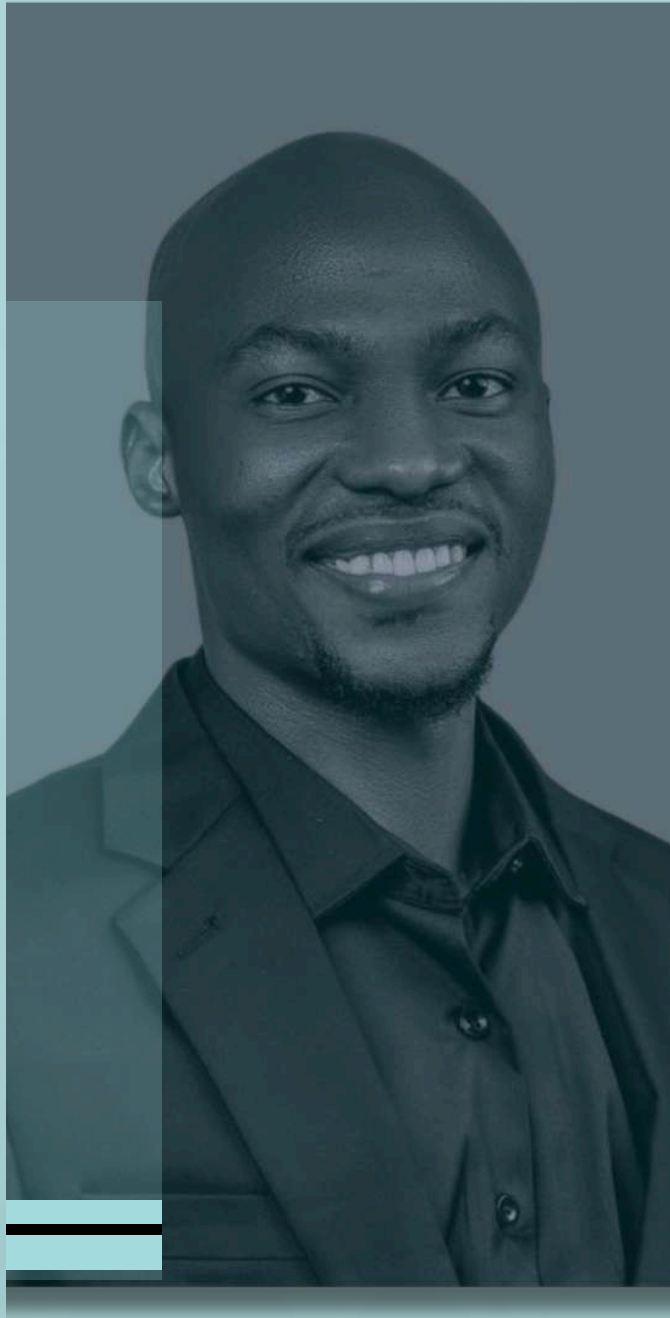




Impact & Innovation

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From Our Executive Director

At Bridge Connect Africa Initiative (BCAI), the work we do is rooted in a profound belief in the potential of women, girls, and young people to shape a better future for themselves and their communities. Over the past year, we have reached critical milestones in our mission to create a world where dignity, opportunity, and equality are not aspirations but realities for all.

Looking back on 2024, I am reminded that true and lasting change begins when individuals and communities are equipped with the tools to lead their own transformation. This belief has guided our work at BCAI, as we continue to foster meaningful partnerships and strengthen initiatives that challenge barriers to progress.

Among our key achievements this year was the launch of the Bridging Access to Girls' Education initiative, developed in collaboration with the Malala Fund. This three-year program is part of our commitment to ensuring access, retention, and completion of secondary education for girls. By building the capacity of government institutions to adopt gender-responsive budgeting and empowering the media and civil society organizations to act as accountability partners, we have laid the groundwork for systemic change. Our work with the Kano state government has been particularly impactful, equipping policymakers with the tools to design gender-responsive education budgets. This effort has led to a call for a State of Emergency on Education in Kano state with an increased allocation of 31% to education beyond the UNESCO recommendations. Similarly, we have seen an improvement in girls' education financing, especially around infrastructure such as the renovation of major girls' schools, transportation (reviving the girl child education buses), and recruitment of female teachers, among others.

We also recognize that the fight for gender equality extends beyond education. Economic empowerment is a powerful driver of change, and our Women Against Violence Empowered through Sustainability project, supported by the Government of Canada, reflects this understanding. This initiative has provided 50 women in Kano with the resources, training, and confidence to combat gender-based violence, build sustainable livelihoods, and adopt agricultural practices that secure their economic independence and food security.

Health, too, remains central to our mission. Through the Youth Leading HIV Awareness Campaign, launched in partnership with USAID under the Presidential Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, we are fostering a generation of 30 youth leaders across Nigeria, who are breaking stigma, raising awareness, and inspiring their peers to build a future free from discrimination. Through this initiative, we have reached over 2,000 online audiences with HIV/AIDS related campaigns within the space of two months.

This year has also been a period of significant growth and reflection for BCAI. We implemented operational improvements to enhance the efficiency of our programs and ensure greater impact on the communities we serve. Perhaps most excitingly, we began the development of an innovative technological advocacy tool designed to address critical gaps in education access. We also designed and launched a dynamic webpage featuring an AI-powered chatbot capable of providing instant, accurate responses to HIV/AIDS-related inquiries. Additionally, the platform functions as a referral hub, directing users to nearby physical HIV testing centers.

As I reflect on these achievements, I am filled with pride for how far we have come and a renewed sense of purpose for the road ahead. The challenges we face are immense, but so is the determination of those we work alongside women, girls, and young people whose resilience and vision inspire us every day.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our partners, donors, and stakeholders for your continued support, trust, and collaboration. It is through your shared commitment that we continue to expand our reach and amplify our impact, creating a world where every individual has the opportunity to live a life of dignity, autonomy, and promise.

Signed
Sani Muhammad

ABOUT US

Bridge Connect Africa Initiative (BCAI) is a non-governmental organisation dedicated to empowering and amplifying the rights of girls, women, and young people through equitable access to education, healthcare, economic empowerment, and environmental sustainability. Founded in 2018, BCAI uses strategies for policy-level advocacy, community engagements, capacity building, digital campaigns, and research to address barriers that limit progress for these groups.

We work closely with communities to co-create innovative solutions and collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, to build a future where women and young people are empowered to live safe and dignified lives. Over the past six years, BCAI has developed and implemented programs that enhance quality and equitable access to education, promote effective healthcare delivery and safety for women, girls, and young people, advocate for child protection, combat gender-based violence, and foster economic growth. These efforts have directly impacted and benefited over 200,000 individuals.

In addition to these efforts, BCAI has conducted critical policy advocacies and achieved significant legislative progress across Northern Nigeria through advocacies. These include advocating for the enactment of the Child Rights Act, championing the passage of the Free and Compulsory Education Policy in Kano State, and pushing for the harmonization of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act with the State Penal Code, impacting positively, the lives of women, girls, and children.

Through these efforts, we have worked with partners such as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Population Reference Bureau (PRB), Malala Fund, the Government of Canada, PEPFAR, Jobberman Nigeria, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Auburn University, Connected Development, Youth Hub Africa, Education as a Vaccine and many others.





VISION AND MISSION

Vision:

We envision a world where women and young people are empowered to live dignified lives

Mission Statement:

We are committed to co-creating innovative solutions with communities, women and young people towards an equitable, just, and sustainable future.



Sani Muhammad
Executive Director



Fatima Aliyu Musa
Chief Operating Officer



Mubarak Daha
Hub Manager



Abdulazeez Musa
Director of Programs



Faith Titus Kattan
Human Resources Officer



Halirat Onuh Hussein
Finance Officer



Juliet Chidera Nwobodo
Communications Officer



Abbas Adamu
Programs Officer



Makkiyyah Sulaiman Muhammad
Programs Officer



Favour Christiana Ogbuagu
Programs Officer



Sadiq Abubakar Shehu
Programs Officer



Musa Usman
Product Designer



Ahmad Tijjani Abdulkadir
Visual Photographer



Abraham Ocholi
Creative Designer



Nasiru Sani Abdullahi
Office Assistant

OUR BRIDGERS





Our Thematic Areas



PROJECT
BAGE Bridging
Access To
Girls' Education

100

STAKEHOLDERS
ENGAGED



8 MILLION

RADIO ADVOCACY LISTENERSHIP

**IMPACT
HIGHLIGHT**



**287,207
PEOPLE**



THE
WAVES
PROJECT

Promoting Women's Economic Growth
Against Violence through Sustainable
Practices in Kano.

50

WOMEN DIRECTLY
IMPACTED

ANTI-FGM CAMPAIGN

6 MILLION

PEOPLE REACHED

YOLHAC
Youth Leading HIV Awareness Campaign

YOLHAC
Youth Leading HIV Awareness Campaign

30

CHAMPIONS DIRECTLY
TRAINED

150K

INDIRECTLY REACHING YOUNG
PEOPLE

30 AGE OF ACCESS
STAKEHOLDERS
ENGAGED

12 HEALTHCARE
FACILITIES MAPPED



ACRONYMS

- **AFRI-CIRD** African Centre for Innovative Research and Development
- **AYP** Adolescent and Young People
- **BCAI** Bridge Connect Africa Initiative
- **CPB** Child Protection Bill
- **CSO** Civil Society Organization
- **EVA** Education as a Vaccine
- **FP** Family Planning
- **HIV** Human Immuno Virus
- **LGAs** Local Government Area
- **MDA** Ministries, Departments, and Agencies
- **NEPWHAN** Network of People Living with HIV and AIDS in Nigeria
- **NGOs** Non-Governmental Organisations
- **SACA** State Agency for Control of Agency
- **SCALE** Strengthening Civic Advocacy and Local Engagement
- **SDGs** Sustainable Development Goals
- **SRHR** Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
- **UBEC** Universal Basic Education Commission
- **USAID** United States Agency for International Development
- **VAAP** Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act

FUND



PROJECT

BAGE Bridging

Access To

Girls' Education

Fostering an enabling environment for increased investment, access and delivery for girls' education

BAGE



Background

Every day, **millions of girls** encounter significant barriers to education, including poverty, cultural norms, inadequate infrastructure, and political instability. **Northern Nigeria** has the highest number of out-of-school children in the country, with girls disproportionately affected. For **BCAI**, addressing this inequality has been a top priority, as has advocating for sustainable and equitable access to quality education. Globally, the urgency is clear, **UNICEF** estimates that 122 million girls are out of school, including 34 million of primary school age and 87 million of secondary school age. Addressing this challenge requires collective action from governments and stakeholders to break down barriers and create pathways for all girls and young women to thrive through education. For BCAI, girls' education is about more than simply enrolling girls in school; it involves ensuring that access is meaningful and sustainable, supported by policies and frameworks prioritizing gender-responsive education.



The BAGE PROJECT

With this vision, we launched the **Bridging Access to Girls' Education (BAGE) project** in 2024, a project by Bridge Connect Africa Initiative (BCAI) supported by **Malala Fund** aimed at enhancing the quality and accessibility of education for girls aged **13–16** in Kano State, Nigeria. The BAGE project seeks to improve girls' access to quality secondary education by addressing issues around access, retention, and completion of secondary education for adolescent girls through gender-responsive budgeting and community-driven accountability mechanisms.



