

Organisation: International Institute of Tropical Agriculture

Summit Track: Gender Equity: A Catalyst for Poverty Alleviation

Abstract

Social and gender norms impede the abilities of women to build economic resilience, increasing their vulnerability to climate change impacts as they dictate and reinforce social inequalities. They also shape unequal economic opportunities and agency for women and men. Addressing harmful norms is key to transforming agrifood systems (AFS). Gender Transformative Approaches (GTAs) present viable interventions in AFS by targeting normative constraints and building critical consciousness. However, there needed to be more guidance on where and how to intervene and specific GTA designs to trigger transformative change. To fill this gap, we conducted research, including qualitative assessments, to identify and understand which norms are restrictive for women at various institutional levels. Additionally, we conducted quantitative assessments of the perceptions of different AFS actors regarding inequitable norms that limit economic resilience, especially for women. The two assessments focused on women and men producers, processors, traders, and policy influencers within the cassava, chicken, and fish AFS in Tanzania. The quantitative assessment employed probability and non-probability sampling approaches to obtain a sample size of 1455. Results indicate that restrictive norms across AFS revolve around five domains, namely financial and material resources, technology, participation and leadership, division of labor and mobility, and gender meta-norms. Leveraging the evidence from our research, we set up participatory stakeholder validation and consultation processes to identify specific leverage points (where to intervene) and associated levers (how to intervene) at family, community, market, and state institutional levels. The identified leverage points and levers are currently being utilized to inform the co-design of and, later, test gender transformative interventions in collaboration with partners, targeting inequitable norms within AFS. These gender transformative interventions will later be implemented by partners with the supposition that they will bring about greater economic resilience and equity within agrifood systems, ultimately contributing to gains in productivity, food, nutrition, and economic security.

Keywords: Gender, norms, resilience, agrifood, transformative.

Exploring “Nwa Girls”: Ashake Foundation’s Apprenticeship Tool for Sustainable Women Empowerment

Presenting Author: Adegbile Mayowa

Organisation: Ashake Foundation

Summit Track: Gender Equity: A Catalyst for Poverty Alleviation

Abstract

For many years, apprenticeship has been a critical instrument for the transmission of knowledge that leads to economic growth and development. Ashake Foundation in its bid to ensure sustainable women empowerment within the women’s development ecosystem came up with “NWA Girls” a vocational apprenticeship plan. Women who have been involved in this project were 500 in number while more than 3,000 others benefited indirectly within three years. This research seeks to explore the NWA Girls apprenticeship strategy to establish its uniqueness, impact, and sustainability. For economic growth and social development, the empowerment of women through skill acquisition is very important. The NWA Girls initiative by the Ashake Foundation was created to educate women on vocational skills that can spur entrepreneurship and self-dependency. In this regard, the study evaluates the effectiveness of the NWA Girls apprenticeship model with a focus on implementation, outcomes as well as transferability into other areas. The “NWA Girls” apprenticeship model is assessed in this study through survey research. A random sample of eighty female trainees (n=80) who participated in the program from 2022 to date was selected. This involved structured questionnaires and interviews conducted to gather data on their economic plans, income levels and dissemination of skills after training. Results showed that 60% of women trained through the “NWA Girls” model have now become entrepreneurs creating micro-scale businesses. Additionally, 20% of those who got trained are now trainers passing down skills they learned. There has been a considerable rise of 78% in the average minimum income among trained women. These results demonstrate a significant effect on economic empowerment for participants. The Ashake Foundation’s “NWA Girls” apprenticeship model has exhibited remarkable prospects for sustainable women empowerment. This initiative not only imparts essential technical skills but also cultivates entrepreneurship and self-employment among females. The success of this project indicates that the NWA Girls’ model may be replicable across other apprentice programs and therefore, more research should be carried out to explore further its wider applicability and long term implications.

Keywords: Poverty, Apprenticeship, Gender, Women, Entrepreneurship

Unlocking Girls' Potential: Harnessing the value of Female Mentorship in Empowering Adolescent Girls and Addressing Gender Inequalities in Northern Nigeria

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Contributing Authors: Roselyn Odeh, Aisha Suleiman Ahmad., Yemi Dorcas Danladi, Farouq Umar Abdullahi and Mohammed Kabir

Organisation: Society for Family Health

Summit Track: Creating Secure Livelihoods and Decent Jobs for All

Abstract

Northern Nigeria faces significant gender disparities, limiting girls' access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. The region's stark statistics reveal a dire need for change: 60% of girls are married before the age of 18, and only 22% complete secondary school, compared to 44% of boys. Furthermore, women hold a mere 6% of leadership positions, perpetuating gender-based decision-making gaps. To break these cycles of inequality, A360 Life Family and Health (LFH) mentorship pairs adolescent girls with mentors; empowering them to pursue economic, educational and career goals, and develop self-confidence and agency to act on their goals. This study assesses the impact of LFH on enhancing girls' human capital and prospects for secure livelihoods. The quantitative study employed a comprehensive pre and post-exposure approach, measuring gains in domains of human capital including education, health, economic empowerment, and social protection. 120 adolescent girls were recruited across Kaduna, Kano and Jigawa for the baseline and 4 weeks after interventions girls were followed up for end-line interviews. The intervention involved trained Mentors taking married adolescent girls through 4 touchpoints curriculum to improve their health knowledge on SRH including modern contraceptives and their value in helping them achieve greater health and well-being, economic autonomy, self-efficacy and agency. Additionally, girls are exposed to capacity-building sessions on nutrition, personal hygiene, effective communication skills, vocational skills, finances and business. Data obtained was analysed on SPSS using a statistical t-test for comparison. At baseline, 53% of participants reported having the ability to manage domestic misunderstandings and demonstrate skills in resolving domestic issues, compared to 85% post-intervention. Similarly, 63% demonstrated effective communication about their economic and financial goals at baseline, increasing to 95% at end-line, additionally, 11% are not in agreement with education as a tool to improve girl's ability for economic productivity this has dropped to 0.8% at end-line. Our findings indicate that 83% of participants showed significant gains in at least one domain, with notable improvements in education, economic empowerment, and psychosocial well-being. Enhancing human capital for girls is critical for promoting secure livelihoods and decent jobs. Our study demonstrates the effectiveness of comprehensive livelihood interventions (LFH) in achieving this goal. We recommend that policymakers and practitioners prioritize such initiatives, ensuring adequate time for skills development and consolidation and addressing gender disparities to provide equal opportunities to married adolescent girls.

