

Surviving the Shock: The Impact of USAID's Sudden Funding Withdrawal and How the NSI Programme Helped Nigerian CBOs Rebuild



www.drpcngr.org



DRPCNigeria



@drpc_nlg



@drpcnigeria



@dRPC_Nigeria



drpc

info@drpcngr.org

Exertive Summary

The NGO Support Initiative (NSI), funded by the Ford Foundation and implemented by the dRPC, was established as an urgent response to the abrupt withdrawal of USAID funding in early 2024—an event that disrupted ongoing programmes, destabilised community services, and threatened the operational continuity of many Nigerian NGOs. The NSI provided rapid, flexible grants to 17 local, women-focused and community-based organisations across all six geopolitical zones, enabling them to restore critical activities, rebuild organisational stability, and sustain essential services in the aftermath of the shock. Between June and August 2025, the programme disbursed ₦65.60 million, representing 12% of the funding lost by affected organisations, and offered technical support through a rigorous mentorship structure that strengthened institutional capacity and programme quality.

Across the three-month cycle, the 17 NSI grantees reached a total of 6,555 beneficiaries, including 4,291 females and 1,662 males, clearly reflecting the initiative’s strong focus on supporting women and girls. The largest thematic contributions were recorded in Gender Equality and GBV Prevention (2,490 beneficiaries), Women’s Health (2,018), Education and Digital Literacy (947), Women’s Economic Empowerment (696), and Climate and Agriculture (404). This multi-sectoral reach demonstrates the programme’s breadth, ranging from community health outreach and GBV prevention dialogues to digital skills training, women-led agricultural resilience, and livelihood strengthening. High-impact organisations such as Unique Royal Sisters, Resonat Spei Humanitarian Hub, GEPaDC, and Rising Hope Girls Foundation collectively accounted for more than two-thirds of the total beneficiary reach.

A central component of NSI’s success was its experienced mentorship model, delivered by eight professionals trained across dRPC’s long-standing programmes, including PAS, PACFaH@Scale, PAWED, and WEE. Mentors provided targeted support in financial management, advocacy, compliance, reporting, procurement, programme planning, community engagement, and SBCC. Their contributions improved grantees’ documentation quality, strengthened accountability systems, enhanced advocacy strategies, and supported smoother implementation despite tight timelines. Many organisations demonstrated visible growth in procurement procedures, reporting integrity, stakeholder engagement, and evidence-based programming—capacity gains that will sustain their work beyond the NSI cycle.

The initiative also played a critical role in restoring community trust and organisational morale after the funding shock. Grantees reported that the NSI call arrived as a “lifeline,” enabling them to return to communities that had been confused by halted activities, resume paused programmes, and rebuild credibility. Staff who feared job loss regained confidence and continuity, while organisations strengthened their visibility and partnerships with government agencies, ministries, and community structures. NSI therefore delivered both programmatic impact and deep institutional strengthening, positioning grantees for future funding opportunities.

Finally, the NSI demonstrates the transformative potential of small but strategic, flexible grants, especially in times of crisis. By combining rapid funding, structured mentorship, and community-driven implementation, the initiative preserved essential services, uplifted women and girls, and enhanced the resilience of local NGOs. This model offers a replicable blueprint for donor engagement in fragile funding environments and highlights the power of targeted investments in grassroots organisations committed to advancing gender equality, health, economic empowerment, and community well-being.

Table of Contents

Exertive Summary	1
List of Abbreviation.....	3
Section 1: Introduction to dRPC & NSI	4
1.1 About dRPC	4
1.2 Objectives of the NSI Programme.....	4
1.3 NSI Grant Applications and the Beneficiaries by Geography	4
Section 2: Impact of USAID Funding Cuts	6
2.1 Loss of USAID Funding: What It Meant for the Organisations.....	6
2.2 Effects on Projects, Beneficiaries, and Community Relationships.....	8
2.3 Organisational Responsibility and Search for Alternatives	9
Section 3: NSI Grant Opportunity: Meaning, Relevance, and Hope Restored.....	10
Section 4: Gates Foundation Investment in building a cohort of CSO Mentors in Nigeria – Paying it forward in the NSI Model.....	11
Section 5: Implementation Experience Under NSI: What Was Done and How	14
Section 6: Portfolio Results Across All Thematic Areas	15
Section 7: Organisational Strengthening Outcomes	17
SECTION 8: Tangible Programme Achievements	19
SECTION 9: Lessons Learned.....	21
Conclusion.....	22
Annex	23
NSI Model in the Global News	23
Announcing the NGO Initiative Support Grant – 5th May 2025	23
News Reports of the Pre-Launch Event.....	24
The Award Launch – 23rd June 2025	24
NSI grantees impact on GBV prevention and response	25
NSI grantees impact on Climate action for women in agriculture	25
NSI Grantees impacting on Gender Justice & Women Political Empowerment	26
NSI Grantees impact on Women’s Health.....	26
NSI grantees impact on Women’s Economic Empowerment	26
NSI grantees impact on Digital and Life skills for Girls	27
Images from NSI NGOs Project Implementation	28

List of Abbreviation

FOMWAN	Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria
BSHF	Blue Sapphire Hub Foundation
dRPC	development Resaerch and Projects Centre
FLACHS	Family Life and Community Health Society (FLACHS)
HYF	Heal the Youth Foundation
HIV	Human immunodeficiency Viruses
ICIR	International Centre for Investigative Reporting
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
NGO	non-governmental organization
NNEW	NECA's Network of Entrepreneurial Women
NSI	NGO Support Initiative
PACFaH@Scale	Partnership for Advocacy in Child and Family Health at Scale
PAS	Partnership for Advocacy in Child and Family Health at Scale
PAWED	Partnership for Advancing Women in Economic Development
RHGF	Rising Hope Girls Foundation
SSD	South Saharan Development Organiozation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSLA	Village Savings Loans Associations
WEWE	Widows and Orphans Empowerment Organization

Section 1: Introduction to dRPC & NSI

1.1 About dRPC

Founded in 1993 by 10 Lecturers from Nigerian Universities, the development Research and Projects Center (dRPC), is a registered non-governmental organization (NGO) with a unique portfolio of working in intermediate spaces to bring together government; international development partners; and civil society organizations to design and implement impactful initiatives. Using co-creation models, the dRPC leads in research and project implementation in education; public health; women's leadership, economic empowerment and climate action; as well as governance, peace and the rule of law, working across Nigeria's development and humanitarian sectors.

As a leading Nigerian intermediary non-profit, the dRPC mobilizes funding from credible and mission driven development partners and has been called upon by several development partners to shape Nigerian country programs and recommend non-government organizations for funding. The dRPC produced the foundational report and defended the concept note for the establishment of an Action Aid country office in Nigeria.

With funding from the Ford Foundation Office of West Africa, in June 2025, the dRPC launched the NGO Support Initiative (NSI) to fill the gap left by USAID's departure from the funding landscape in Nigeria. The NSI supports women-led local NGOs to complete high impact projects which target women and girls in areas of social justice, health, education and economic empowerment. The objective of the NSI is to strengthen local NGO's resilience; their capacity for flexible program redesign; and for leveraging programs for NGO visibility amplification of brands and attracting new funding from innovative sources. The dRPC's work on the NSI is consistent with our intermediary role, mobilizing and regranting fit-for-purpose funding for local NGO resilience and sustainability.

1.2 Objectives of the NSI Programme

The specific objectives of the NSI grants are as follows.

1. Cushion the impact of the abrupt USAID funding withdrawal by providing rapid, flexible financial support that allowed local NGOs to sustain essential grassroots services and prevent program disruption.
2. Strengthen the institutional capacity of community-based and women-led organisations through targeted mentorship in financial management, project implementation, evidence-based advocacy, reporting, and compliance.
3. Restore organisational stability and staff morale by enabling NGOs to continue priority activities, retain key personnel, and rebuild confidence after the funding shock.
4. Reinforce community trust and ensure continuity of critical interventions in women's health, GBV prevention, economic empowerment, digital skills, and climate-smart agriculture.
5. Foster stronger collaboration between NGOs, communities, and government actors, enhancing visibility, policy influence, and long-term sustainability of community-driven development efforts.

1.3 NSI Grant Applications and the Beneficiaries by Geography

The dRPC received 837 applications under Calls one and two of NSI. A total of 28 % or 235 applicants were eligible as having lost funding from USAID. While 602 applications or 72 % that did not meet the eligibility

criteria of having lost USAID funding. Applications were received from all six (6) senatorial zones of Nigeria and in addition from NGOs in Kenya, Ethiopia and the United Kingdom.

