

dRPC's Regional Work: Expanding Impact Across West Africa

Since 2020, the development Research and Projects Centre (dRPC) has significantly expanded its work across the West African region and beyond by establishing key regional connections and networks. These efforts have led to the convening of high-level regional events and organizing of side events at major regional gatherings. This expansion is aimed at amplifying our impact and extending our reach.

Some of the key activities convened or participated in by the dRPC include:

1. **Africa Union Commission (AUC) Country Monitoring Visit to Nigeria on Ending Child Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation & Cutting – 10th November 2022:** The Africa Union Commission (AUC) was hosted by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs with support from the dRPC and Funding from Ford Foundation on the 10th of November 2022 to meet with 18 CSOs working on Ending Child Marriage in Nigeria and 8 traditional /religious leaders from Kano, Sokoto, Zamfara, Katsina and Jigawa to discuss the status of Child Marriage (CM) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Abuja.

The AU monitoring team led by the AU Special Rapporteur on Child Marriage and other Harmful Practices; Hon. Hermine Kembo Takam Gatsing, visited Nigeria and engaged Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies; Coalition of Civil Society Organizations; Traditional and Religious Leaders, United Nations Agencies Offices and other International/Development Partners working to eliminate Child Marriage and other Harmful Practices in the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

2. **Kinshasa Survivors' Hearing on Reparation, 22nd – 24th November 2021:** The dRPC collaborated with the Global Survivors Fund and the Conjugal Slavery in War Partnership to organize a high level 3-day Survivors' Hearing on Reparations to provide: a) platform for survivors of conflict related sexual violence to share their testimonies, views, perceptions and reflections around reparations, participation and co-creation of reparations; b) platform for survivors, activists, experts, and other relevant stakeholders to engage with one another on these issues; and c) draft a Survivors Declaration on the Rights of Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence to participate and Co-Create Gender Based Reparations. The hearing led to the development of the [KINSHASA DECLARATION On the Rights to Reparation and Co-creation of Survivors and Victims of Conflict-Related Sexual and Gender-Based Violence](#), a landmark document advocating for the rights of SGBV survivors. The declaration was launched at a regional event in Banjul, Gambia, and has been translated into multiple languages to support advocacy efforts.

3. **Post Kinshasa Hearing Validation Meetings:** The dRPC supported the conduct of the Validation Meetings in Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone through its partners - Grassroot Researchers Association (GRA), Aiding Disadvantaged and Traumatized Women and Girls (ADWANGA) and Women's Forum Sierra Leone with funding from Ford Foundation. The validation meetings reviewed the Survivors declaration on reparation developed in Kinshasa; shared key takeaways from Survivors' Hearing on reparations for conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence held in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo with the survivors in Nigeria, Liberia and Sierra Leone to document their Survivors feedback on the content of the Kinshasa Declaration on Reparation.

A total of 114 CRSV Survivors participated in the validation meetings held in Nigeria on 18th December 2021, Liberia on 23rd December 2021 and Sierra Leone on 30th December 2021.

4. **3rd African Girls Summit - Niamey, Niger (November 2021):** dRPC hosted a Pre-Summit Session on "Safe Girls, Safe Schools - Implications of School Attacks for Girls' Education in West Africa" during the Third African Girls Summit. The session highlighted the frequency and impact of school attacks in West Africa and emphasized the importance of the Safe School Declaration initiative.

Key recommendations included:

- Making school safety for girls a criterion for establishing and assessing schools.
- Involving traditional, religious, and political leaders in advocating for the safety of girls and boys.
- Addressing language barriers that hinder effective communication between countries in the Sahel.

5. **Advocacy Meeting on Safe Schools in Niger Republic (22nd December 2022):** In partnership with the End Child Marriage Platform in Niger Republic and with support from the Ford Foundation, dRPC organized an advocacy meeting focused on school safety. High-level stakeholders, including the Ombudsman of Niger Republic, attended the event, which reviewed the response of the Nigerien government and other actors to ensure the safe return of students to school.

The meeting also provided a platform for dRPC to share Nigeria's experience in managing education in insecure contexts, emphasizing the importance of securing schools to prevent girls from leaving education prematurely for marriage.

