

-UNLOCKING THE POTENTIALS FOR IMPROVED WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN NIGERIA- THE BUDGET PATHWAY



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The Issue

Nigeria is Africa's largest economy by Gross Domestic Product. Paradoxically, it also has high poverty rate. Even before Covid-19 crises, it was reported that 4 in 10 Nigerians were living in poverty.¹ Covid-19 pandemic and global oil market slowdown pushed more people into the poverty net. According to the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (May, 2020), 40.1 per cent of Nigerians live in poverty. The proportion of urban population who live in poverty is 18 per cent while 52.1 per cent of rural population live in poverty.² In urban and rural areas, significant proportion of people living in poverty are women largely because women are confronted with deep-rooted structural and systemic barriers to their optimal inclusion in gainful economic activities thereby confining them to insecure vulnerable jobs in the informal sector. A study on the composition of labour force in Nigeria revealed that 77 per cent of women work in casual, low skilled, low-paid employment in the informal sector due to lack of access to opportunities, low educational attainment and limited access to financial services.³

In recent years, there have been public declarations of commitment by government to address the huge gender gap in access to opportunities. Dr. (Mrs.) Zainab Ahmed, Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning noted that 'the economic and social empowerment of women and girls is critical to our collective vision of a prosperous and resilient Nigeria'. According to her, 'if Nigeria must have a stronger and more inclusive economy, it is crucial that we take a long term and strategic approach to ensuring that women are economically empowered'⁴. It is in light of this clear government commitment that this brief interrogates the 2022 budget with a view to generating insights on the potential for women's economic empowerment in Nigeria through public spending.

Methodology

The analysis of the 2022 FGN budget followed a multi-stage design beginning with desk review of key policy documents of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). This enabled us to categorize the MDAs according to the degree of relationship between their mandate and WEE. This led us to come up with 17 ministries⁵ whose mandates are core to women's economic empowerment. However, if the criterion is extended to ministries with women-specific (and women+) interventions and projects, the number increases to 24.⁶

The analysis is guided by codes that were used to identify and track projects. These are classified into two categories. (a) Women-core WEE projects with the keywords: female, girl, widow, ladies, and wives. (b) women+others with the keywords: men and women, female and male, women and youth, women and people with disability, women and children, women and graduates, women and farmers, women and artisans, women and elderly, etc. The data were analyzed using quantitative method including comparative and trend analysis.

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- (1) Poverty and Equity Brief, Africa Western and Central (Nigeria), World Bank October 2021 Global_POVEQ_NGA_poverty.pdf
 - (2) NBS: 2019 Poverty And inequality in Nigeria: Executive Summary, May 2020, page 5.
 - (3) (PwC, 2020)
 - (4) Emma Ujah, "Let's prioritise women empowerment to drive economic growth – Finance Minister", Vanguard Newspaper Online, January 18, 2022, https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/01/lets-prioritise-women-empowerment-to-drive-economic-growth-finance-minister/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter

Highlights of the analysis

In 2022, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) allocated · 103.49bn WEE-related projects (these include Women core and women-plus-others) The percentage allocated to WEE is 1.89 per cent of the FGN total capital budget expenditure and 0.60 per cent of its total approved budget size. The budgetary allocation to WEE in the approved 2022 increased by 101.61 per cent compared to N51bn in 2021. In this regard, the total of Women-core projects increased from 118 to 164 in 2022, the total women-plus-others WEE project increased from 527 to 774 in 2022. This shows 39 per cent and 47 per cent increase respectively. The overall WEE projects increased from 645 in 2021 to 938 in 2022 with about 45 per cent. About 122 Federal ministries, department and agencies under the 24 Ministries will implement 938 WEE projects in 2022 against 105 MDAs under 26 Ministries in 2021.

Table 1: WEE Allocation in 2022 Approved Budget (Nbn)

DESCRIPTIONS	2021	2022
FGN Budget Size	14,570,757,581,518	17,126,873,917,692
FGN Capital Budget	4,984,546,875,401	5,467,403,959,863
Amount Allocated to WEE	51,333,233,024	103,496,035,287
WEE as % of Capital Budget	1.02%	1.89%
WEE as % of Budget Size	0.35%	0.60%

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has the highest WEE allocation of about N33.1bn. The amount allocated constitute 32 per cent of the total FGN WEE N103bn provisions. The Ministry retained its first position as in 2021. This follows by Ministry of Women Affairs with about N18.8bn (18 per cent). Now second position against 4th position in 2021; Education N14.1bn (13 per cent). Now third position against 10th position in 2021. Labor and Employment N10.4bn, (10 per cent). Now 4 per cent position against 2nd position in 2021. Industry Trade and Investment N5.6bn (5 per cent). Now 5th position against 3rd position in 2021.