Figure 1: Total Applications received between June to October 2025



Figure 2: Thematic areas of work of the 17 NSI grantees in Cohort 1

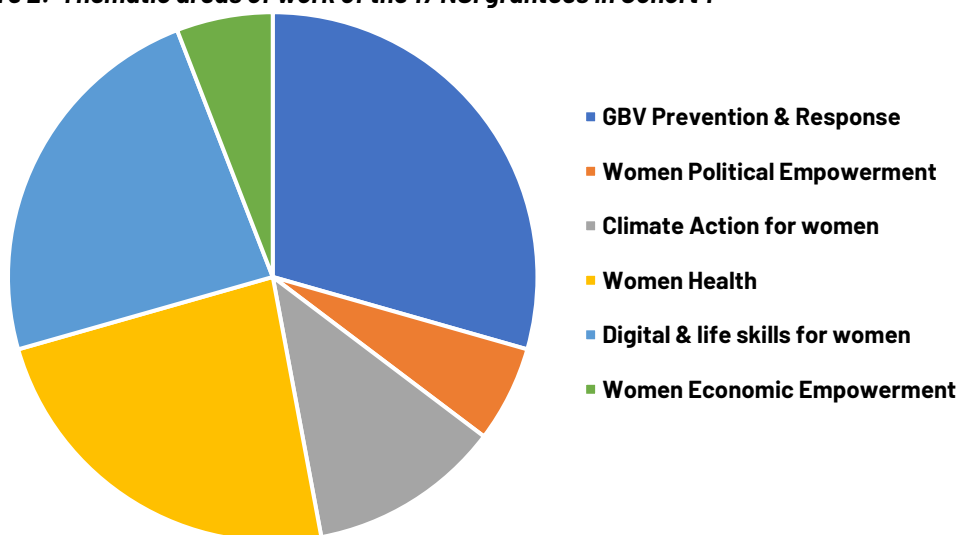


Table 1: Applicants by Geographical Location

NAME OF ORGANIZATION	STATE
• Webfala Digital Skills for all Initiative	Kwara
• GEPaDC	Borno
• Visionary Women In Agricultural Development In Africa (VIWADA)	Benue
• Rising Hope Girls Educational Foundation (RHGE)	FCT
• Blue Sapphire Hub Foundation	Kano
• Unique Royal Sisters	Abia
• Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN)	Niger
• International Centre For Investigation Reporting	FCT
• Rahama	Bauchi
• Resonat Spei Humanitarian Hub Foundation	Adamawa

NAME OF ORGANIZATION	STATE
• Widows and Orphans Empowerment Organization (WEWE)	Rivers
• Headfort Foundation for Justice	Akwa Ibom
• Heal The Youth Foundation	Plateau
• BAOBAB	Lagos
• NECA's Network of Entrepreneurial Women (NNEW)	Lagos
• Family Life and Community Health Society (FLACHS)	Nasarawa
• SkillHer	Oyo



Section 2: Impact of USAID Funding Cuts

2.1 Loss of USAID Funding: What It Meant for the Organisations

Unexpected Shock and Lack of Prior Warning: Across all organisations, the stop-work order arrived as a sudden shock, even though some had heard rumours circulating in the development sector. Unique Royal Sisters explained that although “we had heard rumours,” they “were not expecting it to land so suddenly.” GEPaDC echoed this sentiment, emphasising that they “did not expect it to come so abruptly,” noting that while they were aware donor reviews were ongoing, they had received “no official indication that our project would be halted.” FLACHS described the withdrawal as something that “came suddenly,” leaving staff, volunteers, and community members confused. According to WEWE, the stop-work order arrived without prior warning, prompting an emergency management meeting and immediate organisation-wide communication to ensure compliance and transparency with staff. Despite previously achieving 98% cumulative donor compliance and meeting 100% of USAID programme targets, WEWE received no prior alert that the shutdown was imminent.

Collapse of Primary Funding Pipelines: For several organisations, the USAID withdrawal resulted in the sudden collapse of their only active funding stream, triggering an immediate institutional crisis. FLACHS expressed this clearly, stating: “Sincerely, ...having about 21 volunteers and about 8 core staff... all of them had to stop working.” The organisation emphasised its extreme vulnerability at the time of the cut, noting that “apart from this USAID funding... we do not have any other donor funding.” The financial magnitude of the halted

interventions further underscores the scale of disruption. Heal the Youth Foundation simultaneously lost a ₦79 million Adolescent and Young Persons (AYP) Hub programme, a ₦23 million comprehensive HIV response, and a planned ₦129 million healthcare workforce training programme. These were not ancillary projects, they were the backbone of organisational operations. The sudden termination erased current implementation cycles, ongoing service delivery, and future projections for expansion.

Sudden Disruption of Programme Stability and Continuity: The action interrupted long-term programming commitments and destabilised entire community service structures. GEPaDC described how the decision undercut years of planning anchored on a two-year GBV prevention model, explaining that *“one year after the project... came the termination of the BHA contract.”* The cancellation forced the organisation to abruptly discontinue the EMAP component, leaving beneficiaries mid-process without continuity or closure. For Unique Royal Sisters, the shock reverberated deeply across communities accustomed to predictable and consistent support. As they explained, *“It was not just about losing funds, it was about losing stability for our community.”* The timing shortly after signing new grant agreements and entering the festive period heightened the psychological and operational disruption. This instability weakened the sense of security communities had in ongoing health, nutrition, and protection services.

Immediate Human Impact: Staff Shock, Job Loss and Emotional Distress: Across organisations, the human consequences were immediate and profound. Staff teams, many of whom were recruited from the same vulnerable communities they served, faced sudden unemployment and loss of income. Unique Royal Sisters captured the depth of this impact: *“For my team... we lost our main source of livelihood overnight. A lot of my staff are breadwinners.”* WEWE reported that the sudden funding cut also forced WEWE to lay off 50% of its staff, underscoring the severe organisational strain created across grantees. At GEPaDC, the emotional toll was compounded by the loss of investment in ongoing proposal development. The organisation highlighted how *“staff who had invested their energy into proposal development felt demoralized.”* The erasure of institutional knowledge and technical expertise represented not only a financial loss but also a setback in capacity that could take years to rebuild.

Community Confusion, Fear, and Reputational Damage: The withdrawal also caused confusion and distress among beneficiaries who were left without explanation for the sudden cessation of essential services. Grantee noted that the abrupt nature of the decision created damaging misperceptions: *“Some assumed the organization had mismanaged funds... the sudden nature of the closure created a temporary disconnect and misunderstanding”* (NSI Grantee1). Such confusion had immediate reputational consequences, particularly in communities where trust had been earned through years of consistent engagement. FLACHS described the community’s response as emotionally charged and difficult to navigate, saying: *“For beneficiaries... it was something that was unexplainable. We kept getting calls.”* The inability to provide answers to urgent community questions further deepened the rupture in relationships and eroded the confidence that beneficiaries had in their service providers.

Strategic Setbacks and Lost Opportunities: Beyond the immediate operational shock, the funding cut undermined long-term organisational strategy, development pipelines, and future programmatic trajectories. Respondent explained that *“the abrupt cancellation of pending USAID grant applications meant that months of planning... became redundant”* (NSI Grantee2). This included months of stakeholder engagement, budgeting, and partnership coordination that could no longer be leveraged. The sudden halt also prevented organisations from scaling proven interventions, expanding into underserved areas, or capitalising on emerging opportunities. For organisations on the cusp of broader institutional growth, the USAID withdrawal represented not just a financial interruption but a setback to organisational maturation and long-term sustainability.

2.2 Effects on Projects, Beneficiaries, and Community Relationships

Abrupt Halting of Core Project Components: The stop-work order forced organisations to halt essential programme components that were mid-stream and could not be paused without consequences. GEPaDC explained that the GBV prevention track ended immediately, noting that *“the EMAP activity... was terminated... and we had to disengage the beneficiaries.”* This disrupted a structured curriculum designed to unfold progressively, leaving men, boys, women, and girls without the continuation of sessions that shaped behavioural change. Heal the Youth Foundation also lost the momentum of its community-led empowerment cycle, which had been carefully sequenced around leadership training, advocacy preparation, and village meetings; these processes were suddenly cut short before communities could complete their action plans.

Beneficiaries Left Without Safety Nets or Continuity Mechanisms: Across all organisations, community members expressed a deep sense of abandonment when services disappeared overnight. Unique Royal Sisters captured this moment vividly: *“Some were worried, some were frustrated, and many just kept asking, ‘Where do we go now?’”* The loss of continuity particularly affected individuals relying on psychosocial support, peer sessions, and safe spaces, services that cannot be switched on and off without harming trust and progress. For youth participating in empowerment and nutrition learning cycles, the interruption meant that skills-building and knowledge sessions remained incomplete, reducing long-term developmental benefits.

Reversal of Community Confidence and Programme Acceptance: Years of community engagement were jeopardised within days. GEPaDC recounted that some community members questioned the integrity of the organisation, saying the closure *“negatively affected our reputation in the short term.”* Such suspicion threatened to unravel relationships built through intensive outreach, participatory structures, and local leadership engagement. FLACHS similarly described how sudden silence from once-active programme teams bred confusion among women farmers and caregivers accustomed to regular contact. This erosion of confidence placed additional pressure on organisations to rebuild trust once the NSI grant allowed them to re-engage.

Psychological and Social Disruption Among Vulnerable Groups: The most affected were those who relied on the programmes for emotional stability, social belonging, or protection. GEPaDC noted that completing GBV prevention sessions is crucial for behavioural transformation, adding that *“we were not able to get back this feedback from our beneficiaries”* after the USAID cut. Without completion, participants were left mid-journey—some still processing trauma, others in the early stages of shifting norms. According to WEWE, before the closure, WEWE consistently reached over 137,160 orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) with comprehensive services, trained 2,500 community volunteers, and supported 18,000 children with school re-enrolment, illustrating the magnitude of services immediately put at risk by the USAID exit. Heal the Youth Foundation described how women in VSLA groups were unsettled when leadership and advocacy training was interrupted at a stage where they were gaining confidence and beginning to articulate their voices collectively.

Truncated Impact Pathways and Incomplete Behavioural Change Cycles: Many of the interventions depended on time-bound behavioural change pathways that require repeated exposure to sessions, reflection cycles, and follow-up. For instance, EMAP requires several weeks of engagement with women before transitioning to structured dialogue with men. Because the programme was cut at the midpoint, GEPaDC reported that they had completed early sessions but had not reached the evaluative end of the curriculum, explaining that *“there are some sections... and after those sections are covered, that’s where you begin to analyze... the impact.”* This meant that communities could not benefit from the final stages of the model, where measurable shifts in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours become visible.

Some projects had cultivated relationships with government ministries, extension services, or health facilities. The sudden cessation placed these partnerships in a difficult position, as activities that depended on joint planning or government participation could not continue. FLACHS, for example, had developed working arrangements with agricultural extension officers and community systems under their earlier design;

the stop-work order interrupted these ties, weakening momentum for integrated approaches. Heal the Youth Foundation also lost the chance to bring state policymakers into high-level nutrition and empowerment dialogues that were already in motion.

