



Grannies Network for Change (G-NEC) to Prevent GBV In Nigeria

The Kaka Project in Kano and Jigawa States 2026-2027

The Project Summary



*Project designed and implemented by
the development Research and Projects Center*

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The Grannies Network for Change (G-NEC) is a unique, special and first of its kind of project. Before the G-NEC project, hundreds of international development partners spent millions of dollars supporting different groups of champions such as religious and traditional leaders; male and female politic office holders; Ambassadors; and even boys to appeal to male patriarchs of households to change their behavior by preventing GBV experienced wives and daughters in the domestic sphere. Sadly, many of these projects in Northwest Nigeria have met with limited success as GBV continues to be highest in this zone.

The evidence of limited progress on GBV interventions in the Northwest Nigeria can be seen from the most recent data from the National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS). The 2024 NDHS data shows that Northwestern states continue to have the highest rates of Gender-Based Violence than any other geopolitical zone in Nigeria. The tables 1 and 2 below, show the poor status of GBV in Northwest Nigeria compared to other zoners of the country.

Table 1 on the poor state of GBV profile in Northwest Nigeria

Geopolitical Zones	% of women whose husband is jealous or angry if she talks to other men	Attitudes of Women that Husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife if she goes out without telling him	Women's participation in decision-making regarding sexual and reproductive health	Women's participation in decision-making. Making major household purchases	% of women who believe that domestic work should mainly be the role of women
North Central	42.5	7.7	28.6	46.6	32.7
North East	45.8	25.9	15.3	34.4	75.7
North West	57.8	23.5	6.7	21.6	84.7
South East	30.0	7.8	56.5	64.3	28.1
South South	38.7	5.3	72.7	80.9	18.5
South West	31.4	2.8	60.7	67.1	26.5

Source: NBS, National Demographic Health Survey, 2024

In addition to the GBV profile above, the NDHS data shows that women from the Northwest experiencing sexual violence from anyone, including an intimate partner, were most likely to NEVER seek help and to NEVER tell anyone about their abuse. This is not so in other geopolitical zones of Nigeria. This situation is shown in table two below.

Table 2: Women from Northwest Nigeria not seeking Help seeking to stop violence

Per cent distribution of women aged 15–49 who have ever experienced physical or sexual violence by their help-seeking behaviour, according to type of violence and background characteristics, Nigeria DHS 2024				
Type of violence/ background characteristic	Sought help to stop violence	Never sought help but told someone	Never sought help, never told anyone	Total
Zone				
North Central	25.3	19.3	55.3	100.0
North East	16.6	20.1	63.2	100.0
North West	18.9	17.5	63.6	100.0
South East	30.9	8.1	61.0	100.0
South South	22.7	21.6	55.7	100.0
South West	30.1	16.6	53.3	100.0
State				
Northwestern States				
Jigawa	17.2	7.8	75.0	100.0
Kaduna	24.5	15.0	60.5	100.0
Kano	15.4	16.6	68.0	100.0
Katsina	23.0	32.9	44.2	100.0
Kebbi	*	*	*	100.0
Sokoto	21.7	7.4	70.9	100.0
Zamfara	8.0	27.9	64.1	100.0

Source: NDHS, 2024

The **Grannies Network for Change (G-NEC)** project is a fresh and new approach to addressing the persistence of GBV in Northern Nigeria. The G-NEC project is based on the dRPC’s pathbreaking ethnographic research findings that at the household level, especially in multigenerational households, grandmothers are the most influential shapers of gender norms and practices related to wives and daughters of their sons. While sons in multigenerational households acknowledge the persuasive power of key male influentials such as local Imams on their views and beliefs related to wives and daughters, within the households, grandmothers, or the KaKa are the predominant influentials, directly shaping the decision of sons and providing justifications for son’s decisions based on tradition and culture.

The G-NEC project is a household-centered, community level project anchored on the reality of traditional social structure in African gerontocratic societies where the elderly are associated with wisdom

derived from tradition. The project will work in 6 communities in Kano state and 4 communities in Jigawa state with the highest reported rates of physical violence against wives and the highest drop-out rates, highest early marriage rates and the lowest enrollment rates at secondary school rates for girls 12 to 17 years. The project will target:

- 2,000 households;
- 2,000 male household heads who are sons grandmothers in multigenerational households;
- 2,000 grandmothers;
- 3,000 daughters-in-laws; and
- 8,000 daughters in multigenerational households at risk of not transiting through and/or completing secondary school

The project's point of departure is based on the Northwest Nigerian reality where there is high status and influence of the Kaka in multigenerational households. The dRPC will identify, engage empower the local Kaka through participatory dialogue activities to use her influence to shift the gender norms of son/patriarchs in households in order to:

- 1) to reduce high rates of physical violence meted out to wives; and
- 2) to increase support and resources for girls' secondary school education.

This project is anchored on dRPC's 32 years of community-based studies and programming in Northern Nigeria. Formed in 1993 by 10 University Lecturers from BUK and ABU, the dRPC has a long history of designing and implementing innovative projects which no other donor or NGO is willing to take on. The dRPC was the first group start working with Muslim Opinion Leaders in 2004 with funding from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. Also, of the hundreds of African NGOs and academics supported by Grand Challenges Canada (GCC) in the Saving Lives at Birth (SLaB) project, the dRPC was the only NGO that was funded by GCC, twice, to engage local Muslim Opinion Leaders as champions for women's health.

As an innovator and risk-taker for change, the dRPC aims to tackle the persistence of GBV in Northwestern Nigeria by learning from research findings about the potentially transformative role of grandmothers. The dRPC's community research points to the need for a new household

centered approach, engaging the older influential women within the household to transform this persistent challenge.

We will reach grandmothers through gatherings at the village head's house and the local government secretariat. We also will reach the Kakas through radio programs and grandmothers to grandmothers' dialogues. We have a team of 40 grandmothers in Kano and Jigawa States as project officers of the G-NEC project. Through these participatory activities, the dRPC will encourage grandmothers to tell their stories of challenging gender norms over their lifetime and to leverage these stories to communicate norms changing messages to their sons/patriarchs in multigenerational households.

This innovative project is particularly significant for the Ministries of Women Affairs in both Kano and Jigawa states, for donor agencies, and for researchers and studies in BUK and ABU interested in learning about how locally designed innovations for social change can work. Previous projects and studies on GBV prevention in Northwest Nigeria completely neglect grandmothers. Other projects on national level social change focus on older powerful men, neglecting the impactful role of older women in African gerontocratic societies. This study is a first of its kind, examining the power of local level older women at household level.

This project will be generating a continuous stream of exciting case studies, success stories and short videos on a monthly basis to share with the media and the sociologists amongst us.