Table 2: Ranking of WEE Implementing MDAs by Total budget Allocation (2021-2022)

2021 RANKING				2022 RANKING			
	MINISTRIES	ALLOCATION (NM)	PERCENTAGE		MINISTRIES	ALLOCATION (NM)	PERCENTAGE
1	Agriculture and Rural Development	14,033,453,528	27.33%	1 ↑	Agriculture and Rural Development	33,188,734,560	32.06%
2	Labour and Employment	8,549,309,133	16.65%	2 ↑	Women Affairs	18,829,167,161	18.19%
3	Industry, Trade and Investment	7,509,338,070	14.62%	3 ↑	Education	14,174,267,250	13.69%
4	Women Affairs	5,441,993,396	10.60%	4 ↓	Labour and Employment	10,474,746,756	10.12%
5	Secretary to the Government of the Federation	2,717,243,900	5.29%	5 ↓	Industry, Trade and Investment	5,603,837,167	5.41%
6	Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Investment	2,185,000,000	4.25%	6 ↓	Secretary to the Government of the Federation	3,802,040,116	3.67%
7	Science, Technology and Innovation	2,114,000,000	4.11%	7 ↑	Science, Technology and Innovation	3,624,666,775	3.50%
8	Finance, Budget and National Planning	1,940,000,000	3.77%	8 ↑	Information & Culture	3,060,780,000	2.95%
9	Information & Culture	1,829,486,881	3.56%	9 ↓	Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Investment	2,397,554,540	2.31%
10	Education	900,000,000	1.75%	10 ↓	Finance, Budget and National Planning	1,770,000,000	1.71%
	Total	47,219,824,908	91.98%			96,925,794,325	93.65%
	WEE Total	51,333,233,024				103,494,034,087	

However, only 60 MDAs under 17 Ministries are to implement 164 women-core WEE projects. The total 164 projects amount to N36.6bn. This is 1.15 per cent of the total 60 MDAs budget and 0.34 per cent of their budget size

Key Findings

Substantial Improvement in Budget Allocation to WEE

An important feature of the 2022 FGN budget was significant improvement in the total budgetary allocation WEE across MDAs. This increased from N51bn in 2021 to N103bn in 2022 budget. Correspondingly, the number of WEE projects also increased significantly by from 645 in 2021 to 938 in 2022. This is increased by 293 projects (45 per cent). It is noteworthy that most of the changes took place during the approval process in the National Assembly.

Activation of Nigeria for Women Project (NFWP)

Another notable development in the 2022 FGN budget was the provision of fund for the activation of Nigeria for Women Project, a \$100 million World Bank project with an implementing timeline of 2018 and 2023⁷. Having lingered for years without clear traction, the sum of N12bn was allocated to this project under the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs in 2022.

Commitment to AGILE Project

Similarly, the Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment (AGILE) is a \$500 million World Bank Project approved in 2020 with an implementation period lasting up to 2025⁸. The sum of N12bn was allocated to this project in 2022 under the Federal Ministry of Education. Key components of this project is to provide enabling environment for girls through girls' empowerment with critical life skills and knowledge for circumnavigating adulthood and digital literacy as well as providing financial incentives to the poorest households.¹⁰ This is to help lessen the financial burden faced by households in sending their girls to school⁹.

In spite of the laudable components of the 2022 FGN budget, there are a number of areas that calls for further attention in future budgets. These are:

Absence of gender disaggregation

Several of empowerment projects exist in the budget that were not disaggregated along with sex. The non-disaggregation of projects makes it impossible to effectively conduct gender impact assessment and track progress in women's economic empowerment as a result of the projects and programmes included in the budget.

Non-specification of WEE Project Location

In several projects earmarked for WEE, the sites and the beneficiaries were not specified. Examples include empowerment of women and youth on agricultural value chain with project code ERGP202204059 (50 million); ERGP202202038 - Training and empowerment of women and youths (85 million); ERGP202202500 - Economic empowerment setup kit for women in agriculture (84 million); ERGP22112809 - Gender start up support scheme for female entrepreneurs with 50 million funding commitments, etc.

Women-as-core versus women-plus-others

In 2022 FGN budget, it was commonplace to lump women with other groups. This makes tracking and impact analysis complicated. There is also the risk of other formidable social groups to crowding out women in the competition for opportunities.

- (7) World Bank, Nigeria for Women Project (NFWP), Projects Appraisal Document, 2018.
- (8) World Bank, "Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment," page 1. <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P170664>
- (9) World Bank Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment, Project Appraisal Document, 2020, pages 27, 28 and 30. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/601211588235942033/pdf/Project-Information-Document-Adolescent-Girls-Initiative-for-Learning-and-Empowerment-P170664.pdf>

Low Priority on Women-Core WEE Allocation

Another point worthy of note is the low priority attached to projects that specifically target women. Out of about 48 ministries 17 have women-core WEE projects. Even then, 11 out of the 17 MDAs allocated less than 1 per cent of their capital budget to women-core WEE project and 6 allocated more than 1 per cent. While Ministry of Education allocated 5.5 per cent of the total capital budget on women-core WEE projects, it was 35.5 per cent in the Ministry of Women Affairs. Interestingly, the Ministry of Agriculture allocated N5.2bn to women-core WEE projects constituting 1.3 per cent of total capital allocation and 1.09 per cent of the total budget size despite the fact that women small holder farmers constitute 60 per cent of the agricultural labour force.