The BAGE PROJECT



At the core of the **BAGE Project** is the recognition of existing gender disparities including economic barriers, limited access to safe school facilities, entrenched gender stereotypes, and socio-cultural norms that have continued to hinder girls' access, retention, and completion of education in Kano states. One of the key challenges identified is the inadequacy of budget allocations, which often fail to consider the specific needs of girls. Infrastructure improvements, scholarship funds, and teaching resources are frequently distributed without gender-sensitive planning, resulting in resource gaps that disproportionately affect girls and exacerbate gender inequality



Our Impact

The **BAGE Project** was officially launched in **April 2024**, following the announcement of our Executive Director, **Sani Muhammad**, as an Education Champion under the Malala Fund Education Champions Network. This recognition brought together education champions from Nigeria and other countries, united in their mission to advance education for all. Since the launch of the BAGE project, we have been sensitizing and galvanizing support from key stakeholders for the institutionalization of **Gender Responsive Education Budgeting (GREB)** within Kano State's education sector.

Our Impact

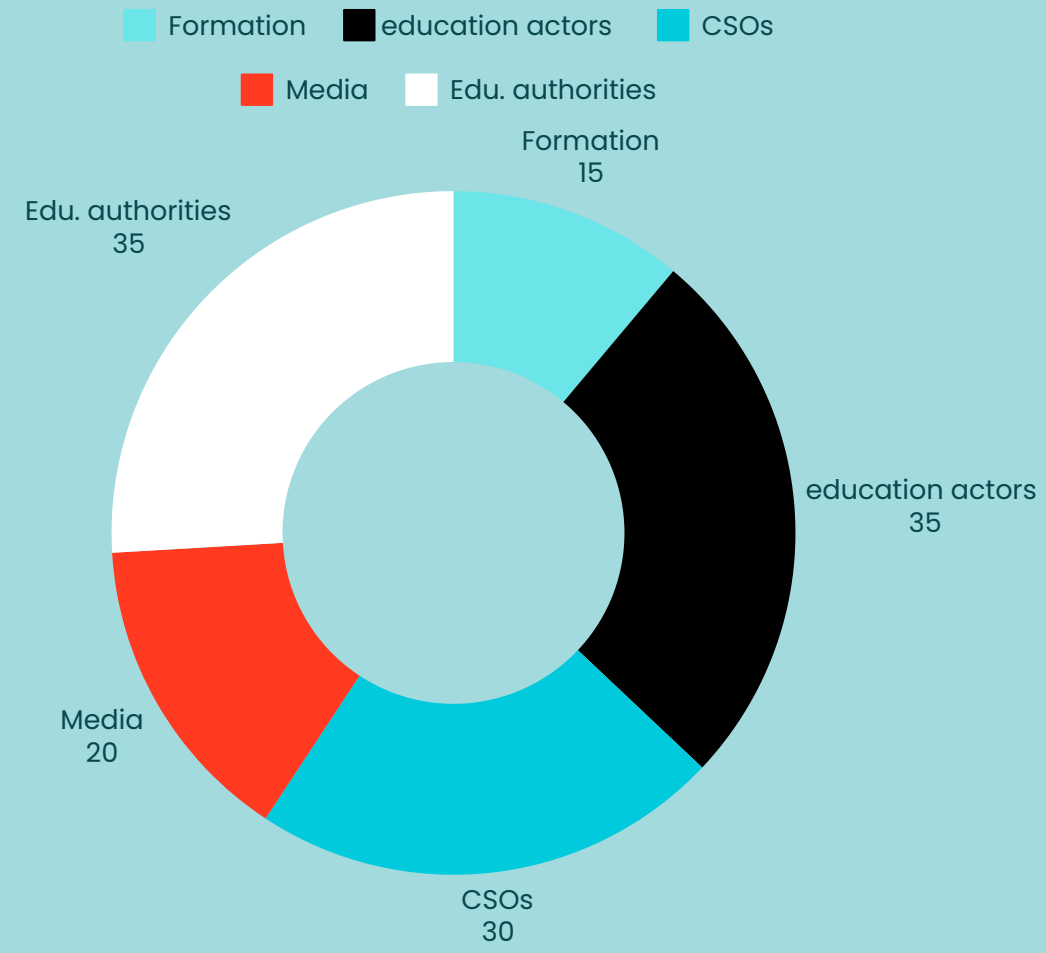
Through targeted efforts, we have worked across government institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), and media outlets to build capacity, raise awareness, and generate actionable insights aimed at influencing education policy and budgeting in a gender-sensitive manner. The central objective of this phase of the project has been to highlight gender disparities in education budgeting and equip key education policymakers and other stakeholders with the knowledge, tools, and frameworks necessary to address these disparities within the state's budgeting process.



Our Impact

Through a series of strategic engagements, BCAI has created a strong foundation for collaboration among government actors, CSOs, media practitioners, community leaders, and other key education stakeholders. This collective effort, among other impressive outcomes, has resulted in the development of a **(GREB) Framework for the Kano State Ministry of Education**. The framework, designed to ensure that public spending on education adequately accounts for the unique needs of girls, facilitating a more equitable distribution of resources and opportunities, is also a direct response to the recommendations of the stakeholders, with clear guidelines for integrating gender considerations into the budgeting processes of the state's education sector.





Key Results

Formation of a 15-member GREB Framework and Development Committee

35 education actors sensitized on GREB

30 CSO members and **20 Media** Practitioners trained on GREB analysis, advocacy, and reporting

35 education authorities and decision-makers trained on GREB integration, advocacy, and implementation

Facilitation of a baseline Assessment and report for Data-Driven Decision Making on Education through the

Baseline Assessment:

Development and Progress Toward Formal Adoption of a Gender Responsive Education Budgeting Framework for Kano State

Lift Equity

AGE OF ACCESS

Background

In Nigeria, children under 18 typically require parental or legal guardian consent to undergo HIV testing. The country bears the world's second-highest burden of HIV/AIDS, with approximately three million people living with HIV (PLHIV) and 190,950 new infections recorded in 2015. Nigeria's HIV epidemic is generalized but exhibits significant regional variations in prevalence. Unfortunately, opportunities for children to access diagnosis and care remain limited. Recognizing the impact of HIV on adolescents and young people, BCAI partnered with Education as a Vaccine as the North-West Regional Partner for the Lift Equity Age of Access Project funded by The United States President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). This initiative aims to reduce the age of access to HIV testing in Nigeria by addressing systemic barriers that prevent adolescents and young people (AYPs) from obtaining essential health services with an emphasis on a community-centered approach and multi-stakeholder advocacy to promote health equity for AYPs.





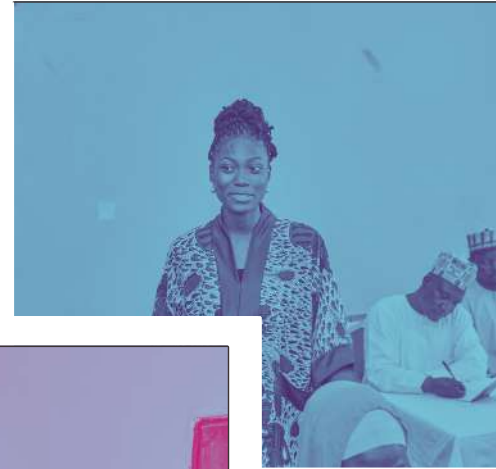
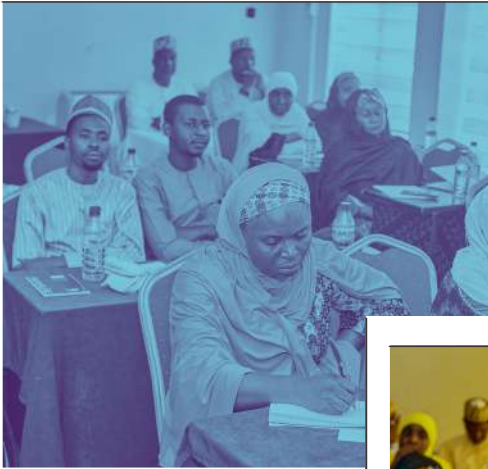
AGE OF ACCESS OUR IMPACT

In September 2024, BCAI hosted the North-West Regional Inception Meeting, bringing together over 30 diverse stakeholders, including government officials, CSOs, traditional and religious leaders, and youth organizations. Through the meeting, BCAI aligned strategies and secured support for reducing the age of consent for HIV testing in Nigeria

Through the stakeholder consultation we further deepened our understanding of the unique challenges faced by adolescents in accessing HIV testing, identified the importance of culturally sensitive approaches and stigma reducing messaging, and emphasized the use of youth-friendly communication channels, these discussions shaped strategies to make HIV testing more accessible and acceptable across communities.

Through the Age of Access stakeholder engagement, BCAI developed an advocacy roadmap, prioritizing grassroots campaigns, partnerships with health boards, and town hall meetings to raise awareness and accelerate early HIV testing access for adolescents. This effort has set the foundation for impactful policy reform and community-driven solutions to combat HIV in the northwest region of Nigeria.







AGE OF ACCESS

Next Step

BCAI has outlined a comprehensive nine-month behavioral change communication strategy to engage stakeholders across the North-West region. Through this initiative, we will champion policy reforms, spearhead community-focused awareness campaigns, and work closely with healthcare providers and youth champions to improve access to HIV testing services. Through continuous collaboration with other stakeholders and targeted advocacy, we aim to create a lasting impact and ensure adolescents can access the care they need.



AGE OF ACCESS

KEY RESULTS

1. Stakeholder Engagement

The inception meeting brought together **30 diverse stakeholders** from **seven North-Western states**, including representatives from Ministries of Health, SACAs, CSOs, youth-led organizations, and traditional and religious leaders. This engagement allowed participants to align on project goals and discuss strategies for addressing barriers to HIV testing for adolescents.

2. Actionable Recommendations

Participants identified strategies to overcome barriers to HIV testing, including engaging traditional and religious leaders, developing culturally sensitive SBCC materials, and using youth networks for outreach.

3. Commitments Secured

Stakeholders pledged to advocate for policy reforms, lead community-focused awareness campaigns, and collaborate with healthcare providers to improve access to testing services. Traditional and religious leaders committed to promoting awareness in their communities, while CSOs and youth-led organizations agreed to spearhead grassroots initiatives.

THE WAVES PROJECT

WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE EMPOWERED THROUGH SUSTAINABILITY

Promoting Women's Economic Growth Against Violence through Sustainable Practices in Kano.



WAVES PROJECT



WAVES PROJECT

Background

On July 9, 2024, a bill to repeal and reenact the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act passed its second reading in the National House of Assembly. While Kano State has yet to adopt the VAPP Act, notable progress has been made by the government, key MDAs, CSOs, and other stakeholders to align the Act with the Penal Code. However, the move to repeal the Act threatened years of progress, jeopardizing efforts to combat Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and its detrimental effects, particularly on women's economic independence. Recognizing the urgency of this issue, our team developed the **Women Against Violence Empowered through Sustainability (WAVES) project**. By the end of the third quarter, we partnered with the High Commission of Canada to Nigeria through the **Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI)** to execute the first phase of the project. Designed as a **5-month incubator and mentorship program**, the Pilot phase of the WAVES project targets women who are survivors of GBV, or at risk of experiencing GBV, and/or are engaged in small-scale agribusiness. The project builds their capacity through training in GBV prevention, financial literacy, business development, and climate-smart agricultural practices, equipping them with the tools to overcome challenges and achieve economic empowerment.

THE WAVE PROJECT

Promoting Women's Economic
Growth Against Violence through
Sustainable Practices in Kano Project

WAVES PROJECT

OUR IMPACT

Counting our Impact

In October 2024 with a selection of participants across our network of women, Who were nicknamed WAVES Women, we kickstarted a three-day Gender-Based Violence (GBV) workshop for all participants which was conducted from 30th October to 1st November 2024, This activity laid the foundation for the 5 months program. A needs assessment was conducted for all participants across 11 Local Government Areas in Kano State.