Keywords: Human capital, girls' empowerment, livelihood, education and Mentorship

Reducing women's vulnerability and poverty through Saving and financial inclusion; Nigeria for Women project implementation

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Summit Track: Creating Secure Livelihoods and Decent Jobs for All

Abstract

Women and girls in Nigeria have remained poor, vulnerable and weak due to limited access to land, political positions, education, and financial opportunities perpetuated by socio-cultural and patriarchal system. The Nigeria for Women project, a five-year project funded by government of Nigeria and supported by the World Bank, was set up to create access and improve women economic empowerment through economic livelihoods. The project recruited and trained Ward Facilitators (WFs) who conducted community mobilisation and advocacy and they recruited and trained the Women Affinity Groups. The objective of this paper was to examine how the NFWP increased access to financial literacy, promoted a savings culture, and fostered financial inclusion among Women Affinity Groups. The paper employs a multi-faceted method such as review of women's socio-economic status, secondary data analysis, and the use of the project's Results Framework (RF) for quantitative data. The results showed that the project mobilized 458,208 women with total of 22,094 Affinity Groups were formed in Abia, Akwa Ibom, Kebbi, Niger, Ogun and Taraba. However, 71% of the women reported an increased Savings and 86% of them said to have improved their savings culture, while 88% of the Women in the Affinity Group reported to have registered bank accounts, which enhanced financial inclusion. Finally, 31% of the WAG members indicated access to credit from various financial institutions, which helped them increased business and income generation. In conclusion, the project significantly increased women's financial inclusion, including opened bank accounts, accessed credit, and developed a savings culture which increased saving and income. These are catalysts for women's business growth and development.

Keywords: Women's livelihoods, financial inclusion, Saving culture and Women Affinity Groups.

Policy actions to catalyze sustainable food system transformation in Northeastern Nigeria

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Organisation: Sahel Consulting Agriculture & Nutrition Limited

Summit Track: Collaborative Strategies for Achieving Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Abstract:

Abstract

Despite their significant contribution to agriculture, women face considerable gender-specific challenges such as restrictions to finance, inputs and limited access to land ownership – as women own less than 10% of agricultural land in Africa and receive less than 10% of agricultural credit. Unequal access to education, traditional gender roles and social norms further restrict women's engagement and decision-making power in agriculture. In 2019, the federal government of Nigeria launched the National Gender Policy in Agriculture (NGPA) to provide a framework and policy direction for reducing the vulnerability of women to biases in farming, closing the gender gap, and addressing inequality in the agricultural sector. This study employed a review of literature and research on smallholder women farmers' empowerment, accessibility to input, credit and other productive resources in Nigeria. A review of secondary data specifically targeting the Northeastern region of Nigeria revealed that the policy has not significantly promoted gender equality in agricultural value chains despite government intervention. The study findings revealed that the policy has not significantly improved the standard of living of rural women farmers in the region and most of the Small Holder Farmers (SHFs) are not even aware of the existence of the policy. Furthermore, the policy has yet to deliver on its primary objective of developing gender-based competencies to address gender gaps and gender-aware programming. Unlocking the potential of women smallholder farmers requires investments in functional pathways amongst relevant government agencies, private institutions, and women farmers (and/or their representative bodies) to guide the implementation and review of gender-based innovative strategies at the National and State levels. This must start with an increase in the number of women SHFs in the region who understand, champion and lobby for the integration of gender- provisions within the policy. This will facilitate an increase in the number and resources allocated to public sector programs designed to intrinsically cater to the needs of women SHFs.

Keywords: Policy, Food System, North Eastern Nigeria.

Prevalence and Correlates of Sexual Satisfaction and Quality of Life Among Married Adults in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State Nigeria

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Summit Track: Gender Equity: A Catalyst for Poverty Alleviation

Abstract

Sexual satisfaction can be described as a personalized feeling powerfully related to previous sexual practices, existing anticipations, and upcoming ambitions. Sexual satisfaction is one of the critical factors affecting the health of married adults and an important indicator of quality of life. Poor sexual satisfaction has been extensively reported as a public health concern as it plays a role in the development of risky sexual behaviours, mental illness, social crimes, and, ultimately, divorce. However, there is limited research on this research in many developing countries, including Nigeria. This study determined the prevalence and correlates of sexual satisfaction and quality of life among married adults in Ibadan Local Government Area of Oyo State. A cross-sectional study was carried out among currently married adults aged between 18 and 64 years. A semi-structured, interviewer-administered questionnaire were adapted from standardized tools and used for data collection. Descriptive statistics, Chi-square ($p < 0.05$), and logistic regression analysis were performed using SPSS 27. A total of 427 adults were interviewed with a mean age of 38.90 ± 10.33 years, 60.0% were females 60.0%, 60.9% were self-employed and 88.8% were in a monogamous marriage. Majority of the participants expressed good sexual satisfaction (75.4%). There was an association between sexual satisfaction and quality of life of married adults ($\chi^2 = 6.417$, $p = 0.011$). The prevalence of sexual satisfaction was high in this study and that of quality of life was moderate. Correlates such as age, education, length of marriage, were significantly associated with sexual satisfaction and also quality of life. Information obtained will be beneficial for the development of educational programs.

Keywords: Sexual Satisfaction, Quality of Life.