2.3 Organisational Responsibility and Search for Alternatives

A Renewed Sense of Duty to Communities Despite Institutional Uncertainty: Following the abrupt withdrawal, organisations expressed a powerful moral obligation to continue serving the communities that depended on them. Unique Royal Sisters described this responsibility as immediate and deeply felt: *"We could not just abandon thousands of community members who rely on our services."* Even without external funding, teams understood that their absence would leave vulnerable groups exposed to heightened risks, whether malnutrition, GBV, stalled treatment, or weakened social protection networks. This sense of duty became the emotional engine that pushed organisations to start seeking survival pathways even before new funding was secured.

Rapid Mobilisation of Internal Resources and Cost-Saving Adaptations: Several organisations quickly turned inward, reassessing their operational models to determine how they could stretch the little remaining resources they had. GEPaDC reported making strategic use of previously trained community volunteers, explaining that they had *"developed the capacity of some of the community members... so this helped us to cut down the expenses of hiring experts."* This transition allowed local structures to temporarily sustain parts of programming without the heavier costs associated with salaries, consultants, accommodation, or transportation. Such pragmatic adaptations enabled organisations to keep critical touchpoints alive during the funding vacuum.

Strengthening Partnerships and Leveraging External Networks: With formal programmes suspended, organisations intensified efforts to draw on partnerships with INGOs, government departments, and allied CBOs. Grantee described how they relied on earlier collaborations to ensure that urgent GBV cases received support, noting that *"we refer those cases to other partners... because we don't have the financial capacity to handle it"* (NSI Grantee5). These referral-based strategies allowed organisations to continue protecting vulnerable households even when they lacked the resources to intervene directly. Heal the Youth Foundation also leaned on existing networks in Plateau State to keep community-level structures intact while anticipating new funding opportunities.

Strategic Reassessment of Programmes to Align with Emerging Opportunities: The funding shock also compelled organisations to re-evaluate their strategies and prepare to pivot quickly should new windows open. Heal the Youth Foundation described conducting internal planning meetings to determine which activities offered the highest value for community wellbeing under limited resources. They explained that they used a decision-making tool to scrutinise each activity, noting: *"If we're unable to articulate this success... we will not do the activity."* This disciplined approach allowed organisations to prioritise interventions capable of producing visible, short-term gains while maintaining a foundation for long-term impact.

Re-engaging Communities to Maintain Trust and Avoid Programme Drift: Even without funds, some organisations made deliberate efforts to keep community actors informed and engaged so that trust would not erode further. Heal the Youth Foundation sent teams into line ministries to conduct quick assessments at their own cost, which helped keep relationships active and signalled continued commitment. These initiatives demonstrated to stakeholders that the organisations were still present, still listening, and still preparing to return once they found new support. This form of community-facing responsibility was crucial in preventing complete disengagement and maintaining programmatic relevance.

Persistent Search for Alternative Funding Streams and Local Opportunities: In the months immediately after the cut, organisations became significantly more aggressive and proactive in exploring new grants, philanthropic channels, and domestic partnerships. FLACHS highlighted how the crisis pushed them to

broaden their funding horizon: they “submitted so many proposals... places where we didn’t know there were opportunities.” Teams began monitoring donor platforms more actively, reaching out to state ministries for co-created initiatives, and experimenting with small-scale fundraising from local networks, which had not been central to their strategy before. WEWE noted that the scale of its impact, empowering 3,500 caregivers and consistently exceeding target outcomes, strengthened its sense of duty to secure new funding streams rather than allow years of community progress to erode.

Section 3: NSI Grant Opportunity: Meaning, Relevance, and Hope Restored

Under the NSI grant, a total of ₦65.60 million (representing 12% of the total funding lost by the dRPC-NSI Grantees) was disbursed between June and August 2025 to 17 local Nigerian NGOs across the six geo-political zones in Nigeria, supporting interventions in women’s economic empowerment; health and well-being; education and digital skills development; climate resilience and food security; and gender equality, rights, and advocacy. Beyond the financial investment, however, the NSI programme offered something even more significant: renewed hope, institutional stability, and a practical pathway for organisations to recover from the abrupt USAID funding shock and continue serving their communities.



A Lifeline Arriving at a Moment of Desperation: For many organisations, the NSI call for proposals emerged at a moment when hope was fading and teams were unsure how long they could sustain operations. Unique Royal Sisters described the emotional relief with striking clarity: “Seeing the NSI call felt like a lifeline... it came at a time when we were almost losing hope.” After weeks of unanswered questions from communities and halted activities, the appearance of a responsive, flexible grant window provided psychological stability as well as concrete operational promise. FLACHS described the timing as “quite timely,” noting that it came exactly when the organisation needed reassurance that its work still had value. For WEWE, the NSI grant helped sustain Rivers State office, which had served the community for nine consecutive years, and enabled continued GBV programming after previously assisting 18,474 GBV survivors across the state.

“The WEWE office in Rivers State faced challenges covering operational costs after nine years of providing GBV services. Six years of WEWE’s GBV work in Rivers State included managing the IHVN project from 2019 to 2025, particularly after a service delivery contract left no funds for operations. When the NSI call for proposals was announced in June 2025, WEWE immediately submitted its application, viewing the opportunity as a beacon of hope. The grant offered a chance to sustain critical work, cover operational costs, and continue serving the community at a time when closure seemed unavoidable.” Dr. Josephine Ogazi-Egwuonwu, Executive Director, WEWE

A Grant Model That Recognised the Realities of the Crisis: The NSI grant stood out because it acknowledged the context of sudden disruption and adapted to the needs of the organisations rather than imposing rigid programmatic structures. Heal the Youth Foundation emphasised this difference, explaining that unlike traditional donors who dictate activity menus, *“we were told, submit your ideas, tell us what you want to do with the money.”* This flexibility empowered organisations to design interventions grounded in community realities and to rebuild the most urgent elements of programmes that USAID’s closure had interrupted. For many grantees, this was the first time they encountered a funding model that centred local voice to this degree.

Rebuilding Community Trust and Programme Credibility: The NSI support provided an opportunity for organisations to return to communities with renewed capacity and to reconnect with beneficiaries who had been left in confusion. GEPaDC described this effect powerfully: *“This funding has really supported us in gaining back our trust within the community.”* Being able to resume EMAP sessions, re-engage GBV stakeholders, and complete previously paused components enabled the organisation to demonstrate reliability after a period when communities had questioned their continuity. According to WEWE, through the NSI-supported convening, 67 government, CSO, and private-sector GBV actors were trained on entering state-level data into the National GBV Dashboard—an important step toward ensuring Rivers State GBV cases are finally reflected in national planning. Similarly, NSI allowed FLACHS to resume activities with women farmers and climate-resilient seed distribution, restoring relationships that had been strained by the sudden USAID exit.

Restoration of Staff Morale and Institutional Confidence: The NSI grant was not only a programmatic intervention, it also recalibrated team morale. For organisations where staff had been demoralised or fearful of organisational collapse, the award signalled a new beginning. NSI enabled small but meaningful continuity of roles, giving teams the assurance that their work remained valued. One organisation noted how impactful this was: the grant *“provided continuous means of livelihood to the project staff.”* This stabilisation helped retain trained personnel, preserve institutional memory, and reduce the psychological toll experienced in the aftermath of the stop-work order.

A Platform for Innovation, Re-design, and More Sustainable Approaches: The NSI framework encouraged innovation rather than restoration of old models. Heal the Youth Foundation used the grant to fully integrate a community-led empowerment approach they had long wanted to test, noting that NSI’s flexibility meant they could *“implement what we want... what we love to do.”* This freedom allowed organisations to rebuild programmes in more sustainable, community-owned ways. GEPaDC similarly redesigned its activities by shifting key roles to trained community facilitators, ensuring that ownership became shared rather than donor-driven.

Reopening the Door to Visibility, Networks, and Future Opportunities: For many grantees, NSI was the first step toward re-entering institutional networks that had gone quiet after the USAID shock. The grant provided visibility in state ministries, peer learning across organisations, and exposure to additional funding opportunities. FLACHS highlighted how transformative this was, sharing that NSI *“positioned organisations... and reinforced a culture of transparency and integrity.”* This visibility helped organisations regain their footing in the development landscape and strengthened their eligibility for future, larger grants.

Section 4: Gates Foundation Investment in building a cohort of CSO Mentors in Nigeria – Paying it forward in the NSI Model

The NSI programme integrated a robust mentorship model that paired each grantee organisation with experienced professionals drawn from dRPC’s long-standing advocacy, accountability, financial management, and programme quality CSO networks. Mentors were trained over 8 years of investment by the Gates Foundation in two high impact dRPC programs – the Partnership for Advocacy in Child and Family Health, PACFaH and the Partnership for Advocacy in Child and Family Health at Scale (PACFaH@Scale); in addition the

Partnership for Advancing Women in Economic Development (PAWED) also funded by the Gates foundation. These three investments by the Gates Foundation ran from the period 2015 to 2023 and was preceded by a 2 year mapping of CSOs in Nigeria(2013-2014) to assess local capacity for sustainable policy advocacy. Below is an overview of the mentors, their backgrounds, and the value they contributed to the NSI programme.



1. Dr. Stanley Illechukwu - Advocacy & Policy Influence Mentor

Dr. Stanley brought extensive experience from the PAS Advocacy Framework and his role in civil society mobilisation under SSDO. He facilitated the general advocacy orientation for all grantees and provided tailored mentorship to two organisations whose projects required sophisticated advocacy strategies. Under his guidance, one Abia-based organisation successfully persuaded informal community leaders to accept HIV testing services for key populations, while another in Rivers State engaged the Ministry of Gender to operationalise the State GBV Situation Room. His mentorship ensured that advocacy-focused projects achieved concrete, measurable policy

outcomes within the short cycle.