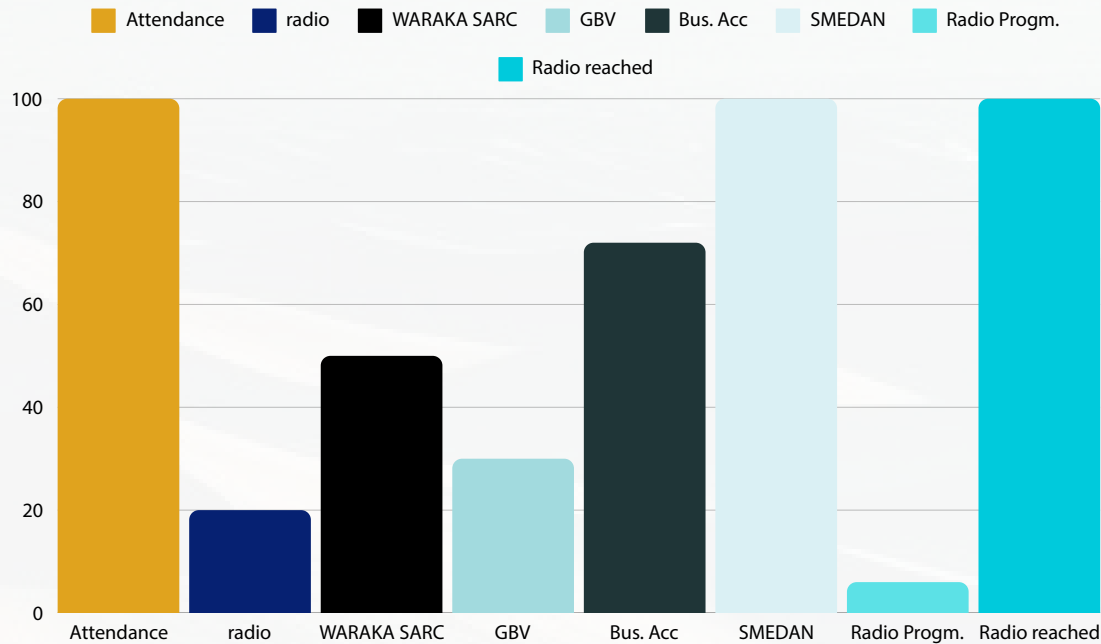




OUR IMPACT

The assessment revealed that most women are self-employed, engaged in informal agribusiness activities such as vegetable farming and poultry, and make significant contributions to household incomes. However, they face challenges including limited technical skills, inadequate access to finance, and the impacts of gender-based violence (**GBV**). Barriers to their business growth include high input costs, poor market linkages, lack of branding, and limited access to financial services and infrastructure. (Download Report)

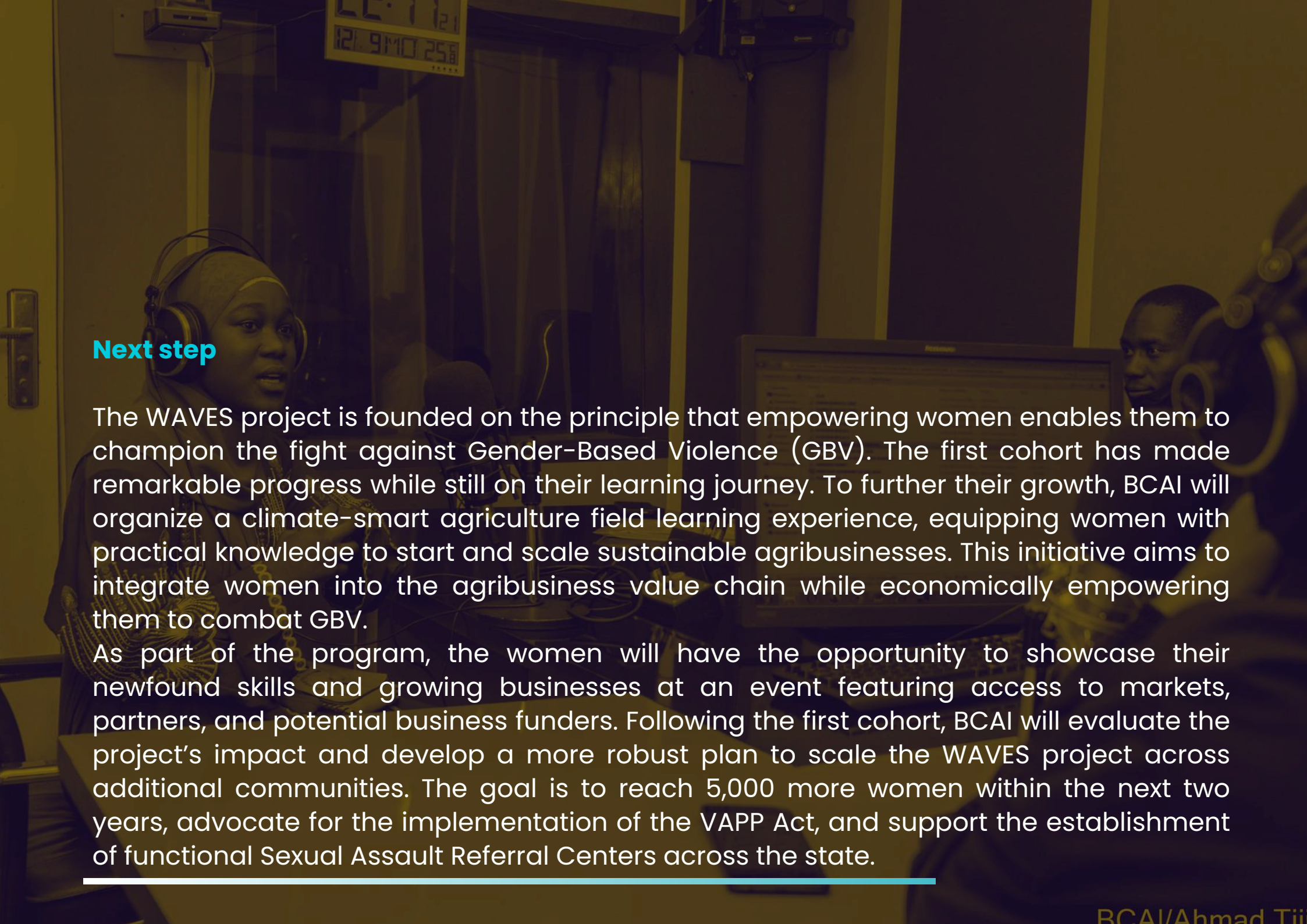
Recommendations from the assessment were taken into consideration and the report from the needs assessment was used to design a robust five-day business development service training for all **women** leveraging the expertise of a Business Development consultant, Mr Badamasi Aliyu Abdullahi.



- **50** women across 11 LGAs in Kano were enrolled in the WAVES Program
- **100%** attendance recorded across all activities
- **20%** of the women participated as guests during the radio advocacy on GBV.
- **50** Women were given direct links to counselors at WARAKA SARC center for referral services
- **30%** of women reported carrying out a step-down GBV training in their community
- **72%** of the women opened a business account for the first time
- **100%** of the women formally registered their business with SMEDAN
- **6** radio programs across 2 radio stations
- **2** million radio reach within 3 weeks
- **1** Woman set up her first Greenhouse after the business development training

2million
Radio reached
within 3 weeks



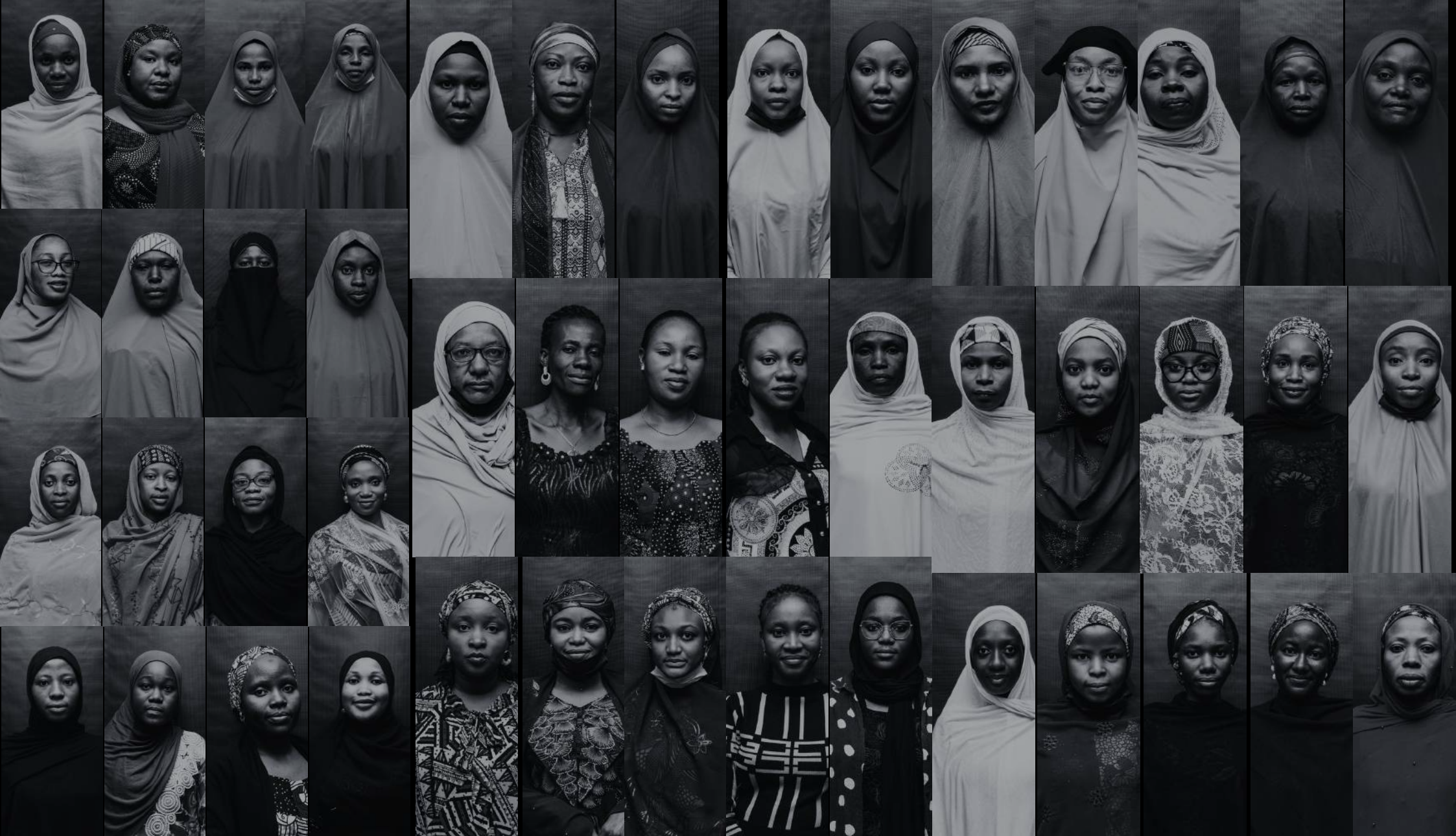
The background image shows a woman on the left wearing a headset and a man on the right looking at a computer monitor. They appear to be in a call center or office environment. The image is dimly lit with a yellowish tint.