Navigating Equity and Empowerment: Exploring Gender Dynamics and Inclusive Leadership in the Creative Arts Sector

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Summit Track: Gender Equity: A Catalyst for Poverty Alleviation

Abstract

This qualitative research investigates the intricate interplay of gender dynamics and inclusive leadership within Nigeria's Creative Arts sector, focusing on navigating equity and empowerment. The rationale for this study stems from the understanding that the Creative Arts sector is a dynamic and influential space that mirrors societal norms and power structures. Despite its potential for progressive change, disparities in professional opportunities, recognition, and overall empowerment based on gender persist. The study employs an in-depth interview methodology to gather rich, qualitative data. Twenty participants from diverse roles within arts and culture agencies were purposively selected to ensure a comprehensive exploration of perspectives and experiences. The data collection process involved semi-structured interviews, allowing for flexibility and depth in responses. The interviews were conducted over a three-month period, ensuring a thorough and varied set of insights. Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis, identifying key themes and patterns related to gender dynamics, leadership practices, and their impact on equity and empowerment. The findings reveal significant disparities in professional opportunities and recognition based on gender within the Creative Arts sector. Participants highlighted specific challenges, such as gender bias, lack of support, and unequal access to resources. However, the study also uncovered instances of successful navigation of these challenges, often facilitated by inclusive leadership practices. The study underscores the critical role of inclusive leadership in addressing gender disparities within the Creative Arts sector. The results provide valuable insights into the challenges and successes experienced by individuals in this field, highlighting the importance of fostering inclusive environments. The key takeaways suggest that targeted leadership practices can significantly mitigate gender-related challenges, promoting equity and empowerment.

Keywords: Gender Dynamics, Inclusive Leadership, Creative Arts Sector, Equity, Empowerment.

Preventing female cancers as a stimulus for sustainable economic growth: a narrative review of implementation of Nigeria for Women Project (NFWP)

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Summit Track: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

The pivotal role of Nigerian women in economic growth of the nation has been well documented. Nigerian women own 41% of micro-businesses. Nigeria for Women Project (NFWP) is a World Bank sponsored intervention to harness economy potentials of women to stimulate national growth. The economically empowered woman can be thrown back into poverty by cancer. We are therefore proposing integration of cancer prevention strategies into the activities of NFWP. This is a narrative review of implementation of the NFWP with the aim of theoretically exploring the feasibility of integrating cancer prevention into the project. Secondary data available on the website of NFWP was reviewed and implementation strategies for the project were outlined. Possible points for integrating cervical cancer prevention strategies were outlined. The financial and health implications were subsequently projected. The NFWP economic empowerment program is being implemented in 6 pilot states. Women enrolled into the program are encouraged to join the Women Affinity Group (WAG). The group serves as the institutional platform for capacity building of women enrolled into the program. Cumulatively, about 856,660 women grouped into 22,096 WAG have been economically empowered across the 6 pilot states. The regular meeting of the WAG provides an unprecedented opportunity to educate these women about cancer prevention. Integrating positive health seeking behavior interventions into economic empowerment programs for women is not only feasible, it could be cost saving with potential for synergistic effect on the individual programs being integrated. Economic empowerment programs should consider integrating positive health seeking behavior information into their programs to protect the women from the financial toxicity of cancer treatment.

Keywords: Gender Inequity, Economic Empowerment, Cancer Prevention

Male Engagement: Transforming Gender Inequalities and Empowering SRH Decision- Making Among Married Adolescent Girls Aged 15-19 in Jigawa State

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Organisation: Society for Family Health

Summit Track: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

A gender-transformative approach to contraception focuses on challenging and changing harmful gender norms, roles, and power dynamics that affect access to and use of contraceptive methods. Gender relations within households and communities are based on attitudes and beliefs rooted in social norms. These concentrate power in the hands of male partners and older family members, with disadvantages girls in relation to their mobility, resources, opportunities, and decision-making abilities. This approach recognizes that traditional gender roles often restrict women's reproductive choices and limit their access to sexual and reproductive health services. In Nigeria, 23% of women aged 15-49 have an unmet need for family planning. Furthermore, only 10% of married adolescents (15-19 years) use modern contraception, and a staggering 62% of women believe that a husband is justified in beating his wife if she refuses sex. The A360 project seeks to explore how gender-transformative approaches, facilitated through deliberate male engagement for shared decision making improves contraceptive access for married adolescent girls aged 15-19. Male engagement strategy involves facilitated interaction between husbands and the lead facilitator to promoting girls' access to and choice over contraceptive use, utilizing the MMA (Matasa Matan Arewa) program to also engage husbands through community religious and traditional leaders. The study employs a comparative retrospective methodology to analyze data from two different LGAs. It compared uptake of modern contraceptives among females aged 15-19 years across 15 intervention facilities implementing the A360 male engagement intervention with 15 control facilities not implementing the male engagement component in Jigawa State. Data was retrospectively collected over a 12-month period and analyzed using descriptive statistics to compare the percentage differences between the two sites (intervention and control). The study findings indicate a significant increase in contraceptive access among adolescent girls aged 15-19 in the intervention sites with male engagement with 4,571 adolescent girls in the intervention sites adopting contraceptive methods, compared to 937 in the control sites; a difference of 3,634 over a 12-month period. The significant increase in contraceptive use among adolescent girls aged 15-19 in intervention facilities with male engagement compared to control facilities highlights the value of collaboratively engaging men to address gender inequalities and power dynamics that impedes on quality SRH access for married adolescent girls.

Keywords: Adolescents, Male, Engagement, Gender, Decision-making.