Table 3: Women-Core WEE Allocations 2022 (Nm)

S/N	MINISTRIES	PROJECTS TARGETING WOMEN SEPARATELY	ALLOCATION	MINISTRY CAPITAL BUDGET	MINISTRY BUDGET SIZE	ALLOCATION AS % OF CAPITAL BUDGET	ALLOCATION AS % OF BUDGET SIZE
1	Agriculture and Rural Development	51	5,268,115,756	404,248,924,564	479,793,153,213	1.30%	1.09%
2	Women Affairs	26	14,417,600,000	40,581,888,629	42,685,646,713	35.53%	33.77%
3	Education	3	12,409,868,750	222,212,089,508	923,787,614,465	5.58%	1.34%
4	Labour and Employment	18	1,031,163,329	58,359,476,178	72,813,203,156	1.77%	0.41%
5	Industry, Trade and Investment	9	453,305,150	67,069,067,284	85,035,812,722	0.68%	0.53%
6	Secretary to the Government of the Federation	7	395,000,000	66,130,177,985	128,705,598,229	0.60%	0.30%
7	Science, Technology and Innovation	13	521,128,680	153,404,138,165	203,087,661,330	0.34%	0.25%
8	Information & Culture	8	442,180,800	23,610,782,123	79,407,056,161	1.87%	0.55%
9	Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Investment	7	322,054,540	110,902,265,453	514,743,928,310	0.29%	0.06%
10	Finance, Budget & National Planning	5	480,000,000	940,960,928,722	6,809,247,796,619	0.05%	0.007%
11	Water Resources	3	59,736,700	172,460,011,569	183,129,069,889	0.03%	0.03%
12	Environment	3	162,500,000	38,772,545,885	61,569,193,727	0.42%	0.26%
13	Special Duties & Inter Governmental Affairs	2	130,000,000	8,524,905,899	12,964,520,584	1.52%	1.00%
14	Communications and Digital Economy	2	52,389,006	136,574,254,047	159,962,250,665	0.04%	0.03%
15	Foreign Affairs	1	3,993,961	9,183,529,439	88,427,012,637	0.04%	0.004%
16	Works and Housing	1	100,000,000	531,657,827,662	563,593,431,859	0.02%	0.01%
17	Niger Delta	5	215,000,000	172,460,011,569	183,129,069,889	0.12%	0.11%
Total		164	36,464,036,672	3,157,112,824,681	10,592,082,020,168	1.15%	0.34%

What needs to change and improve

Bureaucrats

- Sustain the momentum for increased budgetary provisions to WEE.
- Create institutional coordinating mechanism/framework for tracking gender impact of budget implementation
- Conduct and publicize quarterly report on gender impact analysis of program and projects.
- Specification of WEE projects location in the budget to enable the civil society organizations to track and report on execution and impact
- Promote gender sensitivity in the procurement process on WEE projects.
- Ensure women inclusion in the budget process (preparation, implementation and monitoring).
- Ensure timely releases and cash backing for WEE related budget lines.
- Bridge institutional capacity gap in GRB across the fiscal governance chain
- Increased gender disaggregation of budget data

Law Makers

- Sustain the momentum on continuous budgetary allocation to women-core allocation.
- Ensure proper scrutinization of the budget to ensure that it is gender sensitive.
- Timely oversight on WEE-implementing MDAs to ensure effective implementation.
- Avoid WEE budget duplications.

Development Partners/Donors

- Effective engagement with state and nonstate actors in improving more funding commitment on WEE.
- Support the executive and legislative for capacity building gender responsive budgeting.
- Support the gender desk officers of the MDAs on WEE impact assessment reporting.
- Sustain the existing momentum in WEE-related supportive program and projects.
- Intensify the grassroots WEE-programs support in collaboration with the state and non-state actors.
- Carry out an independent quarterly, half-year or annual WEE-impact assessment report.

Women Economic Collectives (WECs)

- Improve budget literacy among the Women Economic Collectives (WECs)
- Effective scrutinization and analysis of WEE budget.
- Ensure quarterly, half-year and annual tracking and monitoring of WEE budget releases.
- Ensure timely monitoring of WEE-projects implementation and report compliance.
- Sensitization on the need for investing on WEE.

Activists/Media/Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

- Improve budget literacy among the activist/media/Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).
- Track the project implementation process (fund releases, procurement, execution and monitoring) and report performance.
- Continue to track the WEE budget to ascertain the government commitment towards women empowerment issue.
- Publish knowledge productions in advancing the salience of WEE across Nigeria.
- Intensify research efforts on WEE to identify areas of improvement and gaps.

Religious and Traditional Rulers

- Amplify the need for more funding commitment on WEE.
- Address the cultural and religious barriers in the implementation of WEE projects at some grassroots community where women empowerment is seen as an abomination.



PAWED Profile

Partnership for Advancing women Empowerment in Development (PAWED) is two years project with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation (BMGF). It aims at building 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 project is being implemented by development Research and Project Centre (dRPC).

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

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Women's Economic Empowerment is National Economic Empowerment



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