Next step

The WAVES project is founded on the principle that empowering women enables them to champion the fight against Gender-Based Violence (GBV). The first cohort has made remarkable progress while still on their learning journey. To further their growth, BCAI will organize a climate-smart agriculture field learning experience, equipping women with practical knowledge to start and scale sustainable agribusinesses. This initiative aims to integrate women into the agribusiness value chain while economically empowering them to combat GBV.

As part of the program, the women will have the opportunity to showcase their newfound skills and growing businesses at an event featuring access to markets, partners, and potential business funders. Following the first cohort, BCAI will evaluate the project's impact and develop a more robust plan to scale the WAVES project across additional communities. The goal is to reach 5,000 more women within the next two years, advocate for the implementation of the VAPP Act, and support the establishment of functional Sexual Assault Referral Centers across the state.

WAVES WOMEN





YOLHAC

meet.google.com/geg-hfvc-gff

Gmail YouTube Maps Comms Assistant ta... OLA ANU - Instagra...

Abdulazeez Musa Abdulhafiz Sultan Odey Joy aisha a usman Amina Mubarak A...

Sadiq Abubakar S... Favour Christiana 18 others Ocholi Abpraise

People

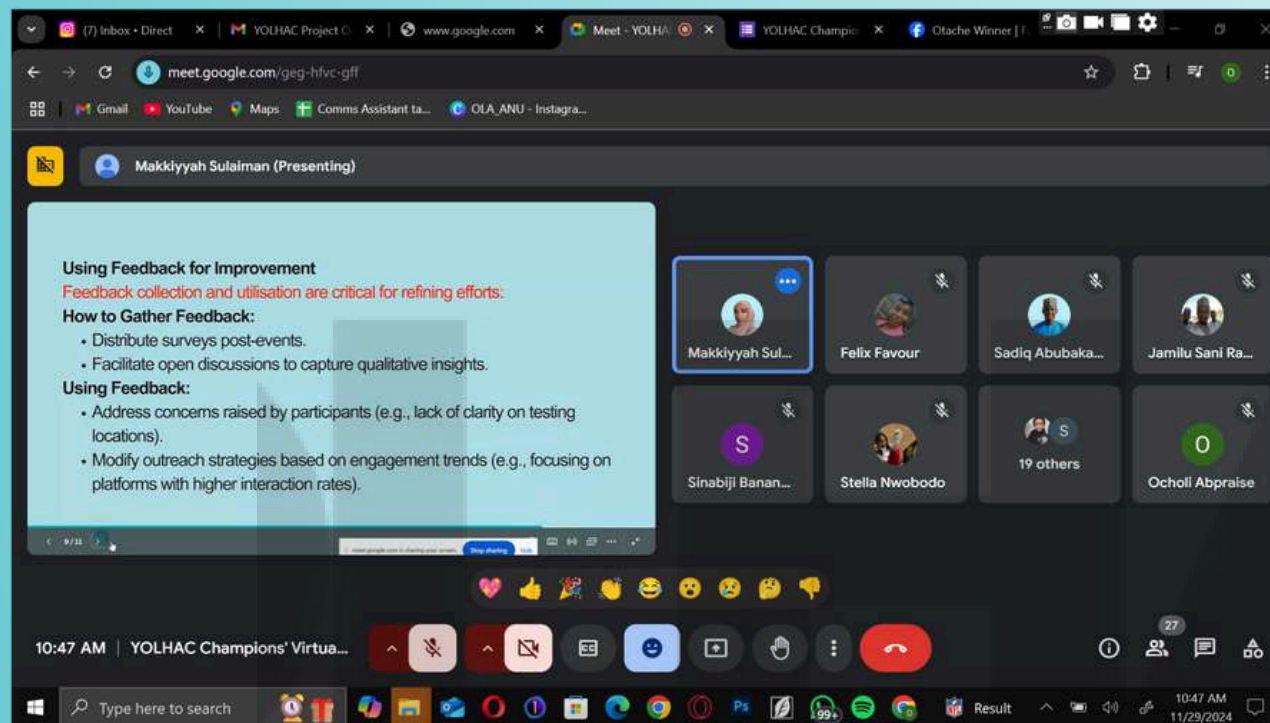
- Omosoye Mariam
- Oyilonye ejeh
- Rahama Hussein
- Sadiq Abubakar Shehu
- Sinabiji Bananda
- Stella Nwobodo

11:32 AM | YOLHAC Champions' Virtual...



Background

In Nigeria, the HIV epidemic ranks as the second highest globally, with **over 1.9 million people currently living with the virus**. Recent data reveals an incidence rate of **8.0 per 10,000** persons across genders and age groups and a prevalence of **1.4% among adults aged 15–49 years (NACA 2019)**. Despite this significant burden, adolescents and young people (AYPs) face persistent barriers to accessing prevention, testing, and care services, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions to address these gaps. With this in mind, and aligned with BCAI's vision of co-creating innovative solutions in key health areas, we designed the **Youth Leading HIV Awareness Campaign (YOLHAC)**. This year-long project, which is currently been funded by the U.S. **President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)**, empowers young people **aged 15–24** to lead the fight against HIV/AIDS. Through the program, 30 HIV Champions across the 6 geopolitical zones in Nigeria were trained to effectively use social media platforms to raise awareness and disseminate information on HIV prevention and care services.

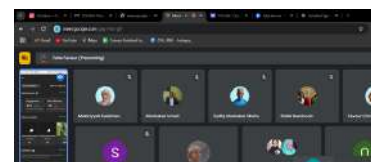
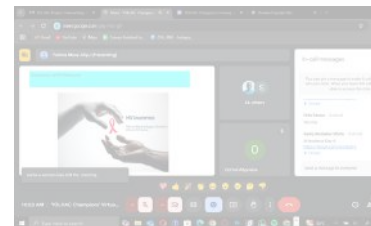
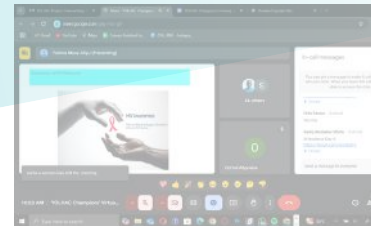


YOLHAC

A central feature of **YOLHAC** is its innovative online platform, which integrates comprehensive HIV resources and an AI-powered chatbot for real-time virtual consultations and support. **BCAI** has seamlessly combined technology with youth-led **advocacy** to engage at least 100,000 Adolescents and Young People (AYPs) through targeted social media campaigns, virtual events, and ongoing support. **YOLHAC** is committed to ensuring that 5,000 AYPs access HIV services through virtual platforms, with follow-up support designed to strengthen care linkage and promote treatment adherence.



By equipping young people with the tools and knowledge to drive change, **YOLHAC** fosters a generation of advocates who are transforming the narrative on HIV awareness and access. This initiative not only addresses the immediate health needs of AYPs but also builds sustainable systems to support HIV prevention and care across Nigeria.



HAC

YOL



Cultural Beliefs

- In many societies, cultural and traditional beliefs associate HIV with venereal diseases, or a lack of self-control. These associations foster judgmental attitudes and lead to the stigmatization of individuals living with HIV (PLHIV).
- For example, in some communities, HIV is perceived as a punishment for moral failings, leading to victim-blaming and a lack of empathy.

Social Factors Contributing to Stigma

- Stigmatization of people with HIV/AIDS is a result of a complex interplay of social, cultural, and structural factors.
- These factors include:



YOLHAC
YOUTH ORIENTED LIFESTYLE HIV/AIDS CARE

COMPREHENSIVE HIV EDUCATION FOR YOUTH CHAMPIONS



YOLHAC

OUR IMPACT

The project received over **600** applications across the 19 states in Nigeria, from which **30 youth champions, aged 15–24, were** selected after a rigorous vetting process. These champions were equipped with essential skills during a five-day virtual training session, which resulted in an 85% improvement in their knowledge and advocacy abilities. The champions are now actively driving HIV-related advocacy in their communities, with focus on HIV education, stigma reduction, and promoting HIV testing.

YOLHAC Champions utilized digital platforms like **Facebook, Instagram, and X (Twitter)** to disseminate **360** creative posts that addressed myths, stigma, and HIV testing awareness with an average reach of 500 per person.

The development of the YOLHAC webpage and AI chatbot has been a major milestone in the first implementation quarter of the project. When launched, the platform will provide youth-friendly, digital access to HIV-related information and services. It includes features such as FAQs, self-assessment tools, and referral tracking, all designed to enhance engagement and improve access to HIV prevention, testing, and treatment, thereby further enhancing HIV service access in Nigeria.

600

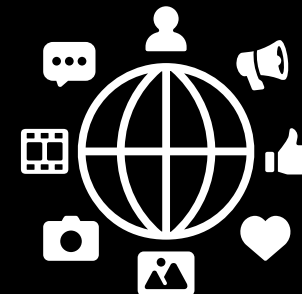
applications across the
19 states in Nigeria

30

youth champions, aged
15–24, were selected
after a rigorous vetting
process

85%

Improvement in their
knowledge and advocacy
abilities



Next step

The next step for the YOLHAC project involves several key actions aimed at enhancing the reach and effectiveness of the initiative. We will officially launch the YOLHAC webpage, making it accessible to the public. This platform will provide youth-friendly, digital access to essential HIV-related information and services, empowering young people across Nigeria with resources for HIV prevention, testing, and treatment.

In parallel, the YOLHAC Champions will continue their social media awareness campaigns, driving engagement and educating communities on HIV-related issues. These campaigns will target misinformation, reduce stigma, and encourage HIV testing, with champions utilizing the platform to amplify their messages across multiple digital channels and increase the YOLHAC webpage reach and usage. BCAC will also strengthen collaboration with state HIV/AIDS program coordinators, SACA, and local health officials to ensure that the services and information provided through the YOLHAC platform are accurate and aligned with the specific needs of the communities we serve. This partnership will ensure that the platform remains relevant and effective in promoting HIV awareness and improving access to critical services throughout Nigeria.



15000
post reach
and over

3000
OVER 3000
ENGAGEMENT

Key Results

- 639 applications received
- 30 outstanding youth champions (aged 15–24)
- 85% improvement in HIV-related knowledge and advocacy skills among participants after training.
- 360 posts generated by champions across Facebook, Instagram, and X (Twitter).
- 15000 post reach and over 3000 engagement
- Data collected for 12 states identifying accessible HIV testing facilities.
- 2 facilities mapped per senatorial zone in each completed state.

CAMPAIGN

ANTI-FGM CAMPAIGN

The poster features a central black circle with a white female symbol and a male symbol intertwined. To the right of the symbol, the text reads "YOUTH CAMPAIGN AGAINST FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION PROJECT." Below the symbol is a circular icon containing a puzzle piece and a house with two figures. The background is light blue with faint geometric patterns. Two large portraits of women in headscarves are on the left and right. Logos for UNFPA and BRIDGE CONNECT Africa Initiative are in the top corners. Small circular portraits of people are scattered around the central circle.

UNFPA

BRIDGE CONNECT Africa Initiative

YOUTH CAMPAIGN
AGAINST FEMALE
GENITAL MUTILATION
PROJECT.

Background

The **UNFPA-UNICEF** Joint Programme on the Elimination of **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**, implemented by **BCAI**, represents a bold and transformative effort to address the harmful practice of FGM in Jigawa State, Nigeria using social behavioral change communication. This program strategically leverages mass media, particularly radio, to engage communities in culturally sensitive dialogues, enhance awareness, and inspire collective action to eliminate FGM.