2. Ms. Nkiru Nwode - Programme Coordination, Reporting & Evidence-Based Advocacy Mentor

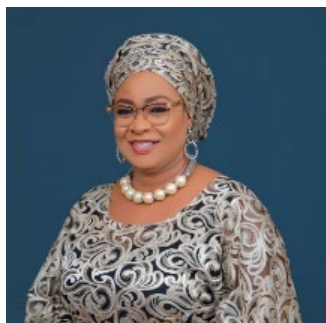
With a strong foundation from dRPC's PACFaH, PAS, and PAWED programmes, Nkiru brought competencies in stakeholder engagement, structured planning, data use, and government relations. She guided all 17 grantees to interpret project guidelines, develop realistic work plans, manage risks, and comply with programmatic and financial reporting requirements. Through routine check-ins, review of monthly reports, and peer-learning facilitation, she helped organisations troubleshoot

challenges, strengthen networks, and maintain quality. Her structured mentoring helped grantees stay on track and deliver results despite the compressed timeline.



3. Mr. Olafusi Olaseinde - Financial Management, Compliance & Accountability Mentor

Drawing from PwC-led PAS accounting training and extensive experience training CSOs, Mr. Olafusi mentored grantees on donor financial compliance, tax requirements, transparent documentation, fraud-free accounting, and proper record-keeping. His guidance reinforced the importance of accurate retirements, financial integrity, and adherence to Nigerian financial regulations. His training improved confidence among small NGOs, enabling them to upgrade their financial systems and strengthen their readiness for future grants.



4. Ruth Agbo - Women's Economic Empowerment, Leadership & Visibility Mentor

Ruth leveraged her experience from the WEE Programme, communications trainings, and collaborations with the Ministry of Women Affairs to mentor organisations on visibility, leadership, reporting quality, and results-focused programming. She emphasised integrity and high standards in documentation while inspiring women-led groups to form sustainable economic clusters such as cashew and cocoa cooperatives. Her mentorship helped organisations enhance local ownership, deepen advocacy, and expand opportunities for women beneficiaries.



5. Halima Ben Umar - SBCC, Communications & Advocacy Implementation Mentor

With training from dRPC's PAWED and PAS projects, Halima strengthened grantees' facilitation, report writing, and advocacy delivery. She worked closely with the Heal the Youth Foundation, guiding improvements in project execution and report quality. By the second reporting round, she observed substantial growth in their planning, documentation, and advocacy strategy, direct results of the skills she transferred in evidence-based advocacy and effective communication.



6. Wilson Ogah - Procurement, Documentation & NGO Systems Strengthening Mentor

Wilson applied technical skills gained from PACFaH@Scale accounting and procurement training to support grantees like VIWADA and Rising Hope Girls Foundation. He mentored them to improve procurement processes, correct financial documentation gaps, strengthen record management, and uphold reporting integrity. His mentorship also strengthened his own understanding of organisational growth dynamics and reinforced his technical expertise through

hands-on engagement.



7. Samuel Aiyewan - Advocacy, Budget Tracking & Quality of Care Mentor

Samuel brought extensive experience from multiple Gates foundation capacity-building programmes implemented by the dRPC between 2018 and 2021, including advocacy, budget tracking, and quality-of-care training. He often notes that these trainings fundamentally reshaped his approach to service delivery, shifting his mindset and refining how he engages with communities after many years in the civil service. The competencies he gained enabled him to effectively supervise and mentor NSI grantees, guiding them to strengthen implementation quality and community engagement. His work with women-led cooperatives further equipped him to support grantees in

promoting empowerment, amplifying women's voices, and enhancing their participation in local development processes.



8. Alhaji Baba Shehu - Programme Management, Procurement & Compliance Mentor

Alhaji Baba Shehu drew on extensive training in programme management, resource mobilization, advocacy, media storytelling, and proposal development to guide grantees through key compliance and implementation processes. He supported organisations to strengthen procurement procedures, conduct proper vendor pre-qualification, improve financial retirement and tax compliance, and follow approved work plans with discipline. Many grantees initially struggled with these requirements, but

through his step-by-step mentorship they enhanced their reporting quality, strengthened financial documentation, and became more confident in meeting professional standards for project implementation.



9. Kehinde Omojola – Strategic Advocacy, SBCC, MEL & Programme Delivery Mentor

The capacity-building training Kehinde received through the PAWED project significantly enhanced his ability to mentor and support five NSI grantee organisations. His training in strategic advocacy messaging, report writing, funds management, monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL), and social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) equipped him with practical tools that he applied directly during mentorship engagements.

Kehinde provided tailored support to each assigned organisation: he helped Headfort Foundation resolve scheduling challenges affecting their prison outreach activities; supported BAOBAB in refining their advocacy messaging for greater clarity and influence; guided NNEW on SBCC and influencer engagement strategies to better reach market women; and offered SkillHer and Webfala targeted assistance on programme management, documentation, and timely reporting. Overall, the competencies gained from the PAWED training strengthened the quality, relevance, and problem-solving depth of mentorship he delivered under the NSI programme.

Section 5: Implementation Experience Under NSI: What Was Done and How

Strategic Realignment of Activities to Fit Available Resources: Once awarded the NSI grant, organisations immediately adjusted their programme designs to ensure that essential components could be delivered within the smaller, time-bound structure. FLACHS described this shift vividly, explaining that instead of operating across multiple LGAs, they “*worked within one LGA and expanded our reach*” by concentrating beneficiaries geographically. This reduced travel, accommodation and logistics costs, allowing them to support more women farmers than previously planned. GEPaDC followed a similar logic, realigning their workplan so that community members trained under the former USAID project could take on facilitation roles. The organisation explained that this approach helped them “*cut down the expenses of hiring experts,*” enabling continued delivery of EMAP sessions.

Using Community Structures to Drive Implementation: A defining feature of NSI-supported implementation was the deliberate use of community-led mechanisms. GEPaDC relied heavily on facilitators, supervisors and youth previously trained under the USAID project, noting that “*the community people also own the project... it will give them this entitlement spirit.*” This approach not only reduced costs but also deepened local ownership of GBV prevention activities. Heal the Youth Foundation fully operationalised a community-led empowerment model, bringing women’s groups, VSLA members, and traditional leaders into core implementation roles. This created a decentralised delivery model that aligned with the organisation’s strategic priority of “community-led development.”

Compressing Timelines Through Adaptive Scheduling: Because NSI-funded interventions operated within a three-month cycle, organisations had to adapt the pacing of their activities to ensure outputs were achieved without compromising quality. GEPaDC explained that where EMAP sessions were typically held weekly, the NSI model required “*bi-weekly sessions,*” carefully scheduled around farming seasons, school routines, and community preferences. This allowed the organisation to complete outstanding weeks of the curriculum within the shorter timeframe. Similarly, Heal the Youth Foundation conducted a highly sequenced implementation process—first running a focus group discussion, then leadership training, followed by advocacy training and village meetings—while ensuring that each step built logically toward the next.

Prioritising High-Impact Activities Over Broad Coverage: NSI encouraged organisations to prioritise depth of impact over geographical spread. Heal the Youth Foundation adopted an internal decision-making tool to assess whether each planned activity created visible value, describing how they asked: *“Will this give us the result we require? If not, we remove it.”* This disciplined approach ensured that only high-impact components—such as women’s leadership training, policy advocacy and village square dialogues—were implemented. FLACHS also made strategic decisions that preserved programme quality, shifting focus entirely to women farmers, a group often excluded from agricultural inputs and support, thereby maximising effectiveness within limited resources.

Strengthening Programmes Through Government and Stakeholder: Engagement: NSI-supported implementation strengthened partnerships with government line ministries and state actors. FLACHS worked closely with agricultural extension officers, describing it as a “milestone,” noting: *“people from the ministry of agriculture supported us in every capacity-building session.”* This partnership provided technical legitimacy and increased community confidence in the intervention. Heal the Youth Foundation’s implementation culminated in a high-level state meeting where commissioners, permanent secretaries and directors participated, demonstrating strong stakeholder buy-in. The organisation described this moment as extraordinary: *“They invited the stakeholders themselves... we didn’t invite anybody.”*

Ensuring Mentorship-Driven Implementation Quality: A unique aspect of NSI implementation was the ongoing, hands-on mentorship provided throughout the grant. Organisations had access to programmatic mentors, financial mentors, and reporting mentors who ensured that activities were compliant, well-documented, and strategically delivered. As one grantee described, NSI mentors were consistently available, noting: *“Sometimes I even go into activity forgetting that... I will reach out to the mentor.”* This structure enhanced implementation quality, strengthened internal systems, and nurtured confidence among project teams who were delivering programmes under new constraints.

Demonstrating Outcomes Within a Short Implementation Window: Despite limited time and modest funding, organisations achieved measurable outcomes. GEPaDC completed outstanding EMAP sections, enabling them to gather feedback from spouses and assess behavioural shifts. Heal the Youth Foundation supported women to produce vision boards, facilitated village square meetings that triggered direct community investments, and secured state-level adoption of key nutrition guidelines. FLACHS enabled women farmers to access climate-resilient seeds and expand their knowledge through community navigators. These results demonstrated that, even in a shortened cycle, NSI-funded activities could deliver transformative, community-driven outcomes.

Section 6: Portfolio Results Across All Thematic Areas

The NSI grant program supported 17 community-based and women-led organizations working across five major thematic sectors: Health; Gender Equality & GBV; Women’s Economic Empowerment; Education & Digital Literacy; and Climate Resilience & Agricultural Development. The portfolio achieved broad thematic coverage, with Health interventions reaching 2,018 beneficiaries, Gender Equality and GBV programmes engaging 2,490 people, and Women’s Economic Empowerment initiatives supporting 696 women and community members. Education and Digital Literacy programmes reached 947 beneficiaries, while Climate and Agriculture interventions supported 404 participants, demonstrating the diverse and multi-sectoral impact of the NSI grant across Nigeria.