Knowledge and Attitude of Blood Donors toward Sickle Cell Anemia in Ibadan

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Organisation: SmileBuilders Initiative

Summit Track: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

Sickle cell anaemia (SCA) affects about 2% of Nigeria's population and is a significant healthcare challenge. Different therapeutic approaches have been developed to manage SCA which include blood transfusion. In a bid to develop a sustainable solution to the blood supply pool, the SmileBuilders Initiative organizes a blood donation drive (Donate-A-Pint Project) quarterly in Ibadan, Nigeria. This study aimed to assess the awareness, knowledge, and attitude of blood donors in Ibadan, Nigeria to SCA. A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted at the University College Hospital Blood Bank in Ibadan. A validated questionnaire, based on similar studies in Nigeria, was used to collect data from blood donors. The Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used for data analysis, and the chi-square test of independence assessed associations between variables, with a significance level of 0.05. Among 205 donors, 68.8% (141) were male, and 42.4% (87) were over 24 years old. Most donors 60.0% (123) were university students. While 12.3% (25) had never heard of SCA, 68.3% (140) were voluntary donor, and 79.5% (163) were aware of their genotype. Regarding intrauterine diagnosis of HbSS, 20.0% (41) would allow pregnancy, 31.7% (65) would abort, and 48.3% (99) were undecided. Most respondents 73.2% (150) had good knowledge of SCA (mean score = 7.0/10.0). If partners were found to have SCA after marriage, 42.9% (88) were undecided. The majority (86.3%) of the respondents were willing to opt for genetic counselling as a necessary precautionary attitude towards sickle cell anaemia. Knowledge of SCA was significantly associated with sex ($p = 0.017$) and education level ($p = 0.001$). Blood donors in Ibadan have good knowledge, awareness, and attitudes toward SCA. However, more health education, including studying the social and behavioural change of this demographic would benefit the population.

Keywords: Sickle Cell Anaemia; Blood; Donor; HbSS; SCA

Gender Equity in Technology and Innovation: Pathways to Reducing Poverty

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Summit Track: Gender Equity: A Catalyst for Poverty Alleviation

Abstract

Given tremendous progress towards gender equality, gaps exist, notably in technology and innovation. The global agenda for sustainable development emphasises gender equality and the empowerment of women. Technology and innovation are critical to generating economic growth, creating jobs, and enhancing quality of life. However, gender disparities in access and involvement in these sectors continue to impede growth. This study looks into how encouraging gender parity in technology and innovation can function as a driver for the reduction of poverty. This study uses a mixed-method approach, which combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The quantitative component entailed statistical analysis of secondary data from global databases, such as the ones maintained by the World Bank and UNESCO, to discover trends and relationships between gender equity in technology and indicators of poverty. The qualitative component comprised in-depth interviews with important stakeholders, such as policymakers, industry executives, and women in technology, to learn about the hurdles and drivers of gender equity in this sector. The results show a substantial link between gender equity in technology and reduction in poverty, hence, highlighting numerous avenues for gender equity to reduce poverty, including increased work opportunities, more entrepreneurial activity, and better access to financial resources and educational opportunities for women. Therefore, enabling women's equal access to technology education and opportunity empowers individuals while also driving greater economic and social progress. Policymakers as well as stakeholders must prioritise gender-inclusive policies and practices in order to fully realise the enormous potential of technology and innovation for alleviating poverty.

Keywords: Gender equity; Technology; Innovation; Poverty reduction; Economic growth

Health inequity as a factor hindering cervical cancer elimination: A case study of the Ruga Nomadic Pastoralist Communities in Nigeria

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Summit Track: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

Equity is a key social concept in sustainable development discourse. The estimated 50 million nomadic pastoralists in Africa are among the most “hard-to-reach” populations for health service delivery. Some studies have identified these communities as potential disease reservoirs, particularly those slated for elimination and eradication. The constant mobility of nomadic populations excludes them or places them at the edge of healthcare services. Cervical cancer is preventable and curable, as long as it is detected early and managed effectively. Yet it is the 4th most common form of cancer among women worldwide, with the disease claiming the lives of almost 350,000 women in 2022. Few diseases reflect global inequities as much as Cervical Cancer. Nearly 94% of the deaths in 2022 occurred in low and middle-income countries. This study targeted women of reproductive age at the Ruga Community of Kyami, Galadimawa, and Gudu Districts of FCT, Abuja with a sample size of 185 women using semi-structured interviews about their knowledge and access to screening for Cervical Cancer. In these communities, Cervical Cancers are not identified or treated until advanced stages due to insufficient access to reproductive healthcare services, effective screening and early treatment. There is a dire need of advocacy and education across these communities that tend to be the major precursor of high mortality rates of Cervical Cancer in Nigeria resulting from lack of awareness on early detection and subsequent late presentation to Hospitals. This will be a major leap in achieving Global Strategy for Cervical Cancer Elimination which rests on three key pillars and their corresponding targets: 90% of girls fully vaccinated with the HPV vaccine by the age of 15, 70% of women screened using a high-performance test by the age of 35, and again by the age of 45, 90% of women with pre-cancer treated and 90% of women with invasive cancer managed.

Keywords: Healthcare, Inequities, Nomadic, Cervical, Cancer.

Empowering Rural Women through Financial Inclusion: A Case Study of Nigeria for Women Project (NFWP) in Niger State

Presenting Author: Victor Patrick¹

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Organisation: ¹Diadem Consults Initiative, ² Nigeria for Women Project, Niger State Ministry of women affairs and social development.

Abstract

Niger State is among the six states implementing the project's pilot phase, where 75,545 women were successfully registered across three LGAs. These women were financially disadvantaged, lacking savings and access to credit facilities for their businesses, unlike their male counterparts. The State Project Coordinating Unit (SPCU) engaged stakeholders and established LGA and community project structures. They formed Women Affinity Groups (WAGs) and trained them in the operationalization of savings and loan practices, gender, standardized business plan development, and financial literacy. SPCU conducted orientations on financial inclusion to enrol more rural women into WAGs and carried out assessments to identify the beneficiaries who qualify for the livelihood grant. The livelihood grant is given to WAG members who are engaged in income-generating activities and are actively saving and accessing loans in their respective WAGs. Before the project, less than 2% of the 75,545 rural women had bank accounts or any form of savings. After the intervention, 100% of the women now have bank accounts and have accessed credit facilities from their WAG groups, which was a criterion for receiving the livelihood grant. The study shows that the formation of WAGs and the socioeconomic empowerment of rural women are significantly related. The study underscores the importance of targeted financial inclusion strategies and capacity building in promoting gender equality as a catalyst for economic development and poverty alleviation. The 100% achievement has allowed WAG members to access more facilities to grow their businesses and understand the importance of saving.