1 The program targets **five key Local Government Areas (LGAs)** Birnin-Kudu, Gumel, Dutse, Hadejia, and Kirikasamma known for their **traditional adherence to FGM practices**. Through a **four-episode Hausa-language radio drama series**, the program delivers multidimensional narratives that highlight the health risks, religious perspectives, and lived experiences of FGM survivors. The goal is to educate, mobilize, and empower communities to create an enabling environment for sustainable behavior change and gender equality.

INTRODUCTION

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a deeply entrenched cultural practice that persists in many Nigerian communities due to a myriad of sociocultural beliefs that vary across communities with regional and ethnic variations in prevalence. Other drivers which include ignorance and limited knowledge of the harmful nature of FGM as well as existing laws against the practice (amongst the populace and some 30% business events), weak and poor enforcement of existing anti-FGM laws, weak national and state level FGM response coordination bodies and financial gains for the outliers who perpetuate this harmful practice that sustaining gender inequalities and violence against women and girls.

The prevalence among women age 15-49 is 31.4 and 63.8 among girls from age 0-14.

LGA	Prevalence (%)
BIRNIN-KUDU	31.4
GUMEL	63.8
DUTSE	37.2
HADEJIA	28.6
KIRIKASAMMA	28.6

WOMEN 15-49
AGE 15-49: 31.4%

GIRLS FROM 0-14
AGE 0-14: 63.8%

© UNFPA/UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM in Nigeria, 2023. All rights reserved.
 * 14.8 million girls are at risk of FGM, 20.5% (20% of the 44 million) are in the Niger region.
 ** FGM prevalence among girls aged 0-14 is 63.8% in Gumel, 28.6% in Kirikasamma, 28.6% in Dutse, 37.2% in Hadejia and 31.4% in Birnin-Kudu.
 *** FGM prevalence among girls aged 15-49 is 31.4% in Birnin-Kudu, 63.8% in Gumel, 37.2% in Dutse, 28.6% in Hadejia and 28.6% in Kirikasamma.
 **** Prevalence among girls 0-14 years is 63.8% in Gumel, 28.6% in Kirikasamma and 28.6% in Dutse. © UNFPA/UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM in Nigeria, 2023.

RAYUWA BAYAN KACIYA
4 Episode FGM Story Series airing (Episode 4)

Join Us for the Last Episode of "Nazari Mai Zurfi: Muryar Canji!"
The Anti-FGM Radio Series.

Special Guests:
Adamu Ahmad Ibrahim & Hussaina Yakubu

SAWABA FM 94.9 FM
TUESDAY, 3RD DECEMBER 2024

9:AM

MURYAR CANJI
4- Episode FGM Story Series airing soon.

SAWABA FM 94.9 FM
TUESDAY, 3RD DECEMBER 2024

9:AM

CAMPAIGN

The Anti-FGM project started with a scriptwriting session to craft culturally relevant and emotionally resonant narratives.

This process involved collaboration with professional writers and integration of grassroots opinions, gathered through vox pops, alongside insights from religious leaders, health professionals, and FGM survivors. This ensured the scripts were authentic, relatable, and sensitive to cultural tones.

Our Impact

we engaged a professional storyteller skilled who delivered an engaging story and produced High-quality audio episodes in partnership with experienced production teams.

From November 26 to December 3, 2024, the series aired on Sawaba FM (104.9 Hadejia) and Freedom Radio, reaching an estimated 6 million listeners across 54 wards in Jigawa State. This wide-reaching campaign delivered impactful anti-FGM messaging to communities, sparking conversations and raising awareness about the need to end this harmful practice.

A woman wearing a hijab and headphones is speaking into a microphone in a radio studio. The background is a plain wall with two light switches. The image has a dark, moody color palette with purple and blue tones.

Key Results

6million

Listeners covering five major Local Government Areas
(Birnin-Kudu, Gumel, Dutse, Hadejia, Kirikasamma).

Strategic partnerships with Sawaba FM, Freedom Radio, and the Jigawa State Ministry of Health, helped extend the campaign's



The Silent Echoes of Classrooms

DIGITAL

ADVOCACY

... for coun... ss... in rural communities,
... his... e... ins out of reach.

A photograph of two women sitting on the ground in a rural, dusty environment. The woman on the left is wearing an orange headscarf and a blue t-shirt with the word 'PROWING' visible. The woman on the right is wearing a red headscarf and a colorful patterned dress. In the background, there is a simple, rectangular building with a corrugated metal roof and a wooden door, surrounded by trees and a fence. The sky is overcast.

Background

In 2023, our team visited a rural community in **Dambatta Local Government Area of Kano state**, upon arrival, they met an almost empty classroom with children in the community either hawking, going to the farm, or playing around the school environment. **They engaged the principal an elderly man in his 50s, who explained the issues he has faced trying to get students in the community to come to school, with the attendance rate dropping drastically. We knew there was a problem. Marke is a rural community located in Dambatta LGA, Kano State, northeastern Nigeria. This community and its environs rely primarily on a small scale. Marke is characterized by a lack of good roads, unsafe drinking water, and unavailability of basic infrastructure, yet the community members lead simple and quiet lives. Despite the establishment of a community school in 1976 and government efforts to build the school and provide basic resources and infrastructure, Marke has not made significant strides in education.** There has been a stark decline in school enrollment, notably among girls, with fewer than **20 inactive students comprising the entire school population.**



The Silent Echoes of Classrooms: A Documentary on Girls Education in Northern Nigeria.



Bridge Connect Af...
400 subscribers

Subscribe

28

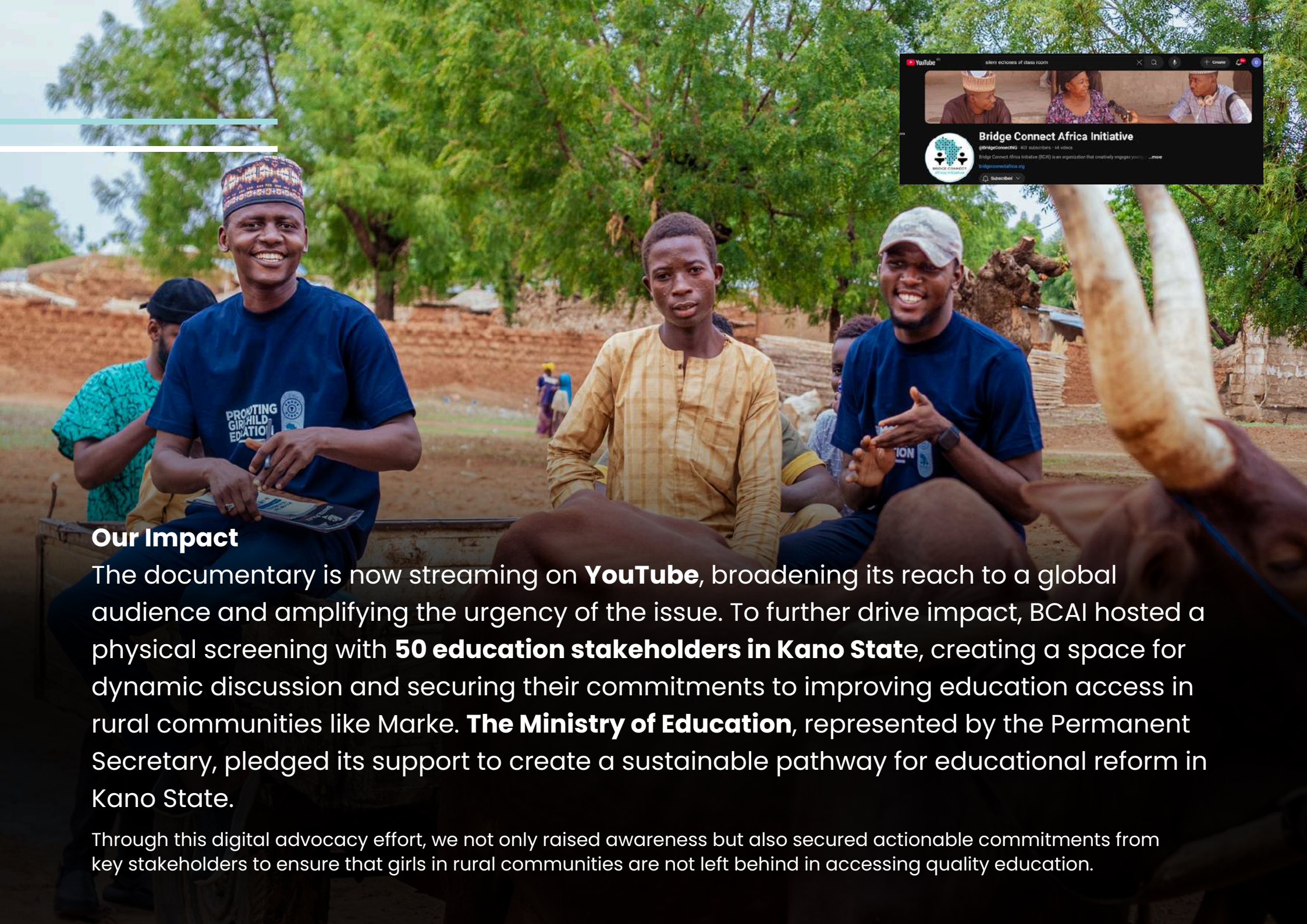
Share



Our Impact

As part of our efforts to address the pressing challenges in education, we conducted comprehensive interviews with key community stakeholders, capturing their insights and experiences to inform meaningful solutions. Building on these voices, **BCAI** teamed up with **Peace First** and produced a powerful 17-minute **documentary** that highlights the barriers to **education** and inspiring action.





Our Impact

The documentary is now streaming on **YouTube**, broadening its reach to a global audience and amplifying the urgency of the issue. To further drive impact, BCAI hosted a physical screening with **50 education stakeholders in Kano State**, creating a space for dynamic discussion and securing their commitments to improving education access in rural communities like Marke. **The Ministry of Education**, represented by the Permanent Secretary, pledged its support to create a sustainable pathway for educational reform in Kano State.

Through this digital advocacy effort, we not only raised awareness but also secured actionable commitments from key stakeholders to ensure that girls in rural communities are not left behind in accessing quality education.

key Impact



10K

Reach across all social media

key Impact

50 stakeholders reach
5 documentary inspired advocacy
2 media publication

400

views on YouTube

- 10,000 reach across all social media platforms
- 400 Youtube views
- 50 stakeholders reach
- 5 documentary inspired advocacy
- 2 media publication