Table 2: Thematic Classifications

Thematic Area	No. of NGOs	Total Reached
Health	3	2,018
Gender Equality & GBV	4	2,490
Women Economic Empowerment	5	696

Education & Digital Literacy	3	947
Climate & Agriculture	2	404

The breakdown is as follows.

Health Sector Interventions: Three organizations implemented health-focused projects targeting women and vulnerable groups. Their activities centered on community health education, women's health promotion, and support to incarcerated women. Overall Reach in Health: 2,018 individuals, largely women.

Organization	Focus Area	Total Reached	Women	Men
Unique Royal Sisters	Women's health	1,667	1,667	–
FOMWAN	Community health	51	36	15
Headfort Foundation	Women's health, Prison welfare	300	200	100

Across the three health-focused grantees, women were the primary beneficiaries, particularly through community sensitization on wellness, health rights, and access to services. Unique Royal Sisters contributed significantly by providing direct outreach to 1,667 women, while Headfort Foundation delivered targeted health and welfare support to incarcerated women, demonstrating strong impact on underserved populations.

Gender Equality, Rights & GBV Prevention: These organizations worked to strengthen community understanding of gender rights, reduce violence against women, and enhance response systems to GBV. This thematic area recorded the highest reach, with 2,490 individuals sensitized on gender norms, GBV prevention, and women's rights. While women constituted a large portion of participants, men also featured prominently particularly through GEPaDC's male engagement model, which targeted 931 men to promote allyship and community-level gender transformation.

Organization	Focus Area	Total Reached	Women	Men
GEPaDC	Gender equality	1,136	205	931
Resonat Spei Humanitarian Hub	GBV sensitization, Women empowerment	1,267	299	81
WEWE	GBV response capacity building	67	48	19
BAOBAB	Gender equality advocacy	20	20	–

Women's Economic Empowerment: Five grantees implemented programs supporting women entrepreneurs, strengthening livelihoods, and improving financial resilience within communities. Overall Reach in Economic Empowerment stands at 696 individuals. Interventions focused on equipping women with skills to enhance income generation, leadership, and financial independence. Rahama, NNEW, and SkillHer concentrated solely on women, while ICIR and Heal the Youth Foundation engaged both women and men in community livelihood strengthening. These efforts helped women establish stronger roles in local economies and improved household resilience.

Organization	Focus Area	Total Reached	Women	Men
Rahama	Women economic empowerment	100	100	–
Heal the Youth Foundation	Economic empowerment & community strengthening	203	158	45
NNEW	Women entrepreneurship	50	50	–

SkillHer	Women's empowerment	30	30	–
ICIR	Women's empowerment, storytelling	313	230	83

Education & Digital Literacy: The education-focused grantees worked on digital inclusion for girls, basic education support, and technology-driven literacy for women. Overall Reach in Education & Digital Literacy was 947 individuals. Digital literacy emerged as a priority area, with Rising Hope leading large-scale outreach to girls (715 girls) directly equipped with digital education skills. Webfala specifically targeted women, while Blue Sapphire Hub provided foundational learning support. This cluster contributed strongly to reducing the digital gender gap.

Organization	Focus Area	Total Reached	Women	Men
Webfala	Women's digital literacy	19	19	–
Rising Hope Girls Foundation	Girls' digital literacy	898	715	183
Blue Sapphire Hub Foundation	Education	30	17	13

Climate Resilience & Agricultural Development: Two organizations strengthened women-led agricultural practices and promoted community resilience to climate change. Overall Reach in Climate & Agriculture was 404 individuals. Both organizations focused on equipping women farmers with climate-smart techniques, sustainable agriculture practices, and increased food security knowledge. The majority of beneficiaries were rural women, demonstrating the program's alignment with grassroots resilience-building.

Organization	Focus Area	Total Reached	Women	Men
VIWADA	Climate resilience & food security	304	257	48
FLACHS	Agricultural development	100	100	–

Section 7: Organisational Strengthening Outcomes

Mentorship as a Distinctive Feature of NSI Support: One of the most transformative elements of NSI support was its structured mentorship system, which provided organisations with continuous technical, programmatic and financial guidance. Several grantees emphasised that this level of personalised support was unprecedented. As GEPaDC noted, *"there's no funding that we have an individual mentor attached to the organization... apart from NSI."* This meant that instead of navigating implementation challenges alone, organisations received real-time advice, troubleshooting support and hands-on coaching. For many, this was the first time a donor built mentorship into a grant design as a core feature rather than an optional addition.

Strengthened Financial Management, Compliance, and Accountability: NSI investments significantly enhanced the financial discipline and compliance culture within organisations. The financial mentors played a critical role in this shift. FLACHS highlighted how transformative this was for their internal systems, explaining that the grant *"emphasized so much on tax compliance"* and improved their readiness for future audits. Heal the Youth Foundation described how their finance officer grew in competence and confidence, recalling that before NSI, *"she only had [limited training],"* but under the programme she received extensive mentoring that made her *"a pro now."* These improvements positioned organisations for larger, more complex funding streams.

Improved Reporting, Documentation, and Data Management Systems: Organisations reported that NSI helped them elevate their documentation and reporting quality. The structured monthly updates, workplans,

and financial templates sharpened their internal processes. One grantee described how mentors ensured “*all our financial documents are accurate and consistent*” (NSI Grantee1), and monitored workplan implementation closely. FLACHS reported similar gains in monitoring and evaluation, noting that NSI strengthened their staff’s ability to produce timely, standardised reports suitable for donor oversight. These improvements reduced administrative errors and increased organisational credibility.

Media Visibility and Strategic Storytelling Capacity: NSI deliberately pushed organisations to expand their public profile and visibility, an area in which many lacked prior experience. FLACHS shared how this changed their practice: “*we got about four media organizations to cover activities... something we didn’t know was possible at small cost.*” With NSI’s emphasis on documenting and showcasing impact, organisations learned to create media-friendly materials, tag dRPC on posts, and present their work to wider audiences. Heal the Youth Foundation described how this exposure repositioned them within the state ecosystem, explaining that they are now seen as “*the go-to people for nutrition*” in Plateau State. This visibility directly contributes to longer-term funding prospects.

Strengthened Relationships with Government and Institutional Stakeholders: Through NSI-supported activities, organisations gained access to state-level actors and systems in ways they had not before. FLACHS built partnerships with agricultural extension officers, who supported capacity-building sessions in person. Heal the Youth Foundation described how their advocacy work under NSI culminated in a high-level meeting with broad government participation, where “*four commissioners... permanent secretaries... and line directors*” attended without being directly invited by the organisation. This visibility expanded their legitimacy and integrated their work into formal state structures, increasing the likelihood of policy influence and future collaboration.

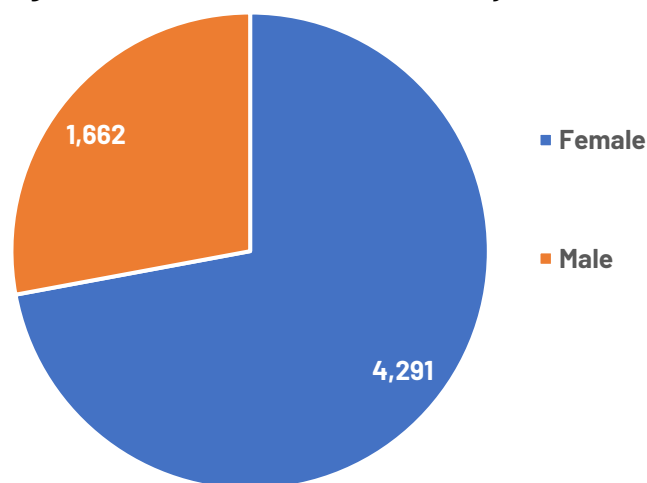
Enhanced Organisational Confidence and Strategic Clarity: The combination of mentorship, improved systems, visibility and community-driven results helped organisations rebuild institutional confidence after the demoralising USAID exit. Staff regained their sense of professional identity, while leadership teams refined their strategic direction. Heal the Youth Foundation articulated this transformation clearly, stating that NSI helped them implement “*what we want... what we love to do,*” reinforcing a stronger sense of organisational purpose. These gains have strengthened internal cohesion, sharpened strategic priorities and encouraged organisations to see themselves as capable actors within the wider development ecosystem. In addition to these qualitative improvements, the NSI programme also strengthened organisational structures through direct investment in staff capacity across all grantees. A total of 79 staff across 17 organisations benefited from NSI support, reflecting the programme’s strong emphasis on institutional strengthening. Of these, 54 were female and 25 male, representing 68.35% female participation. Several organisations, such as SkillHer, Headfort Foundation for Justice (HFJ), FLACHS and BAOBAB, were 100% female-led, while URS reported 90.91% female staff and RSHHF 71.43%.

Peer Learning and Collaborative Networks Across CBOs: NSI also created a shared learning environment among grantees, something few local CBOs had previously experienced. FLACHS highlighted how valuable this was, noting that NSI “*created opportunity to learn from peer organizations... share ideas and share strategies.*” This peer learning made organisations feel less isolated, exposed them to new methodologies and enabled cross-fertilisation of ideas. Such networks can evolve into long-term partnerships that strengthen the broader civil society ecosystem.

