The development Research and Projects Center (dRPC), was formed in 1993 and the oldest intermediary non-profit in Nigeria, with an intentional mission to anchor, facilitate and catalyze collaboration to advance development innovation and practice in which women, girls and excluded communities are included.

The dRPC is implementing the new Partnership for Advancing Women Empowerment in Development (PAWED) project over a two year period with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation (BMGF).

PAWED is to build a Nigerian CSO advocacy and communications coalition to advance evidence, policies and programs that further women’s economic empowerment vanguard organizations such as Women’s Empowerment Collectives.
The advocacy and communications coalition will advance women’s economic empowerment by nudging policymakers to increase funding, implement and scale up investment in WEE policies, programs, and projects with an initial focus on increasing the salience of women’s empowerment collectives in Nigeria.

Over the next two years, the PAWED project will identify the most influential WEE advocacy organizations (governmental and non-governmental) in Nigeria as well as strategic individual WEE champions (both traditional and non-traditional champions), bringing them together to form Advocacy and Communications Coalitions at national and at state levels.

Coalition members will work together to distill and communicate the evidence that investing in WEE in Nigeria benefits the woman, the household and is in the best interest of communities and the Nigerian nation. Coalitions working at national level and in 6 priority states to translate and package and communicate evidence into clear and achievable policy asks, directed at key policymakers, prompting them to advance women’s economic empowerment in Nigeria.
Consistent with the dRPC’s mission as an intermediary, the PAWED project is strategically positioned amongst the BMGF portfolio of WEE/WEC investments in Nigeria to facilitate and support other WEE/WECs grantees working to evidence mapping/collection/dissemination efforts in the country. These include investments to:

- Map social and cultural norms barriers which prohibit women’s economic participation from advancing,
- Map current national and state level ministries and institutions current awareness and engagement regarding women’s economic empowerment
- Map of current stakeholders, non-profits, and other organizations offering group-based services to women’s groups
- Map donor and philanthropic funding given in Nigeria in support of gender equality, women’s economic participation, financial inclusion, or gender integration in comparison to other strategic priorities.
- Investments to support the World Bank in the development of the Nigeria For Women Project
- Memorandums of understanding with different state governments
- Efforts to strengthen high level social media and media influencers salience of women’s economic empowerment in driving development outcomes.
The three primary objectives for the PAWED project are:

- Increase the salience of women’s economic empowerment with national and state government ministries, writ large
- Increase the salience of effective policies and programs to advance women’s economic empowerment with donors and national and state government ministries, with a primary focus on women’s empowerment collectives
- Increase the salience of women’s economic empowerment amongst civil society and influential leaders and their appetite to support change that might be in opposition to cultural and social norms

Over two years, the PAWED project’s will go through inception, implementation and evaluation phases, punctuated by pause and reflection monitoring junctures for learning and reprogramming:

PAWED will be implemented at the national level and in 6 priority states to be selected in collaboration with GP PAC grantees. The 6 priority states will be selected on the basis of evidence of significant medium to long term economic development programs in states supported through international partner funding or technical assistance. The PAWED project will select and work in 3 priority states where WEE was incorporated into the economic development programs and 3 priority states where WEE was not incorporated into the development programs of the states.

Project management and coordination with BMGF WEE grantees: activities include establishment of a project Advisory Council, setting up the project management systems and procedures and establishment of platforms and procedures for coordination with other grantees in the BMGFWEE portfolio

Formative research activities in this project include mapping of key organizations (governmental and non-governmental organizations) and champions (traditional and non-traditional) who supported and promoted WEE projects. Research work will also focus on the evidences of what works in promoting WEE projects and engaging WECs. The project will also map out effective advocacy strategies, tactics and approaches. PAWED will tease out effective communication channels, messages and framings to effect change in the WEE policy landscape at national and sub-national levels.
The project will conduct research on the impact of Covid-19 on Women’s Economic Empowerment and Women’s Economic Collectives in Nigeria.

The PAWED project will bring together organizations and champions around the common cause advancing WEE in Nigeria. The Coalitions will advocate to policy makers by advancing messages of what works for women, families, communities and nations when supporting WEE.

PAWED will engage and work with Communication experts and firms to develop effective messages, work through impactful communication channels and prepare members of the Advocacy and Communications Coalitions to deliver and reach advocacy targets with messages, information and evidences to prompt WEE funding and support.

The project will create a WEE Hub which will connect and coordinate with regional and global WEE hubs.

Learning and theory building about influence, change and gender action policy transformation underpin this project which will employ pause and reflection methodologies to pose and answer key research questions on what is working in the project, how, where, why and with what resources.