Showing On
 **YouTube**

youtube.com/@BridgeConnectNG

SCAN ME



 @BridgeConnectNG



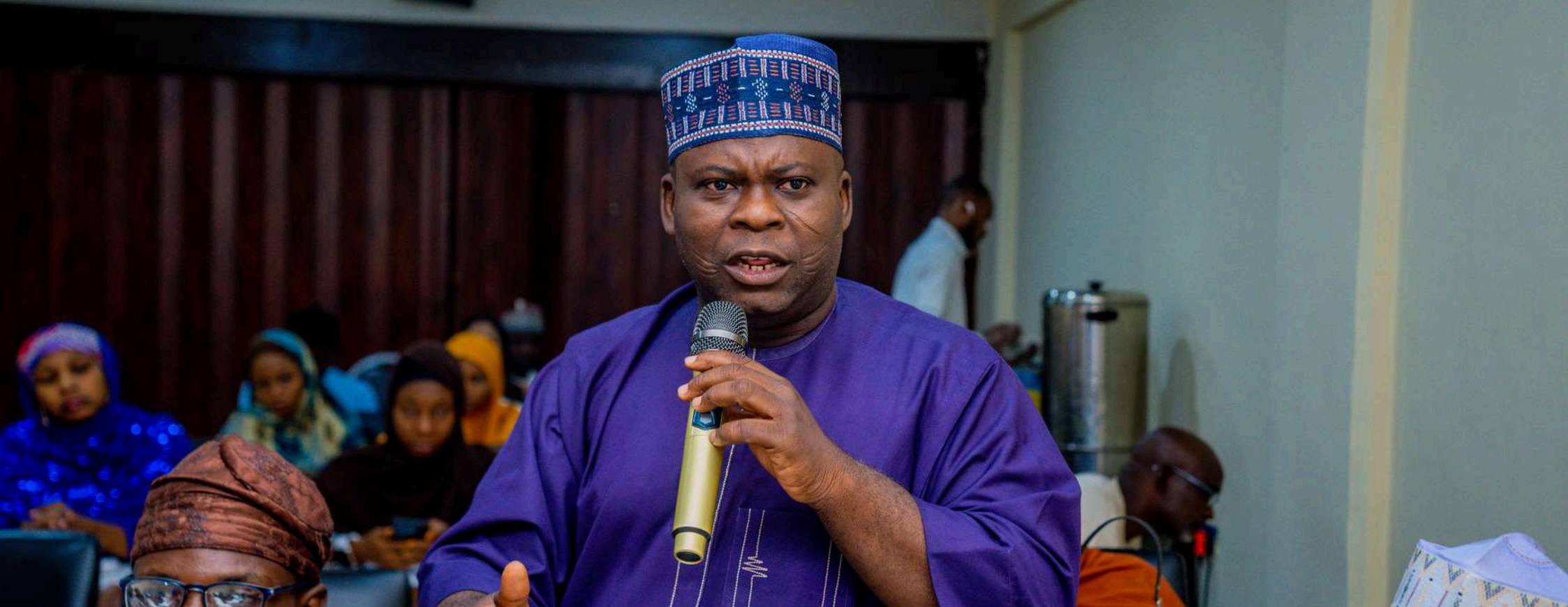
Network and Coalitions

CSO-Media Advocacy Network

Leveraging our strategic and coordinated advocacy approach towards inclusive education, where the needs of girls and disadvantaged populations are placed at the forefront of educational planning and decision-making, Bridge Connect Africa Initiative (**BCAI**) has established a network of **30 civil society organizations (CSOs) and 20 media practitioners.**

This dynamic coalition is dedicated to transforming the educational landscape of Kano State by tackling systemic inequalities, driving sustainable policy change, and ensuring that every child, especially girls and marginalized groups can access quality education without barriers.

As a network, these organizations and media practitioners are taking collective action to address the entrenched socio-cultural and economic barriers that hinder equitable access to education. They leverage data-driven insights to engage decision-makers, shape public opinion, and create momentum for lasting change, ensuring that gender-responsive education policies are effectively implemented and institutionalized.



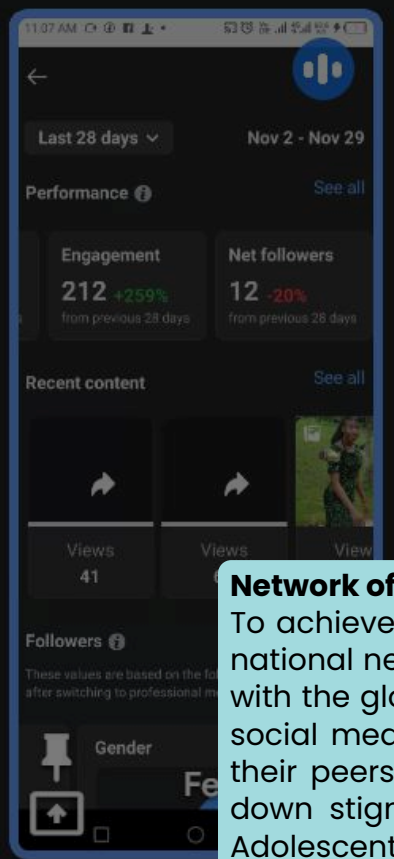


Eco-system of 50 Women entrepreneurs

In a world where economic disparity intensifies gender inequality BCAI has built an Ecosystem of 50 Women Entrepreneurs to dismantle barriers to gender equality. Equipped with sustainable agricultural practices, innovative business development strategies, and expanded resource access, these women are reclaiming their dignity and shaping their futures by ensuring they are central to the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

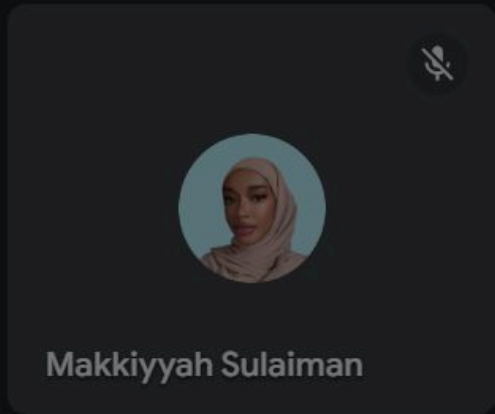
Through financial independence and strategic empowerment, these women are breaking free from cycles of abuse and economic dependency. This BCAI Ecosystem of Women Entrepreneurs is more than an economic intervention; it is a transformative movement that redefines the role of women in society, fosters inclusive growth, and envisions a future where equality is a lived reality.

Felix Favour (Presenting)

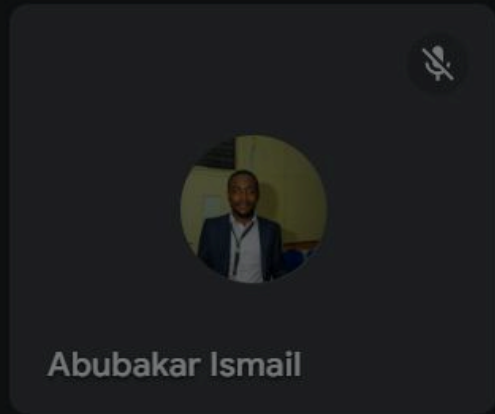


Instagram performance analytics for the last 28 days (Nov 2 - Nov 29):

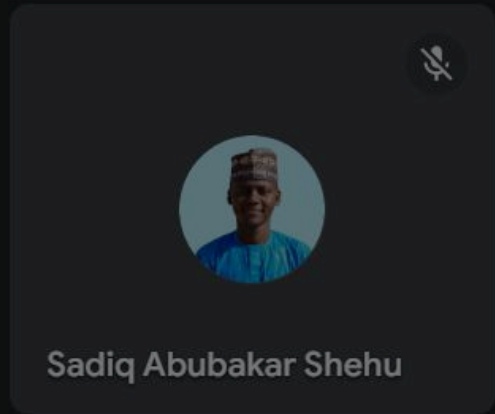
- Engagement: 212 (+259% from previous 28 days)
- Net followers: 12 (-20% from previous 28 days)
- Views: 41



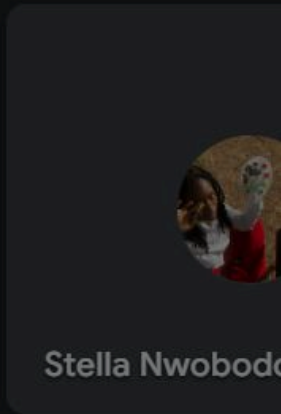
Makkiyyah Sulaiman



Abubakar Ismail



Sadiq Abubakar Shehu



Stella Nwobodo

Network of 30 Youth HIV Champions
To achieve an HIV response that leaves no one behind, Bridge Connect Africa Initiative (BCAI) has established a national network of 30 trained Youth HIV Champions to lead a transformative awareness campaign. In alignment with the global goal to end HIV as a public health threat by 2030, these young leaders aged 15-24 are leveraging social media to drive critical conversations on HIV prevention testing and care, thereby reaching thousands of their peers with life-saving information. Through a youth-friendly communication approach, they are breaking down stigma, fostering positive behavioral change, and encouraging greater uptake of HIV services among Adolescents and Young People (AYPS) and Key Populations (KPs) by connecting them to essential HIV services and ensuring seamless access to prevention, treatment and support.

INTERNATIONAL DAY
OF THE GIRL CHILD

GIRLS'
VISION FOR
THE FUTURE

SELECT CATEGORY



INTERNATIONAL
DAY OF THE GIRL
CHILD



Gallery Highlight

International Day of the Girl Child

In commemoration of the 2024 International Day of the Girl Child, "Girls' Vision for the Future" was held on October 12. The activity brought together 10 secondary school girls aged 13–16 from marginalized communities to empower them through education, mentorship, and leadership development. The event featured an interactive movie premiere showcasing strong female role models, a vision board session where participants articulated their aspirations, and mentorship opportunities with distinguished female leaders.

Testimonials from participants

1. **Precious Inuwa:** Girls and boys should have equal rights to education. The government should build schools for girls to attend, rather than having them hawk on the streets. I aspire to become a nurse to save lives. To achieve this, I must study hard in school.
2. **Shafeeqah:** Girls' education is just as important as boys' education because she can pass on her knowledge to her children. I aspire to become a doctor, and achieving this goal won't be easy. I need to study hard to become what I want in the future.



16 Days of Activism

To commemorate the 16 Days of Activism 2024 under the theme: **Towards 30 Years Of The Beijing Declaration And Platform For Action: Unite To End Violence Against Women**, BCAI conducted a radio advocacy campaign in Kano State from November 25 to December 10, 2024, highlighting Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and women's economic empowerment. Broadcast on Wazobia FM and Premiere Radio in English and Hausa, the campaign raised awareness, engaged policymakers, and mobilized community action. Key discussions included domestic violence and the importance of the VAPP Act, GBV challenges faced by disabled persons and rural women, and the role of men, boys, and youth in GBV prevention. The campaign promoted community participation, encouraged policy reforms, and amplified survivors' stories, fostering collective action for a safer and more equitable society in Kano State.

World AIDS Day

On December 1, 2024, we commemorated World AIDS Day with a vibrant social media campaign to amplify awareness about HIV/AIDS and address related stigma. Champions used creative templates and analytics tools provided by BCAI to develop 360 impactful posts shared across Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter). These posts focused on dispelling myths, reducing stigma, and promoting HIV testing awareness, reaching a broad audience and driving significant engagement. Complementing this initiative was a Twitter Live session featuring a public health expert, where the theme, "Take the Right Path: My Health, My Right!", was explored in depth. The live session reached approximately 440 participants, fostering an interactive platform to discuss the importance of human rights in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Independence Day Celebration

On October 1, 2024, we joined the nation in celebrating Independence Day by reflecting on the true essence of freedom. This year's celebration focused on emphasizing the right to education, healthcare, and development, especially for women and children. Through digital campaign, we shared powerful messages that inspired meaningful conversations and created awareness about these essential rights. This initiative served as a reminder of the collective responsibility to uphold freedom and rights for all while celebrating the nation's independence in a meaningful way.

International Youth Day

We joined the global community in celebrating the creativity and innovation of young people who are revolutionizing the digital world. This year's theme "From Clicks to Progress: Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development" emphasized the vital role of youth in shaping our digital future and transforming technology into a force for progress. This campaign showcased the incredible potential of young people and the importance of creating opportunities for them to thrive in the digital era.
#YouthDay #InternationalYouthDay #IYD2024

Malala Day

We celebrated Malala Day, honoring Malala Yousafzai's resilience and unwavering commitment to advocating for girls' education worldwide. Her work through the Malala Fund continues to break barriers, empowering girls in underserved communities across Nigeria and beyond to access education and fulfill their potential. This special day also marked Malala's tradition of meeting with young women to listen to their stories, amplify their voices, and highlight the persistent challenges girls face in their pursuit of education. By celebrating her, we shone a spotlight on the importance of ensuring every girl has the right to learn and thrive.