SECTION 8: Tangible Programme Achievements

Overall Beneficiary Reach and Distribution: Across the 17 NSI grantees, a total of 6,555 people were reached during the grant period, including 4,291 females and 1,662 males, demonstrating the programme's strong emphasis on women and girls. The distribution of beneficiaries shows a diverse and balanced contribution across organisations, with the largest reach recorded by Unique Royal Sisters (25.43%), Resonat Spei Humanitarian Hub (19.33%), GEPaDC (17.33%), and Rising Hope Girls Foundation (13.70%), together accounting for more than three-quarters of total beneficiaries. Mid-range contributors included ICIR (4.77%), VIWADA (4.64%), Headfort Foundation (4.58%), Heal the Youth Foundation (3.10%), WEWE (1.02%), FLACHS (1.53%), Rahama (1.53%), and NNEW (0.76%). Smaller but still meaningful contributions came from SkillHer, Blue Sapphire Hub Foundation, BAOBAB, Webfala, and FOMWAN, each supporting community groups across their specialised thematic areas.

Figure 3: Gender Distribution of Beneficiary Reach



Completion of Previously Interrupted Behavioural

Change Curricula: The NSI grant allowed organisations to complete programme components that USAID's sudden withdrawal had left unfinished. For GEPaDC, this meant finalising the EMAP curriculum, which had been suspended mid-way. They explained that *"we had to complete those sections... left under the BHA project,"* enabling beneficiaries to finish the learning cycle as intended. Completing these sessions was essential not only for programmatic integrity but also for observing behavioural changes that emerge only after the full curriculum has been delivered.

Measurable Shifts in Gender Norms and Household Dynamics: The completion of EMAP sessions generated visible results among participating households. GEPaDC reported receiving meaningful feedback from women whose spouses had attended the men's sessions, noting how these conversations began to shift attitudes about decision-making and gender roles. They described this transformation as significant, explaining: *"we have a huge gap in the transformational change... from where we met them and where we left them."* This demonstrates the powerful impact of restoring continuity to a programme that had previously been disrupted mid-stream.

Women were the overwhelming beneficiaries of NSI-supported interventions, with Women's Health reaching 1,208 females versus 15 males (98.77% female), Climate Action engaging 826 females and 116 males (87.69% female), and Digital/Life Skills for Girls reaching 83.54% female participants. In contrast, GBV Prevention and Response recorded a more balanced reach of 982 females and 1,114 males, while Women's Political and Economic Empowerment interventions were exclusively female, reaching 20 and 50 women respectively.

Strengthened Agency and Collective Voice Among Women Leaders: Heal the Youth Foundation's leadership and advocacy training created powerful ripple effects within women's groups. Women developed vision boards for their communities and articulated shared priorities many for the first time in public spaces. These efforts culminated in village square dialogues where community women confidently presented their demands. In one community, their advocacy yielded immediate tangible support **when the traditional leader donated funds to strengthen their association.** The organisation described this moment as a breakthrough, with women demonstrating newfound confidence and cohesion.

Policy Influence and High-Level Government Adoption of Recommendations: A major achievement under NSI was Heal the Youth Foundation's successful advocacy for state-level adoption of a national nutrition policy. Their meticulous preparation and engagement with policymakers led to rapid uptake, as they noted: *"Immediately, the state adopted the policy."* This outcome illustrates the catalytic role local CBOs can play in promoting policy alignment when equipped with the right tools, mentorship and strategic guidance. The high-level meeting convened by state officials, attended by commissioners, permanent secretaries and directors, further signals growing institutional trust in the organisation.

Expanded Access to Agricultural Inputs for Women Farmers: FLACHS used NSI support to deliver climate-resilient seeds to women farmers, a group historically overlooked in agricultural extension systems. Their adaptation of the intervention, shifting from scattered communities to a concentrated cluster, allowed them to reach more women than anticipated. FLACHS recounted how the intervention met a critical need, noting that women emphasised the importance of receiving seeds that were *"more beneficial to them than maize."* This not only strengthened food security but also addressed a longstanding gender gap in access to agricultural support.

Box 1: NSI Improving Women Livelihood

My name is Rakiya, and I've spent my entire life farming, just like my parents and grandparents before me. However, I never knew that there were seeds that could significantly improve my yields until a friend introduced me to this dRPC people.

Their kindness and generosity shook me. Not only did they provide me with improved seeds that can cover almost one hectare of land, but they also offered us training on best farming practices completely free of charge. To my surprise, they even provided food and transportation allowances during the training. I've never experienced such kindness in my life. Thanks to dRPC, my farm is now thriving. I'm happy with the progress I'm making, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to improve my livelihood. I'm praying for God's blessings upon dRPC for their selflessness and kindness. Their support has given me hope for a brighter future, and I'm eager to see the fruits of the impact of dRPC's support on my life and farming practices.



Strengthened Community Structures Through Navigation and Facilitation Models: NSI-funded activities strengthened community-based structures that can sustain impact beyond the grant period. FLACHS, for example, trained community navigators who understood local languages, geography and social dynamics, noting that their involvement *"made the work really, really good for us."* Such navigators improved community access, accelerated enrolment and enhanced participant retention. GEPaDC's use of community facilitators individuals previously trained under USAID, similarly embedded knowledge within local systems, reinforcing sustainable, community-owned delivery.

Increased Organisational Visibility and Demand for Continued Engagement: The results delivered under NSI significantly elevated the visibility of grantee organisations at community, state and sectoral levels. Heal the Youth Foundation noted that after the programme, state actors began approaching them directly: *"They are now coming to our office, telling us we will do training together."* This shift from organisations seeking recognition to being sought after—signals strengthened legitimacy. NSI's emphasis on media engagement amplified this effect, helping grantees present their work to wider audiences and potential donors.

SECTION 9: Lessons Learned

Deep Community Engagement Is Essential for Programme Acceptance and Continuity: Across all grantees, one of the strongest lessons was the necessity of engaging multiple layers of community leadership rather than relying on a single focal person. FLACHS emphasised this insight clearly, explaining that *“the project thrives when engagement goes beyond single focal persons... when it involves traditional rulers, women leaders, religious figures, youth and gatekeepers.”* This broadened engagement ensured smoother implementation, stronger buy-in and better resilience when disruptions occurred. Organisations learned that community engagement must be continuous, intentional and inclusive, as it is the foundation upon which trust and programme absorption are built.

Community-Led Implementation Strengthens Ownership and Reduces Resistance: The shift to more community-led models under NSI showed organisations the value of allowing participants to shape timing, content and delivery approaches. GEPaDC noted how involving community members in planning improved attendance, stressing that *“you should allow them to be part of the planning for the timing... so that you’ll be able to have good attendance.”* This level of inclusion reduced resistance, improved programme alignment with local schedules and strengthened local leadership capacity. Organisations saw that when communities lead, implementation is smoother, and behaviour change is deeper and more sustainable.

Adaptability and Flexibility Are Critical in Uncertain Contexts: The USAID closure taught organisations the importance of designing interventions flexibly rather than rigidly. Heal the Youth Foundation demonstrated this by altering their planned seed distribution after listening to women farmers, stating that *“the copy [cowpea] was more important for them than the maize.”* By adapting to community realities rather than sticking to predetermined plans, organisations achieved greater relevance and impact. The experience reinforced the lesson that flexibility is not a deviation from programme fidelity, it is a core component of effective community development.

Strong Stakeholder Relationships Can Accelerate Impact: Grantees consistently reported that working closely with government agencies strengthened credibility and expanded reach. FLACHS described their collaboration with agricultural extension officers as pivotal, noting that *“people from the ministry of agriculture supported us in every capacity-building session.”* This support not only enhanced technical quality but also built bridges for future partnerships. Heal the Youth Foundation’s experience, where state actors took ownership of organising a high-level meeting, demonstrated that strong relationships can dramatically accelerate policy influence and institutional recognition.

Continuous Learning and Mentorship Improve Organisational Maturity: Mentorship under NSI demonstrated that even experienced organisations benefit from structured learning support. Heal the Youth Foundation expressed this clearly when reflecting on their overall journey: *“Learning never ends... NSI opened our eyes to so many things we thought we were doing well but weren’t.”* Organisations learned the importance of humility, openness to feedback and continuous improvement. Mentorship strengthened financial systems, sharpened reporting skills and enhanced strategic thinking, demonstrating that capacity development must be an ongoing investment, not a one-off training.

Advocacy Skills Are Essential for Long-Term Community Change: Several organisations highlighted advocacy as a critical lesson learned, especially its power to bridge communities and policymakers. After receiving advocacy training, women supported by Heal the Youth Foundation successfully engaged community and state leaders and secured commitments that would ordinarily be difficult to obtain. As the organisation reflected, *“Advocacy... makes our work a lot easy.”* The lesson was clear: programme results can be amplified when communities are empowered to advocate for themselves and when organisations integrate advocacy into design from the onset.

Participatory Tools Spark Engagement and Strengthen Learning: Creative participatory tool, such as drawing exercises, vision boards and scenario discussions, proved highly effective in eliciting insights, improving engagement and strengthening learning. Heal the Youth Foundation used such tools in their focus group discussions, showing that even women with limited literacy could analyse their nutrition realities and articulate priorities for change. These methodologies enabled organisations to generate richer data and helped participants recognise gaps between their current practices and desired outcomes. The lesson learned is that participatory learning methods should remain central in community-focused interventions.