Keywords: Empowering Rural Women, Financial Inclusion.

Abstract on Economic Security and Women's Experience of Climate Change in the Lake Chad Region

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Summit Track: Gender-Responsive Climate Action for Sustainable Development

Abstract

Economic security is essential for women's independence and empowerment, particularly in patriarchal societies with limited control over resources. In climate-related conflict zones like North-East Nigeria, women face compounded deprivations, including restricted access to land and markets, exacerbated by climate change and violence. This study explores how women navigate these challenges through interviews with local women and experts. It aims to uncover strategies enabling women's survival despite climate change and armed conflict. By analyzing these insights, the research seeks to understand the impact of intersecting crises on women's economic empowerment in vulnerable regions. This qualitative study investigates the impact of climate change and conflict on women's economic empowerment in the Nigerian Northeast. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews including academics and development practitioners, selected for their expertise in the region. Interviews, conducted in person and via phone, were recorded and transcribed. The study identifies three main mechanisms affecting women's economic empowerment in the Nigerian Northeast. First, climate change and conflict worsen economic deprivations, limiting opportunities. Second, fears for physical security prompt increased out-migration, leading to more female-headed households and enhanced women's agency. Third, weakened governance reduces access to services, as government agencies withdraw from volatile areas, increasing reliance on humanitarian organizations. The analysis highlights how these factors interact to create constraints and opportunities, with increased female-headed households providing some empowerment amidst severe economic and security challenges. Poor governance causes vulnerabilities by diminishing support. The study highlights how climate change and conflict increase economic challenges for women in Northeast Nigeria, with variations based on governance and security conditions. Effective policy and humanitarian responses must address pre-existing limitations and support women's economic empowerment in varying contexts of governance quality.

Keywords: Empowerment, Climate, Conflict, Decision-making, Women

Leveraging Partnerships to Enhance Educational Equity and Reduce Poverty: The Impact of the Digital Skills Accelerator for Girls and Women

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Organisation: Aid for Rural Education Access Initiative (AREAI)

Summit Track: Educational Equity: Building Foundations for a Prosperous Future

Abstract

Equitable and quality education is crucial for reducing poverty and driving socio-economic development, especially for girls and women in underserved communities. Despite these needs, many rural areas face significant barriers to educational access and digital skills development. This study investigates the impact of the Digital Skills Accelerator for Girls and Women (DSA) program on addressing educational inequities and alleviating poverty. It highlights the vital role of partnerships in enhancing educational opportunities and equipping marginalised populations for the digital economy. This research combines quantitative surveys and qualitative case studies using a mixed-methods approach. Data collected from August 2023 to June 2024 in rural Nigerian communities focused on the DSA program's effectiveness. Quantitative data was gathered by surveying 500 households to measure educational access and digital skill acquisition, while interviews with participants, educators, and community leaders provided deeper insights. The DSA program led to a 20% improvement in digital literacy among participants. Based on the Internet Skills Scale by the Oxford Internet Institute and the London School of Economics, the curriculum emphasised foundational digital skills through a learner-centred approach. The study underscores the significance of strategic partnerships with government and international organisations in delivering resources and amplifying the program's impact. The findings demonstrate that targeted educational interventions and effective collaborations can bridge educational gaps, empowering girls and women in marginalised communities. Recommendations include scaling digital skills programs and strengthening partnerships to advance educational equity further and reduce poverty. The DSA program exemplifies how integrating quality education with strategic partnerships fosters substantial socio-economic progress and enhances the prospects for marginalised populations.

Keywords: Educational Equity, Poverty Reduction, Digital Skills, Partnerships, Gender Equality

Equitable and quality education as a catalyst for poverty reduction in Nigeria

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Summit Track: Educational Equity: Building Foundations for a Prosperous Future.

Abstract

For over the past two decades, Nigeria has witnessed a drastic increase in poverty rate with over 88 million of its population living below the poverty line, and about 43 million of this population being women. This work set out to investigate the role of equitable and quality education in poverty reduction in Nigeria and point out how partnerships can enhance educational opportunities for girls and women utilising annual data from 2013-2023. Employing the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) technique, the paper found that gender inequality, education attainment in primary school and education attainment in bachelor's degree had a negative and statistically significant relationship with the poverty rate in Nigeria. However, educational attainment in masters had a positive and statistically significant relationship with the poverty rate in Nigeria during the period investigated. These findings imply that access to primary schooling and attaining the first degree by the female population will have a significant impact in reducing poverty in Nigeria since the labour force will have more population with advanced knowledge available. This will increase their employability and increase their net income. It would also boost productivity, thereby increasing domestic investment and creating more jobs in the country. When more percentage of the population is actively employed with the simultaneous existence of productivity, poverty will be greatly reduced. We therefore recommended that the government should encourage investment in primary and post-secondary school educational attainment, to enable the female population to get equal opportunity for education since it is evident that quality education reduces poverty in the country. The government should also create an enabling environment for foreign investment in education for the girl child, a strategy adopted by other developing countries including Seychelles and India.

Keywords: Poverty rate, Quality education, educational attainment, gender inequality, Poverty reduction.