International Day of African Child

On June 16, 2024, we marked the International Day of the African Child, a day to honor the courageous children who stood up for better education. Education is the foundation for the future of African children and sustainable development. Yet, many children across the continent still face significant barriers to accessing quality and inclusive education, particularly girls. As we reflect on the challenges, we are also reminded of the opportunities to create lasting change by advocating for stronger policies and increased resources for education.

World Environment Day

On June 5th, we joined the global community to mark World Environment Day, a day to reflect on the urgent need to protect our planet. Our forests, farmlands, lakes, and deserts face unprecedented threats, with nearly 40% of the Earth's land now damaged directly impacting half of the global population.

World Menstrual Hygiene Day

We proudly joined the global call on the 28th for a period-friendly world during Menstrual Hygiene Day. This year's message was clear: no girl or woman should face stigma or struggle to manage her menstrual health due to poverty, race, or geographical barriers. We highlighted the urgent need for affordable and eco-friendly period care packs while advocating for conversations that break the silence around menstruation.

International Womens Day

On International Women's Day, we shine a spotlight on the incredible women and girls in the rural communities we've had the privilege to work with. Raised awareness around the need for functional healthcare and resources in rural communities, leading to deeper conversations about investing in women and girls, created safe spaces for women to learn about their bodies and access crucial resources, empowering them with skills that have supported their families, education, and access to better healthcare.

International Education Day

On International Education Day, BCAI collaborated with 15 CSOs and 2 media practitioners for a community outreach and sensitization campaign, raising awareness about the importance of education and encouraging families to ensure every child, especially girls, completes their primary education. Published 2 press releases drawing the attention of the government and urgent action on ensuring inclusive and accessible education in underserved communities.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD

GIRLS' VISION FOR THE FUTURE

11 OCTOBER 2024

BRIDGE CONNECT

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HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY

64 NIGERIA

BRIDGE CONNECT

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WORLD AIDS DAY

2024 Take the rights path: My health, my right!

1st December

BRIDGE CONNECT

www.bridgeconnectafrica.org

12TH JULY 2024

HAPPY WORLD

MALALA DAY

ONE CHILD, ONE TEACHER, ONE BOOK AND ONE PEN CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

BRIDGE CONNECT

www.bridgeconnectafrica.org

HAPPY INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

12TH AUGUST 2024

BRIDGE CONNECT

www.bridgeconnectafrica.org

CFLI/FCIL

THE WAVES

DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

WAVES RADIO ADVOCACY

TOPIC: THE PLIGHT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES IN TACKLING GBV

Tuesday

WAVE FM 101.1 FM 2000 PM WAT

BRIDGE CONNECT

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Go Green

Happy International YOUTH DAY

Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World

BRIDGE CONNECTING

www.bridgeconnectafrica.org

Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing

Strengthening Communication Capacity for Lasting Impact

In today's fast-paced and ever-evolving world, effective communication is the backbone of impactful advocacy and organizational growth. To enhance the strategic communication capabilities of civil society organizations, Bridge Connect Africa Initiative (BCAI) hosted an intensive communications workshop in Kano State, facilitated by a distinguished Board Member. The workshop brought together communications officers and project management professionals from BCAI and other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to strengthen their communication skills and strategic approach in a constantly changing world. Designed to bridge critical gaps in organizational communication strategies, the workshop equipped participants with essential knowledge on the unique dynamics of non-profit communications, effective storytelling techniques, stakeholder engagement, and practical frameworks for enhancing both internal and external communication efforts. The sessions provided actionable insights on leveraging digital platforms, improving brand visibility, and aligning communication efforts with organizational goals to drive social impact.





Advancing Gender-Responsive Education Through Capacity Building

Recognizing the urgent need to address gender disparities in education, Bridge Connect Africa Initiative (BCAI), brought together civil society organizations (CSOs) and media practitioners to strengthen their capacity in Gender Responsive Education Budgeting (GREB), equipping participants with the knowledge and tools to analyze education budgets, advocate for gender-equitable policies, and effectively report on key issues impacting girls' education. Through expert-led presentations, interactive sessions, and hands-on exercises, participants deepened their understanding of GREB principles and explored practical strategies to advance their advocacy efforts. The workshop fostered meaningful discussions on critical challenges hindering girls' access to quality education in Kano State, including poverty, cultural barriers, and a lack of awareness, while identifying actionable solutions such as grassroots mobilization, evidence-based advocacy, and strategic stakeholder engagement.

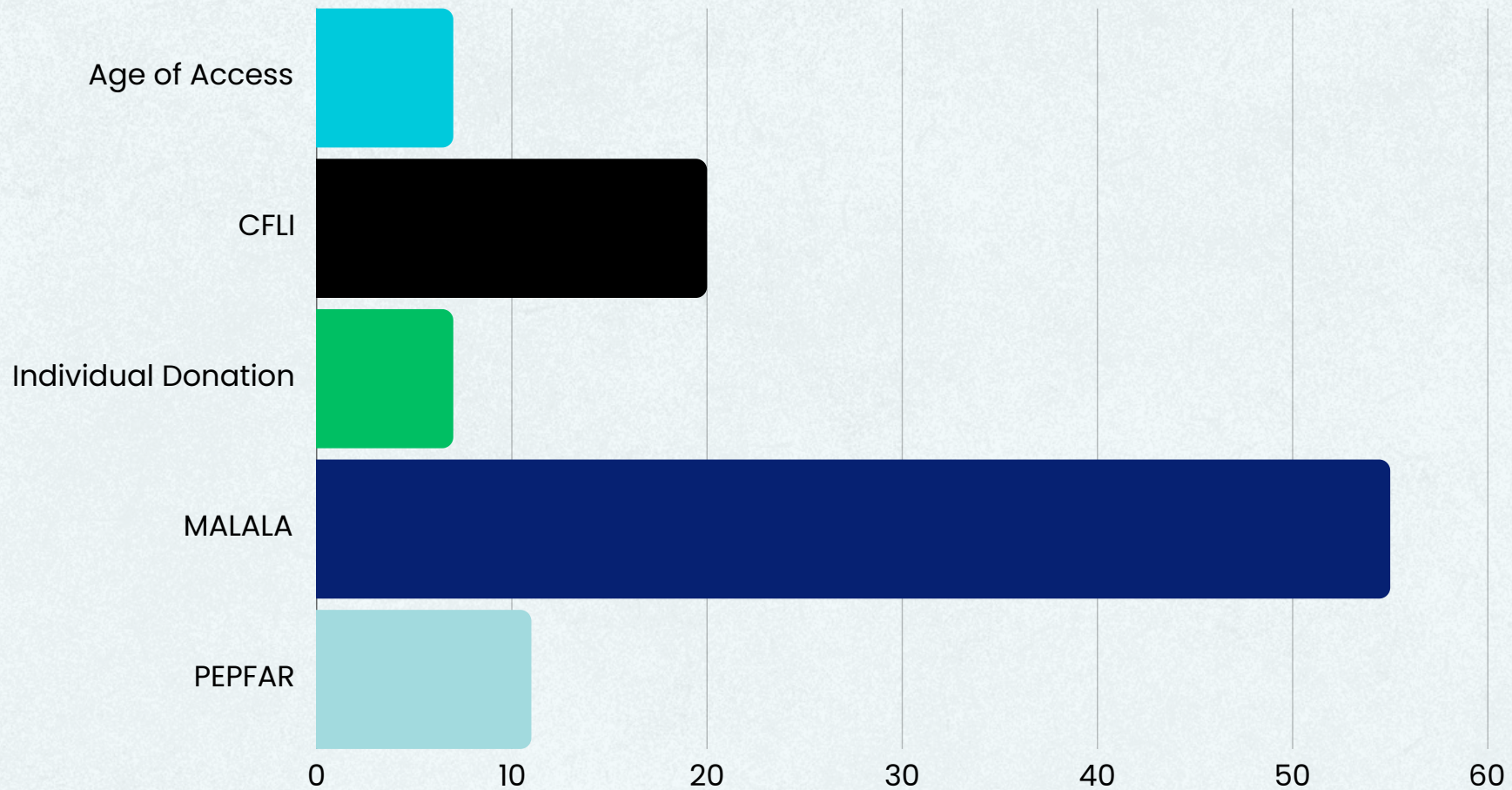
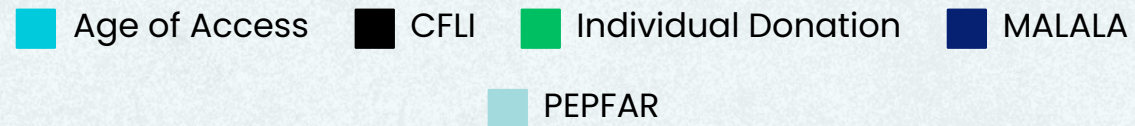
30 CSOs and 20 Media