Conclusion

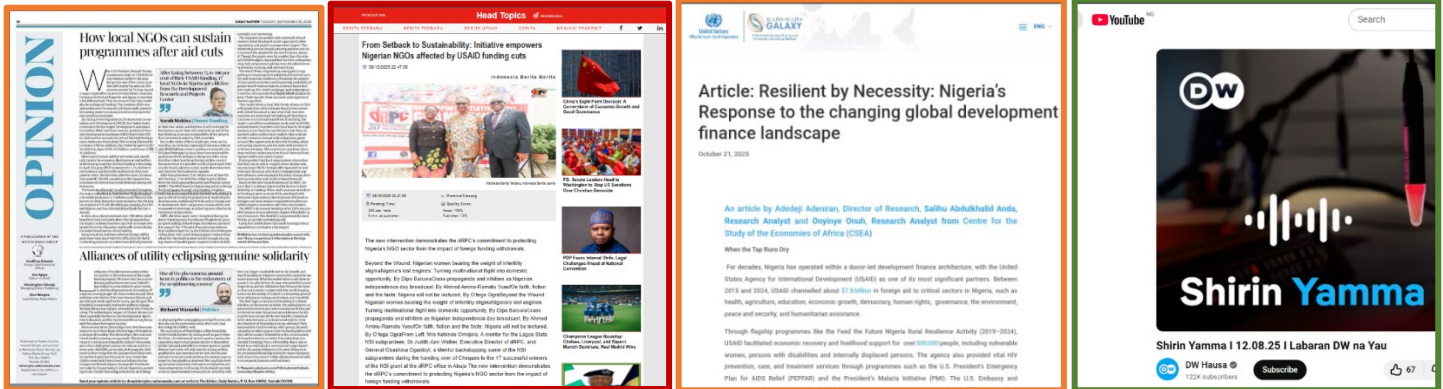
The USAID funding cut created a profound shock across all participating organisations, threatening not only their operational stability but also the wellbeing of the communities they serve. What emerged through this crisis, however, was a powerful story of resilience, adaptation, and leadership among local Nigerian CBOs. Each organisation demonstrated an unwavering commitment to its beneficiaries, mobilising internal ingenuity and community solidarity even when resources were scarce or non-existent. The NSI programme entered at a critical moment, providing not just financial relief, but a model of partnership that centred trust, mentorship, flexibility, and local agency. The grant enabled organisations to restore essential services, complete previously interrupted activities, and reconnect with communities that had been left in uncertainty after the sudden donor exit. More importantly, NSI catalysed long-term organisational strengthening: improving financial systems, sharpening reporting quality, expanding visibility, elevating advocacy capacity, and deepening relationships with government institutions.

Across the grantees, a consistent theme emerged: NSI did more than fill a funding gap, it restored momentum, hope, and institutional confidence. Programmes that had been forced to pause were revitalised, women and youth regained access to empowering opportunities, and communities experienced continuity at a moment when discontinuity had caused confusion and distress. In several cases, the grant sparked policy influence, increased community ownership, and strengthened structural linkages that will outlast the funding cycle.

The experience of these organisations demonstrates the critical importance of flexible, locally responsive funding models that acknowledge context, prioritise mentorship, and invest in organisational capability. As the sector continues to navigate uncertainties, the NSI approach offers an adaptable and scalable model for supporting community-based organisations during moments of crisis. Ultimately, the resilience shown by the NSI grantees combined with the catalytic support provided by the programme, has not only stabilised community services but has strengthened the foundations for more sustainable, community-led development across Nigeria.

Annex

NSI Model in the Global News



- https://www.linkedin.com/posts/sarah-mukisa-4a99a532_meal-localizationworks-evidenceforchange-activity-7396282343189151744-3kr5?utm_source=social_share_send&utm_medium=member_desktop_web&rcm=ACoAADNJ01cBwyRlfrqu0DWRZbYcQySaTizzrOk
- https://www.linkedin.com/posts/sarah-mukisa-4a99a532_localization-leadership-africa-activity-7391033881744805889-hlIP?utm_source=social_share_send&utm_medium=member_desktop_web&rcm=ACoAADNJ01cBwyRlfrqu0DWRZbYcQySaTizzrOk

Announcing the NGO Initiative Support Grant - 5th May 2025



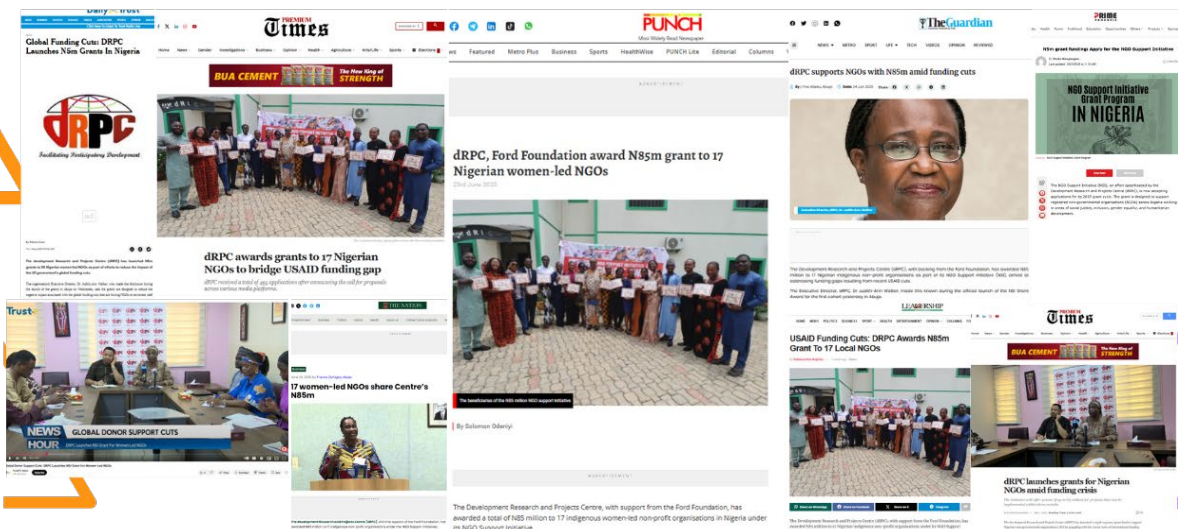
News Reports of the Pre-Launch Event

- NGO Support Initiative Grant Program in Nigeria – fundsforNGOs
- Global funding cuts: dRPC launches N5m grants in Nigeria – Daily Trust
- N5m grant funding: Apply for the NGO Support Initiative – Prime Progress NG
- dRPC launches grants for Nigerian NGOs amid funding crisis
- US funding cuts: dRPC announces grant for Nigerian NGOs affected by Global Funding Cuts
- DRPC Launches N5m Grant Scheme For Women-led NGOs
- US funding cuts: dRPC floats N150m safety net for NGOs
- Global Donor Support Cuts: DRPC Launches NSI Grant For Women-Led NGOs
- USAID Funding Cuts: DRPC Salvages Situation, Award Grants To 17 NGOs In Nigeria

The Award Launch - 23rd June 2025



Media Publications



- <https://dailytrust.com/global-funding-cuts-drpc-launches-n5m-grants-in-nigeria/>
- <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/802789-drpc-awards-grants-to-17-nigerian-ngos-to-bridge-usaid-funding-gap.html>
- <https://punchng.com/drpc-ford-foundation-award-n85m-grant-to-17-nigerian-women-led-ngos/>
- <https://guardian.ng/news/drpc-supports-ngos-with-n85m-amid-funding-cuts/>
- <https://primeprogressng.com/opportunities/n5m-grant-funding-apply-for-the-ngo-support-initiative/>
- <https://leadership.ng/usaid-funding-cuts-drpc-awards-n85m-grant-to-17-local-ngos/>
- <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/791593-drpc-launches-grants-for-nigerian-ngos-amid-funding-crisis.html>
- <https://thenationonlineng.net/17-women-led-ngos-share-centres-n85m/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hgLzbi5YE5w>



NSI grantees impact on GBV prevention and response

S/no	GRANTEE	LINKS
1	ICIR	https://www.icirnigeria.org/icir-launches-project-to-tackle-sexual-harassment-in-universities/ https://x.com/TheICIR/status/1944770276073320850 https://x.com/TheICIR/status/194144630926255720 https://www.facebook.com/100064793316314/posts/pfbid0SRsA5y8fPbFjVcpLZygAjcex8jnS6NM38vXdbt8MfB3XEWtaA1gUh3EaZUhxwYu1l/?app=fbi
2	RAHAMA	https://www.instagram.com/reel/DODtOY5EzJ6/the-rahama-women-development-programme-with-the-generous-support-of-our-partner-/ https://www.instagram.com/p/DODrhvcCHJN/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRI0DBiNWFIZA== https://thenicheng.com/bauchi-ngo-empowers-100-women-adolescent-girls/ https://gamagaritv.com/free/update/rahama-empowers-100-women-adolescent-girls-in-war/3291307
3	Resonat Spei Humanitarian Hub Foundation	https://www.linkedin.com/posts/resonat-spei-humanitarian-hub-foundation_snapshots-from-our-baseline-survey-for-the-activity-7351734774245294080-i2sK?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android&rcm=ACoAADteCD0BI0kF5jDD8M7tkwqz5_RlcnAZBm0 https://www.linkedin.com/posts/resonat-spei-humanitarian-hub-foundation_inspiring-moments-from-the-gender-training-activity-7351742881281228800-86b8?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android&rcm=ACoAADteCD0BI0kF5jDD8M7tkwqz5_RlcnAZBm0
4	GEPaDC	https://www.linkedin.com/posts/gepadcng_genderequality-girlshine-gbvprevention-activity-7360673590549143552-QW2b?utm_source=social_share_send&utm_medium=member_desktop_web&rcm=ACoAADNJ01cBwYrLfrquODWRZbYcQySaTizzrOk

NSI grantees impact on Climate action for women in agriculture

S/no	GRANTEE	LINKS
5	VIWADA	https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1GeDJ2JhZf/ https://www.facebook.com/share/p/16Vbtmai95/ https://zitionline.com/benue-women-farmers-rise-as-training-sparks-new-cooperatives-export-dreams/
6	FLACHS	https://nannews.ng/2025/08/02/group-distributes-hybrid-cowpea-seeds-to-nasarawa-women-farmers/ https://blueprint.ng/group-to-support-100-women-farmers-with-hybrid-cowpea-in-nasarawa/