Gender Gap in STEM Disciplines Among Nigerian University Graduates: Implications for Social Equity Outcomes

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Summit Track: Educational Equity: Building Foundations for a Prosperous Future

Abstract

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights ratified in 1948, acknowledged education as a fundamental human right, countries like Denmark, Norway, Britain, the United States of America, Germany and France have made great efforts to minimize gender gaps in education and occupation. This is because, these nations understood the different needs and abilities of men and women, and they handled these differences in a way that balanced the power imbalances, resulting in their overall progress. Recognizing the pivotal role of Science and Technology, both developing and developed nations worldwide are increasingly prioritizing the development of their human capital in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) to ensure long-term prosperity. As a result, policymakers in Nigeria, have viewed the widespread gender gap in STEM and inadequate STEM expertise as a major challenge for a 21st-century economy. Although there have been significant successes for the women's rights movement over the past years, women still have a long way to go before they have the same opportunities, rights, and freedoms as men. The source of data for the study was through secondary and primary sources, through qualitative and quantitative means with emphasis on public universities STEM students in southwest Nigeria. The study revealed that the world gender gap in 2022 shows that Nordic countries like Denmark, Norway and Switzerland came 1st at 0.013, 2nd 0.016 and 3rd 0.018 scores respectively in the United Nations Gender Inequality Index (GII), while Nigeria ranked 123rd with a score of 0.639 out of a total of 146 countries. With regards to bridging the STEM gender gap, these countries yielded positive results as Iceland closed the gender gap in STEM disciplines from 34% in 2015 to 43% in 2021, Sweden from 34% to 37% and Denmark from 32% in 2015 to 34% in 2021 surpassing EU 33% average, while the STEM gender gap for graduates in Nigeria was 22% for female, demonstrating unequal representation of females in science and technology-related fields and occupations. It was evident that only 5% of Nigerian engineers are female, with one out of every 20 being a woman. In conclusion, Nigeria's Human Development Index will remain low if needed attention is not given to social equity and could further affect inclusive development.

Keywords: Gender gap, Inclusion, Social Equity, STEM, Fairness.

Perception of Female Students on Menstruation-Responsiveness of University of Ibadan Campus

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Summit Track: Advancing Gender Equity in Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

Abstract

Menstruation is a major factor in gender inequality. Menstruation has multi-faceted impacts on the health, education, career opportunities and general well-being of menstruators. Achieving optimum menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) requires access to affordable menstrual hygiene materials (MHMs) to absorb menstrual fluid, safe and private spaces to use them, suitable waste-disposal facilities, accurate and timely information, and time to change MHMs as frequently as necessary. However, the intersection of poverty with the lack of menstruation considerations in policy-making and infrastructural design of public places in Nigeria makes these resources inaccessible to many Nigerian menstruators. This is generally known as period poverty. The objective of the study is to identify the facilitators and barriers to MHH among female students of the University of Ibadan (UI). Data collection is being done through a survey designed to elicit information on respondents' opinions on how menstruation-friendly the university campus is, including questions on access to free, subsidized or affordable MHMs, access to WASH facilities and materials, and access to period-related information across the university. Preliminary data reveal that MHMs are generally accessible on campus but at prices usually higher than market prices, and that free or subsidized MHMs are not present anywhere on campus. While toilets are available across different locations, they sometimes lack water, always lack soap, covered bins and privacy necessary for achieving MHH. This situation does not only portend menstruators' exposure to unpleasant menstrual experiences but also to the risk of contracting reproductive tract infections. Lack of access to the requirements for managing their menstruation on campus can reduce female students' agency while on their periods, thus affecting their academic performance. This can undermine their future career opportunities and further widen the gender inequality gap. It is recommended that stakeholders invest in resources that will ease the management of MHH on the UI Campus.

Keywords: Perception, Menstruation, Menstruator, Period Poverty.

Towards Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Value Chain Analysis of the Aquatic Food System in Edo State, Nigeria

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Organisation: Department of Fisheries Technology, Edo State College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Summit Track: Gender Equity: A Catalyst for Poverty Alleviation

Abstract

In Edo state, different gender categories engage in fish value chains with distinct roles, needs and contributions across them. However, there are perceived inequalities in roles and involvement. The unequal participation of actors is influenced by many factors including gender roles thereby creating a gender gap in their participation. Hence, this study aims to conduct a fish value-chain analysis to evaluate the roles and involvement of women in these value-chains and propose measures that promote gender equality and equity in Edo state. This study employed well-structured questionnaires, key informant interviews and focus group discussions for data collection. 50 questionnaires were distributed each to 13 fish cluster farmers, 13 key informants' interviews and 13 focus group discussions were conducted across the state. This study occurred in September, 2023-January, 2024. We adopted descriptive statistics to analyze data from respondents and information from interviews and group discussions was analyzed using qualitative analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns. Results revealed four fish value-chains: table-sized production, fingerling production, sales and marketing and processing. This finding revealed less participation of women. Gap was seen in gender roles which indicated a male dominated in fingerlings and table-sized production. However, there is a generous involvement of women in processing sales and marketing. This gender gap prevents women from having access to benefits in table-size fish production, and the processing, and use of traditional methods in fish processing hinder its sustainability as it is being influenced by social norms. Recognizing the effects of gender roles in these fish value chains, there is a need for the integration of gender-responsive aquaculture value-chain policy that will bridge the gaps and advocate for a review of the state fisheries policy for equal participation and empowerment of women.

Keywords: value-chain, gender, gap, aquaculture, women

Livelihood Diversification for Sustainable Poverty Reduction Among Rural Women in Nigeria

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Summit Track: The Intersection of Gender and Multidimensional Poverty

Abstract

For many decades now, Nigeria's rural economy has remained largely agriculture-based, but recent studies reflect increasing evidence that rural people's livelihood sources are not overwhelmingly dependent on agriculture, especially farming activities and this indicates the potential role of the non-farm sector as an alternative income source and poverty reduction strategy. In Nigeria, the incidence of poverty has been on the increase leading to multidimensional levels and poverty among women in rural areas has attracted attention because women are the majority of rural dwellers. It is estimated that about 85% of the country's extremely poor reside in rural areas and 60% of this number are women. One important path-way for poverty reduction is income growth which livelihood diversification presents. It is therefore useful that poverty reduction strategies in rural areas should involve approaches targeting livelihood diversification among women because, despite the participation of women in agriculture, poverty continues to ravage them, pointing to the inadequacy of farming activities alone for poverty reduction. This study therefore identified the types of non-farm activities engaged in by rural women in Boluwaduro Local Government Area of Osun State, levels of income generated, reasons for engaging in non-farm activities and their implications for poverty reduction, an impetus for achieving SDG goals 1, 5 and 10. Survey data obtained through a systematic sampling of 382 respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the FGT poverty measures. Results show that the non-farm economic activities engaged in by women were mostly informal including food vending, rope making, tailoring, hairdressing, and pottery, among others. When the mean income of women who diversified into non-farm activities was computed, there was a significant difference in income from respondents who engaged in farming alone. Findings also show that women who engaged in non-farm economic activities that required skills and training generated higher income. The factors inhibiting the take-up of non-farm activities were also discovered including; lack of start-up capital, lack of vocational training centres, and lack of supporting infrastructure among others. Based on these findings, government and development partners at all levels should embark on the provision of vocational training centres and accessible credit facilities to increase women's participation in high-income return activities as an alternative source of income and poverty reduction strategy.