6. **CSO Networks Capacity Building Workshop on Advocacy to End Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Child Marriage in Ghana – 1st – 3rd September 2021:** With support from the Ford Foundation West Africa Office, the development Research and Projects Centre (dRPC) and in partnership with the ProHumane Afrique International in Ghana organized a 3-day CSO networks capacity building workshop on advocacy to end Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and child marriage from the 1st – 3rd September, 2021 in Ghana. The training gathered high profiled executive directors of esteemed CSOs and CSO networks, from Liberia, Senegal, Gambia, Nigeria and Ghana, working to end gender-based violence and child marriage across West Africa countries.

The workshop featured presentations on the role of CSOs and CSO coalitions on ending child marriage: service delivery; awareness creation and advocacy roles, technical analysis of GBV and child marriage trends in Ghana, strength and weaknesses of CSOs and CSO coalitions carrying out advocacy roles to end GBV/child marriage, assessing government policies and programs in a bid to end child marriage, etc.

The workshop also featured group work sessions and panel discussion on the new and emerging risks and risk settings for GBV and child marriage as well as emerging opportunities to address risk factors.

The participants planned and conducted advocacy visit to the Opportunities Industrialization Centers International Ghana with advocacy messages on ending child marriage.

The CSO and CSO networks working to put an end to child marriage and gender-based violence learnt about the emerging factors putting girls and women at risks of GBV and child marriage, emerging opportunities, techniques and skills that can be adopted in the fight against GBV and child marriage. Some of the new skills and techniques will be implemented through effective advocacy messaging, plans and evidenced based data to make government officials to accelerate actions towards ending GBV and child marriage in West Africa.

The dRPC in partnership with the Pro-Humane Afrique International in Ghana is working with participants to fully develop the CSO networks draft action plan for effective implementation of activities aimed at ending GBV and child marriage in Ghana, and West Africa in general.

7. **6th Annual AROCSA Conference 2022:** dRPC actively participates in regional activities to share expertise and drive collective action. dRPC actively participated in the 6th Annual AROCSA Conference in Dakar, Senegal, dRPC's Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Prof. Eghosa Emmanuel Osaghae, shared insights on the role of civil society organizations in safeguarding human and environmental health in Africa, drawing from dRPC's extensive work in Nigeria.
8. **1st African Union Pan-African Conference on Girls and Women Education:** The development Research and Projects Center (dRPC) in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education through the leadership of the Director for Senior Secondary Education, Hajia Binta Abdulkadir disseminated the education research of the dRPC and the National Education policies at the AU Pan Africa Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The dRPC has been an active participant at the AU African Girls Summit and in 2021 supported the only Nigerian delegation who hosted a Pre-Summit section at the 3rd African Girls Summit- in Niamey,

Niger to discuss the Implications of School Attacks for Girls Education in West Africa through our Safe Girls in Safe Schools Project. This delegation consisted of representatives of the FME lead Education in Emergency Working Group (EIEWGN)- Global Coalition to Protect Education (GCPEA) from Attack, religious leaders and the Northeast Regional Civil Society Network including the Lake Chad Region. <https://drpcngr.org/project/cso-safe-school-project/#safe-school-number>

The dRPC also supported the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs to host the AU Delegation for the country visit on Ending Child Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting in August 2022. <https://drpcngr.org/african-union-country-monitoring-mission-on-ending-child-marriage-and-other-harmful-practices-visit-to-nigeria/>

Research/ Projects Disseminated at the 1st Pan African AU Conference on Women and Girls

- Gender Review of Education Sector Plan in Nigeria <https://drpcngr.org/drpc-gender-review/>
- Future Workers Project <https://drpcngr.org/drpc-education-sector-response-to-covid-19/>
- Girls Empowerment Education Project Documentary <https://drpcngr.org/project/early-childhood-care-and-development/>
- Gender Norms, Media Narratives and Women in Appointive Positions in Nigeria <https://drpcngr.org/gender-norms-media-narratives-and-women-in-appointive-positions-in-nigeria-align-platform/>