NSI Grantees impacting on Gender Justice & Women Political Empowerment

S/no	GRANTEE	LINKS
7	BAOBAB	https://www.facebook.com/share/16THczGBxz/ https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1BBBYg4SDX/ https://www.instagram.com/reel/DMZmpE0MA1c/?igsh=MT0yeGp5YWZhYmcwc0== https://www.instagram.com/p/DMVzK3PMV82/?igsh=cWkyeTA4Y3BuZjlk https://www.instagram.com/p/DMVtEqEsGhT/?igsh=MWYxdzlc3oxZHVz0A==

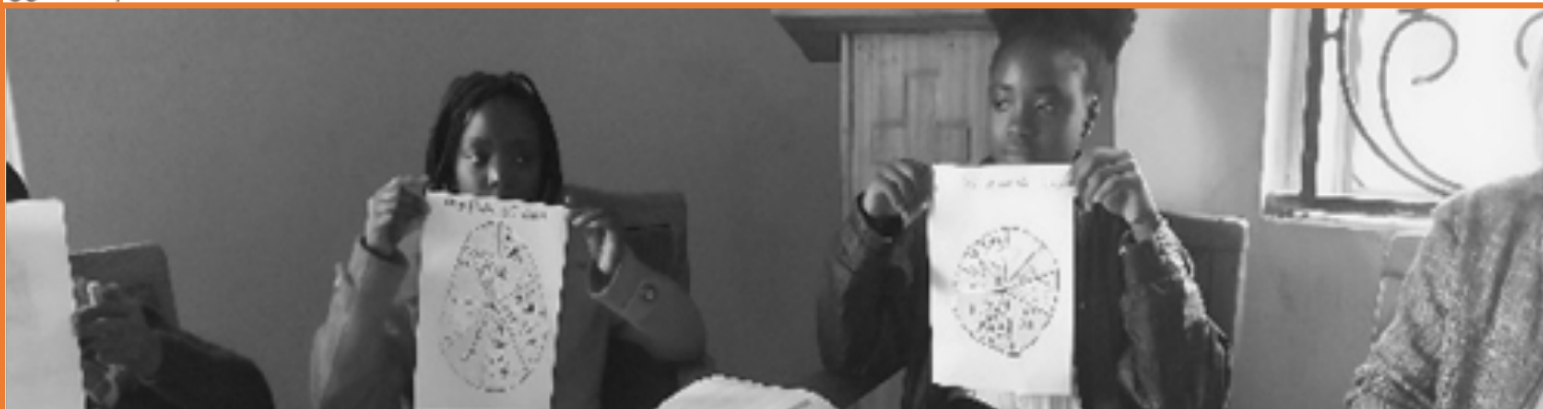
NSI Grantees impact on Women's Health



S/no	GRANTEE	LINKS
8	Unique Royal Sisters	https://www.instagram.com/p/D0822CvjNzm/?img_index=19&igsh=MWtnbXNsYmwz0Gh5dg== https://www.facebook.com/share/1A9zsUvWx6/?mibextid=WC7FNe
9	FOMWAN	http://www.dailystruggle.ng/2025/08/fomwandrpc-train-ward-development.html
10	Headfort Foundation For Justice	https://heapnews.ng/headfort-foundation-launches-wellness-behind-bars-medical-outreach-for-female-inmates-in-kirikiri/ https://bonewssng.com/headfort-foundation-takes-wellness-behind-bars-to-female-correctional-centre-kirikiri/ https://distinctnews.com.ng/headfort-foundation-takes-wellness-behind-bars-to-female-correctional-centre-kirikiri/ https://africaworldnews.org/headfort-foundation-takes-wellness-behind-bars-to-female-correctional-centre-kirikiri/ https://www.thepeoplestalk.com.ng/2025/07/headfort-foundation-takes-wellness.html https://amcnews24.com/headfort-foundation-takes-wellness-behind-bars-to-female-correctional-centre-kirikiri/ https://environmentafricamag.com/2025/07/24/headfort-foundation-takes-wellness-behind-bars-to-female-correctional-centre-kirikiri/ https://www.instagram.com/p/D0MWU0njFI-/utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=d2VnNDQ1ZG43YmN1
11	Heal The Youth Foundation (HTYF)	https://degrassrootsnews.blogspot.com/2025/09/jos-women-take-lead-from-training-to.html https://www.facebook.com/share/p/17HK5hvpX6/ https://viewpointnigeria.org/from-training-to-action-jos-women-mobilise-for-roads-inputs-and-security/ https://www.facebook.com/share/p/14NtKdo5mfh/ https://factfindernewspaper.wordpress.com/2025/09/26/heal-the-youth-foundation-in-collaboration-with-ministry-of-budget-and-economic-planning-convened-a-high-level-advocacy-engagement-with-critical-stakeholders-for-the-adoption-of-a-national-guideline-f/

NSI grantees impact on Women's Economic Empowerment

S/no	GRANTEE	LINKS
12	BAOBAB	https://guardian.ng/appointments/groups-train-50-traders-stress-women-empowerment/ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yeMQYxWHpZo https://www.facebook.com/nnewneca



NSI grantees impact on Digital and Life skills for Girls

S/no	GRANTEE	LINKS
13	Webfala Digital Skills Initiative	https://newtelegraphng.com/ngo-empowers-20-young-women-in-kwara-with-business-digital-skills/ https://www.linkedin.com/posts/webfala-digital-skills-for-all-initiative_webfalainitiative-shegrows-digital-empowerment-activity-7358078879753764864-gywc/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android&rcm=ACoAAC6xCyMBSeRWtDmU_NsoTz6AWHB YbTQdc5s https://www.linkedin.com/posts/webfala-digital-skills-for-all-initiative_webfala-shegrowsdigital-digital-skills-activity-7350846264160272384-oeff/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android&rcm=ACoAAC6xCyMBSeRWtDmU_NsoTz6AWHB YbTQdc5s
9	SKILLHER	https://techiesnode.com/2025/07/14/oyo-startup-ecosystem-news-jobs-and-development-opportunities-14-07-2025/ https://skillher.blogspot.com/2025/07/skillher-receives-drpc-grant-backed-by.html https://www.facebook.com/share/p/16rkiSh7KP/?mibextid=wwXlfr https://www.instagram.com/p/DL6S09WlwhW/ https://skillher.blogspot.com/2025/08/the-saw-journey-continues.html
10	Rising Hope Girls Educational Foundation	https://risinghopegirlseducation.com/empowering-girls-through-digital-literacy-and-safe-school-advocacy-a-transformative-july-for-rhge-in-bwari-abuja-in-the-drpc-sponsored-nsi-project/ https://oghoghoahanorrhgf.wixsite.com/rhgecienastudentblog/post/digital-empowerment-girls-school-safety-street_hawking https://oghoghoahanorrhgf.wixsite.com/rhgecienastudentblog/post/digital-empowerment-and-girls-school-safety https://risinghopegirlseducation.com/empowering-girls-through-digital-literacy-and-safe-school-advocacy-a-transformative-july-for-rhge-in-bwari-abuja-in-the-drpc-sponsored-nsi-project/ https://youtu.be/vP04fpEssXc?si=Teg3w6c_iKHptF3D https://www.instagram.com/risinghopegirlseducation/p/DN58d5yjFcU/ https://youtu.be/acAs0SSfNUY?si=zMWBWwhwgJ1sCHcl
11	Heal The Youth Foundation (HTYF)	https://degrassrootsnews.blogspot.com/2025/09/jos-women-take-lead-from-training-to.html https://www.facebook.com/share/p/17HK5hvpX6/ https://viewpointnigeria.org/from-training-to-action-jos-women-mobilise-for-roads-inputs-and-security/ https://www.facebook.com/share/p/14NtKdo5mfh/ https://factfindernewspaper.wordpress.com/2025/09/26/heal-the-youth-foundation-in-collaboration-with-ministry-of-budget-and-economic-planning-convened-a-high-level-advocacy-engagement-with-critical-stakeholders-for-the-adoption-of-a-national-guideline-f/

Images from NSI NGOs Project Implementation



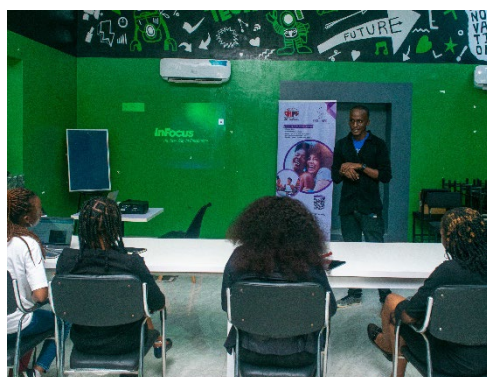
Participants at RHGE safe school training, Abuja



Participants at Shegrows orientation program, Kwara



Student leaders and Lecturers at the ICIR training



Participants at SkillHer Digital Skills Training, Oyo



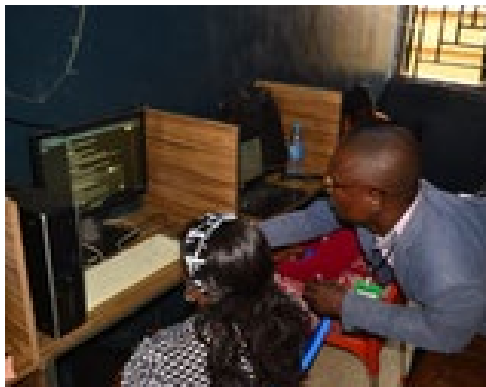
Participants at the GIRLS Shine training Askira LGA, Borno



Participants at financial capacity building training, Bauchi



Cross section of health personnel, lawyers at a health outreach at Kirikiri maximum prisons, Lagos



Participants at RHGE digital training for teachers, Abuja



HIV Testing Activities at a Brothel in Abia

www.drpcngr.org