Keywords: Women, livelihood diversification, poverty reduction, income, rural areas.

Equitable access to SRHR: Enhancing well-being for marginalized adolescent girls and young women in Kenya and Africa

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Summit track: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

In many rural areas of Kenya and across Africa, access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) remains a significant challenge, particularly for marginalized adolescent girls and young women (AGYW). These challenges are multifaceted, encompassing socio-economic, cultural, and infrastructural barriers. This study investigates these barriers comprehensively and evaluates targeted strategies to improve SRHR equity, aiming to enhance overall well-being and reduce health-related poverty in these communities. This research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques to ensure a holistic understanding of the issues. A cross-sectional survey was conducted from January to March 2024, involving 500 AGYW participants from three rural communities in Kenya. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with 30 healthcare providers, community leaders, and policymakers to gather diverse perspectives on SRHR access. Data analysis included descriptive statistics for the quantitative data and thematic analysis for the qualitative data, providing both breadth and depth in understanding the SRHR landscape. Findings revealed that 70% of AGYW reported significant barriers to accessing SRHR services, including financial constraints, long distances to healthcare facilities, and the lack of youth-friendly services. Cultural stigmas and a lack of education on SRHR also emerged as significant obstacles. However, in communities where targeted health interventions were implemented, such as mobile clinics and youth-led health committees, there was a notable 45% increase in SRHR utilization. These interventions not only improved health outcomes among AGYW but also fostered greater community awareness and support for SRHR issues. Addressing SRHR inequities for AGYW in Kenya and Africa requires a multifaceted approach. Effective strategies include financial support programs, infrastructural developments like mobile health units, and the implementation of youth-friendly policies and educational campaigns. The study underscores the critical importance of community-based health initiatives in enhancing access and improving health outcomes for AGYW. These initiatives demonstrate that equitable SRHR services are essential for fostering thriving communities and reducing health-related poverty among marginalized AGYW.

Keywords: SRHR, equitable healthcare, AGYW, marginalized groups

“It is the men who are using it more”: Perceived gender disparity in ICT access and utilization

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Organisation: Policy Innovation Centre, Abuja

Summit Track: The intersection of Gender and multidimensional poverty

Abstract

Globally, digital technologies have grown exponentially with the increased utilization of digital devices and services. This growth is similar in Nigeria albeit to varying degrees across national and subnational levels as influenced by factors such as gender. This abstract provides information on the gendered patterns of ICT demand in Edo state. The findings of this abstract were drawn from the qualitative component of a larger mixed methods study. Specifically, our findings emanated from 15 focus group discussions comprising 124 participants (73 females and 51 males). The groups engaged were farmers, traders, artisans, community leaders, persons with disability, young adults aged 18-29 years, and older adults over 30 years. A reflexive thematic analytic approach was utilized for data analysis, with Nvivo 14 used for data organization and coding. The study was approved by the Edo State Health Research Ethics Committee. Findings revealed perceived gendered gaps in ownership, access, and utilization of ICT with men having higher ownership and access to digital devices and services compared to women. This divide is majorly due to financial constraints which disproportionately affect women, particularly those in rural areas, and have resulted in reliance on shared devices within households or community centres. Furthermore, women were constrained by social norms and familial responsibilities, while men were less constrained and even encouraged to engage in digitalization. Digital technologies were mostly used by men for purposes such as product marketing, business administration, business information and networking. Although women also utilise digital technology for economic purposes, they encounter significant challenges when trying to improve their digital skills. Targeted interventions, such as the provision of subsidized digital devices and services and laws supporting women's ICT access and use, are crucial to closing the gender gap revealed by this study.

Keywords: Gender, Digital divide, Digital access, Digital utilization, Gender disparity.

Inclusive Digital Futures: Ensuring Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in the Assessment of Digital Readiness in Edo State

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Organisation: Policy Innovation Centre, Abuja

Summit Track: Gender Equity: A Catalyst for Poverty Alleviation.

Abstract

Technology has been underscored as crucial to development in Edo state. This has led to critical digital interventions at multiple levels that are driven by government and private actors. Consequently, this has necessitated a comprehensive digital readiness study to understand the digital context of the state. This abstract provides information on the steps implemented to ensure gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) in the study and their outcomes. The digital readiness study which was implemented from November 2023 to February 2024 used a concurrent mixed methods design that integrated GESI considerations. Furthermore, the study benefited from the inclusive recruitment of over 150 research assistants (RAs) as well as study participants. Study tools were designed to capture the complexity of GESI issues and RAs were trained on these concepts. Data analysis used an intersectional approach and prioritised appropriate data disaggregation by relevant demographics such as gender, age, and socioeconomic status. Ethical approval was provided by the Edo State Health Research Ethics Committee. Trained RAs, with over 50% being females, experienced increased research skills vital in advancing their careers. This engagement led to temporary employment and associated income that improved their financial stability. RAs revealed that the GESI training increased their sensitivity to gender and inclusion issues, improving their communication skills. This was evident in their respectful community engagements, which led to increased female and PWDs participation. On barriers to GESI adherence, RAs identified entrenched gender norms which manifested the form of male dominance in conversations, community resistance to gender equality principles, and internalised restrictions among potential female participants. The incorporation of gender inclusion approaches in the study resulted in robust perspectives with findings highlighting the need for continued focus on inclusivity to drive equitable digital transformation that is vital in addressing developmental issues such as poverty.

Keywords: Digital Readiness, Gender Equality, Gender Norms.

Reimagining Gender-Inclusive Pathways and Partnerships for Poverty Reduction

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Organization: Women Rights Initiative (WORI).

Summit Track: Gender Equity: A Catalyst for Poverty Alleviation

Abstract

Gender inequality remains a pervasive issue globally, with women and gender minorities disproportionately affected by poverty. This research aims to address the need for gender-inclusive pathways and partnerships in poverty reduction efforts. The rationale for this study is to explore how reimagining traditional approaches to poverty reduction through a gender-inclusive lens can lead to more effective and sustainable outcomes for marginalized communities. This research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The study was implemented over 12 months, targeting a diverse study population of individuals living in poverty, with a specific focus on women and gender minorities. Data analysis included thematic coding of qualitative interviews and surveys, as well as statistical analysis of quantitative data to identify patterns and trends. Key findings from the study revealed that gender-inclusive pathways and partnerships are essential for addressing the multifaceted nature of poverty. By incorporating the voices and experiences of women and gender minorities, innovative solutions emerged, leading to improved access to resources, economic opportunities, and social support systems. Additionally, the study identified the importance of intersectional approaches that consider the unique challenges faced by individuals at the intersections of gender, race, class, and other social identities. This research underscores the significance of reimagining poverty reduction efforts through a gender-inclusive lens. The findings highlight the potential for transformative change when marginalized voices are centred in the design and implementation of poverty reduction programs. The study contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting the need for gender-inclusive pathways and partnerships in addressing poverty. Recommendations include the integration of gender-sensitive indicators in poverty reduction frameworks and the establishment of collaborative partnerships with grassroots organizations and gender-focused initiatives.

Keywords: Gender, Poverty, Inclusion, Partnerships, Pathways.

Transforming How Communities Perceive Adolescent Girls Agency to Access Antenatal Care Services

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Organisation: Society for Family Health, Nigeria

Summit Track: Equitable Access to Healthcare: A Pathway to Thriving Communities

Abstract

Adolescent girls below age 20 form a vulnerable group with poorer health indices compared with other women of reproductive age. 12.2% of about 12 million adolescent girls population have an unmet need for family planning, 37% have begun childbearing, 3 in 5 girls experience anaemia in pregnancy and of pregnant girls under 20 years; 32% received no ANC. Access to quality antenatal care during pregnancy reduces maternal mortality and morbidity. Socioeconomic factors and norms, such as lack of transport and funds for clinic expenses, no permission from spouse or in-laws, etc hinder pregnant adolescent girls' access to quality ANC and other SRH services widening existing inequalities, particularly for girls with little or no education, living in the lowest wealth quantile. 120 Female and Male Voluntary Community Mobilizers (VCMs) and 60 Antenatal Care service providers were trained to provide adolescent girls and their spouses with the information and agency they need to pursue healthy pregnancies in thirty rural communities and primary health centres respectively in Jigawa and Kaduna States. Male VCMs reach husbands of married adolescent girls in the community to discuss the value of investing in ANC and attending ANC clinics. Female VCMs mobilize pregnant adolescent girls into a mentorship program where girls receive pregnancy-related health information and soft skills. The ANC provider takes pregnant girls through a pre-ANC session providing information about the pregnancy journey and possible risks across each trimester and the value of attending ANC early. Girls get the opportunity to sign up for ANC. This intervention has run for eight months. From January to June 2024, 7,246 pregnant adolescent girls signed up for their first ANC clinic, 1,793 through husband engagement and 5,453 through direct engagement with girls. 1,265 husbands have attended ANC Clinics with their spouse with 1,157 attending the 4th group ANC sessions with their adolescent wives. In identifying and addressing socio-economic and cultural barriers to husband involvement and girls' access to ANC services, couples are motivated to invest in quality, equitable antenatal care. Lessons from our intervention show that this yields incremental benefits for households and communities and impacts on national health indices.

Keywords: Norms, Adolescents, Communities, husband engagement and Pregnancy

Reimagining Policy Design Using Gender Transformative Approach to Address Digital Exclusion among Women-Led MSMEs

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Organisation: Policy Innovation Centre, Abuja.

Summit Track: Gender Equity: A Catalyst for Poverty Alleviation

Abstract

Digital technologies are increasingly becoming essential in promoting economic growth and development however, the 2022 Mobile Gender Gap Report highlights a significant disparity in mobile internet usage in Nigeria. With over 140 million internet subscribers, only about half of men use mobile internet, compared to roughly one-third of women. Furthermore, 68 per cent of women do not own a smartphone, and just 37 per cent of adolescent girls have access to phones pointing to a gap in digital inclusion for girls and women in MSMEs. The digital divide disproportionately affects women, who are often less likely to own personal devices or have consistent internet access. Without the necessary infrastructure, women entrepreneurs struggle to leverage digital tools and platforms that could enhance their business operations and market reach. This gap points to a significant digital inclusion issue for girls and women that disproportionately affects women, who are often less likely to own personal devices or have consistent internet access. We mapped the challenges women experienced in adopting digital technologies, and leveraged findings to inform the design of a gender transformative digital policy in Edo state. Using a human-centred design approach and a purposive sampling technique, we interviewed 24 female rural farmers and entrepreneurs aged 18 – 45 years across the 3 senatorial districts and conducted informational interviews with 45 core stakeholders in the state. The participants highlighted significant challenges in leveraging digital technologies for business optimization such as limited access to internet connectivity and unaffordability of digital tools, cybersecurity issues, high cost of data, and inadequate digital skills signifying exclusion from government's digital interventions. To address these gaps, the evidence generated was used to develop an inclusive digital policy that advocates reducing cost barriers, providing infrastructural support, enhancing digital skills training, and ensuring security for digital transactions. These measures will support the growth and sustainability of businesses run by female farmers, producers, marketers, and returned migrants in Edo State.

Keywords: Digital Technologies, Inclusion, Human-Centred Design, Digital Policy.



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