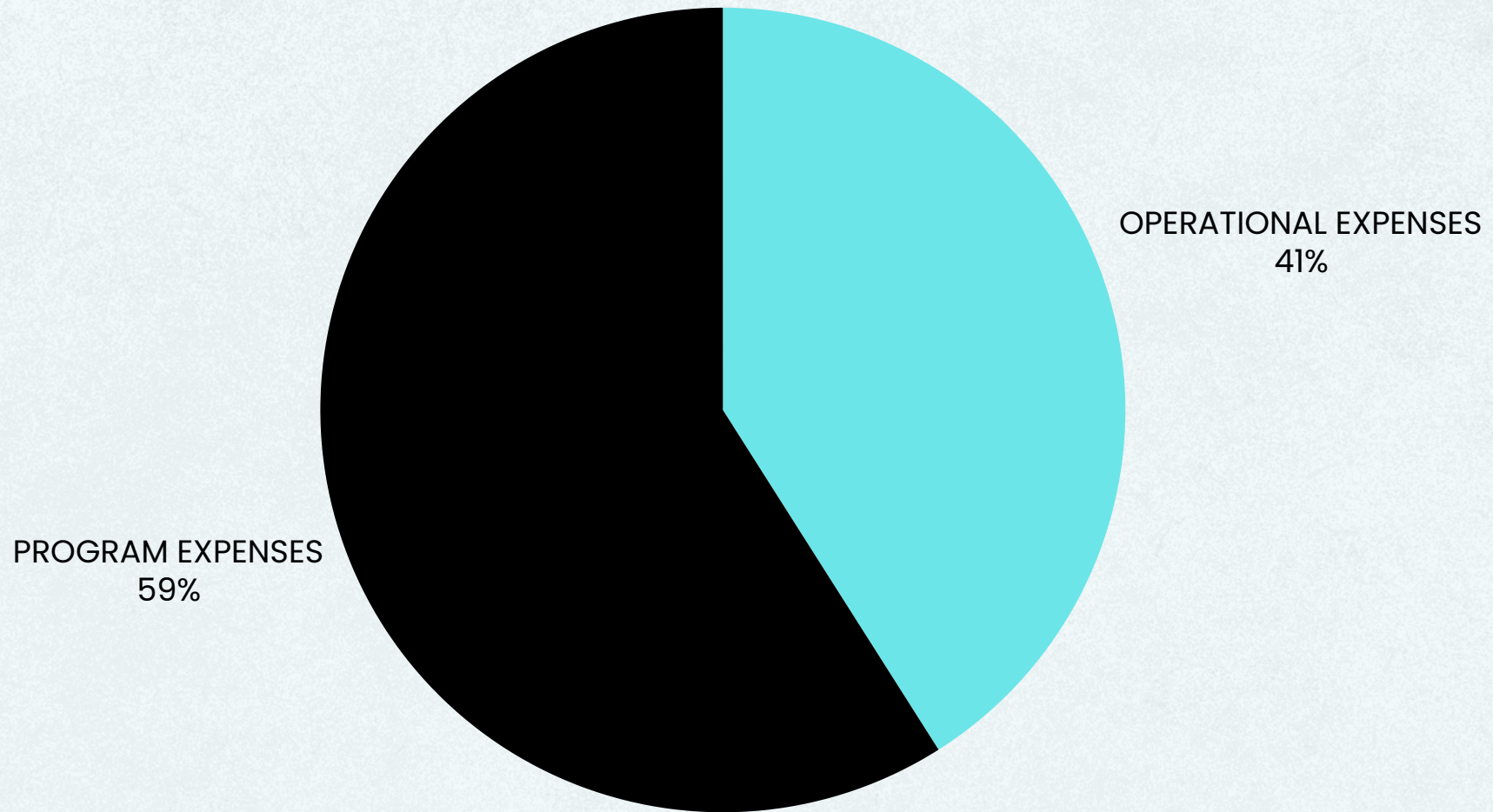
FINANCIAL SUMMARY

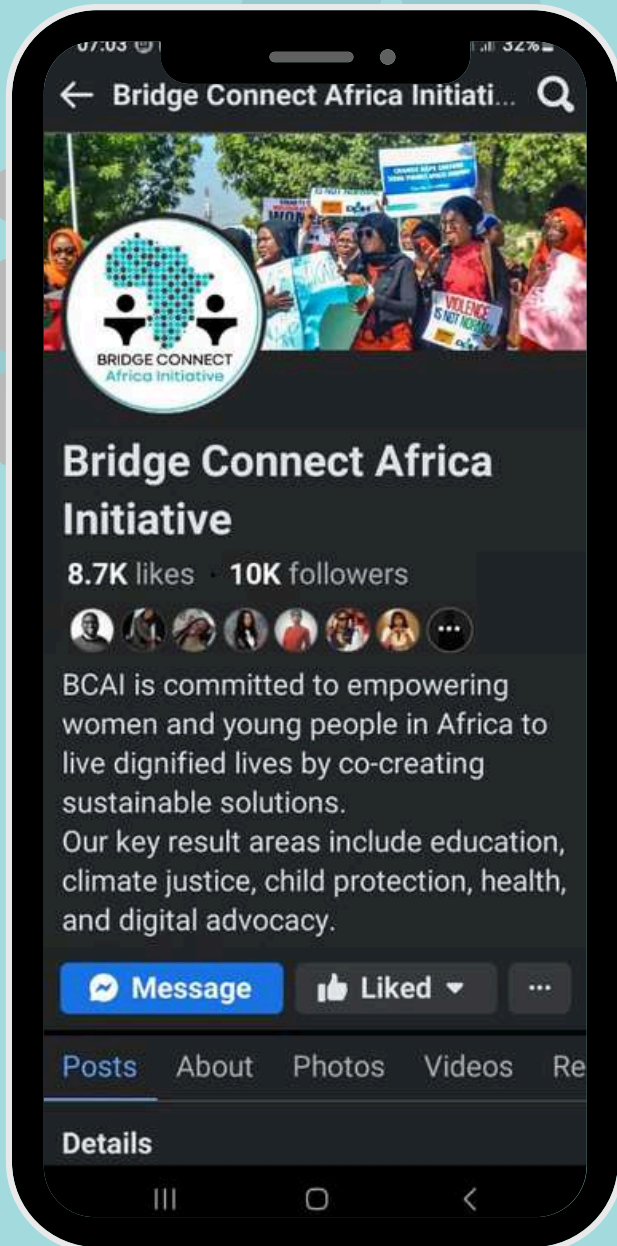
Income



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

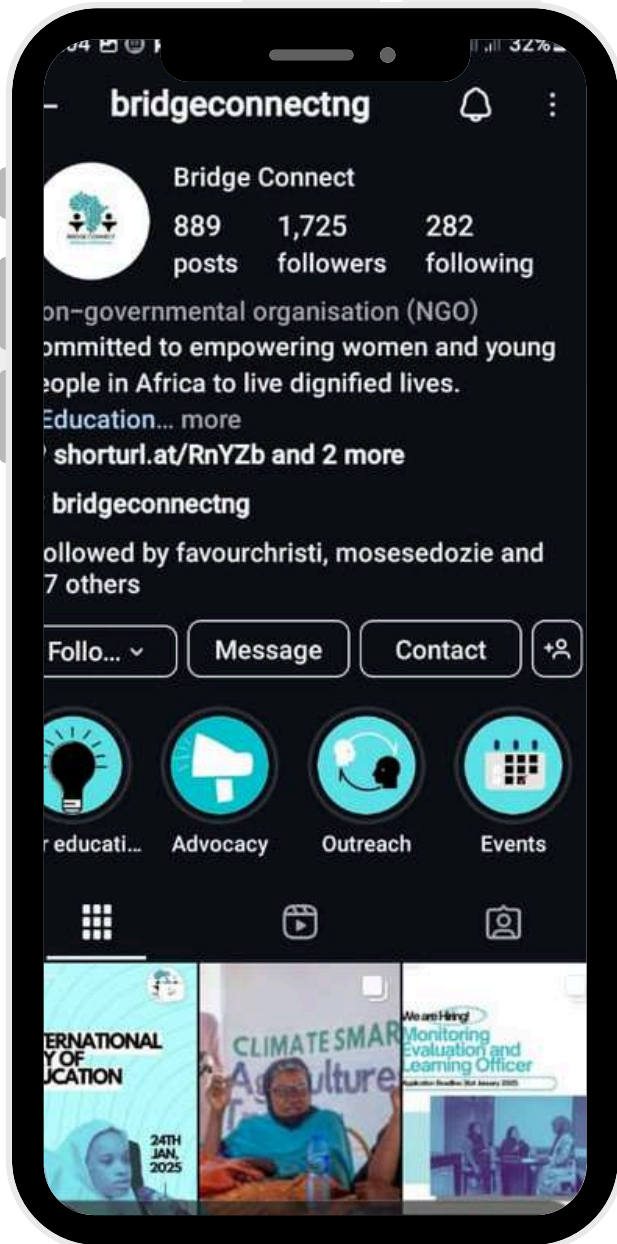
Expenditure





FACEBOOK
Followers:
10k+

165K **108**
548 Contents
Reached



INSTAGRAM

Followers:

1,725

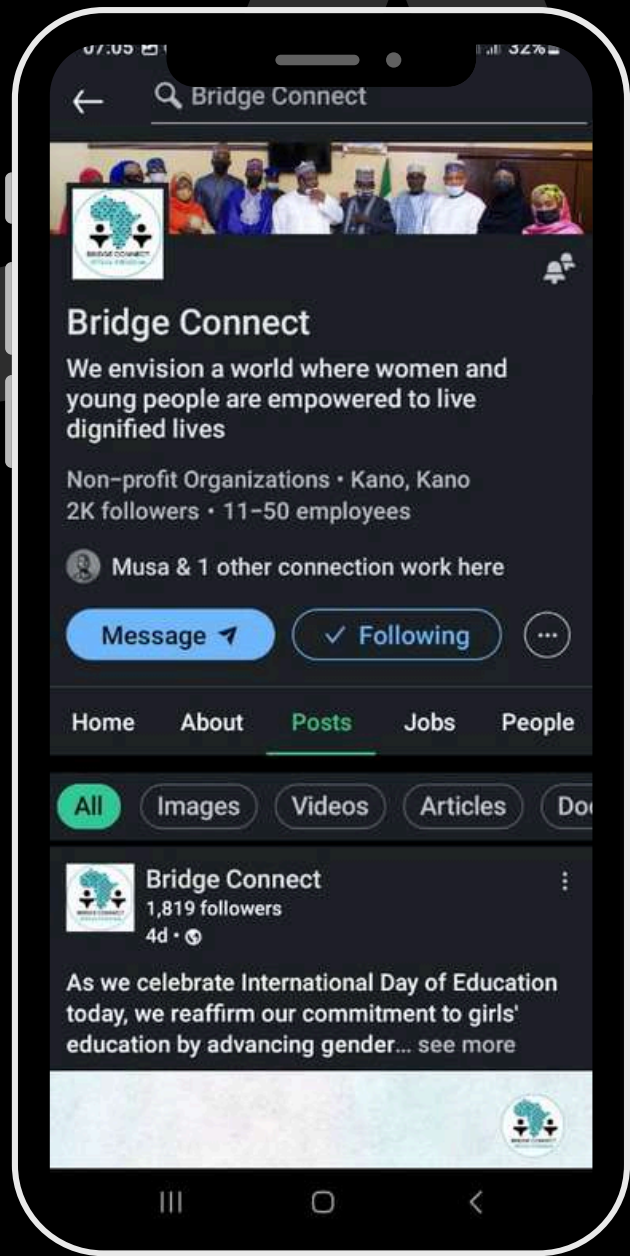
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684

Reached

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Contents

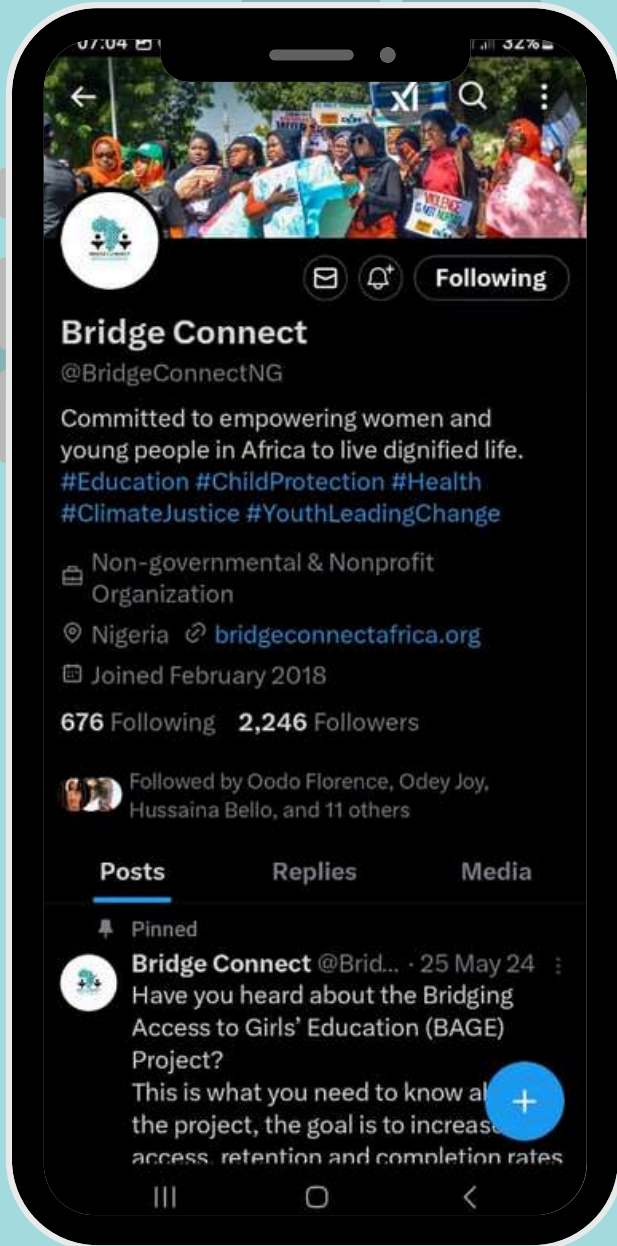


LinkedIn

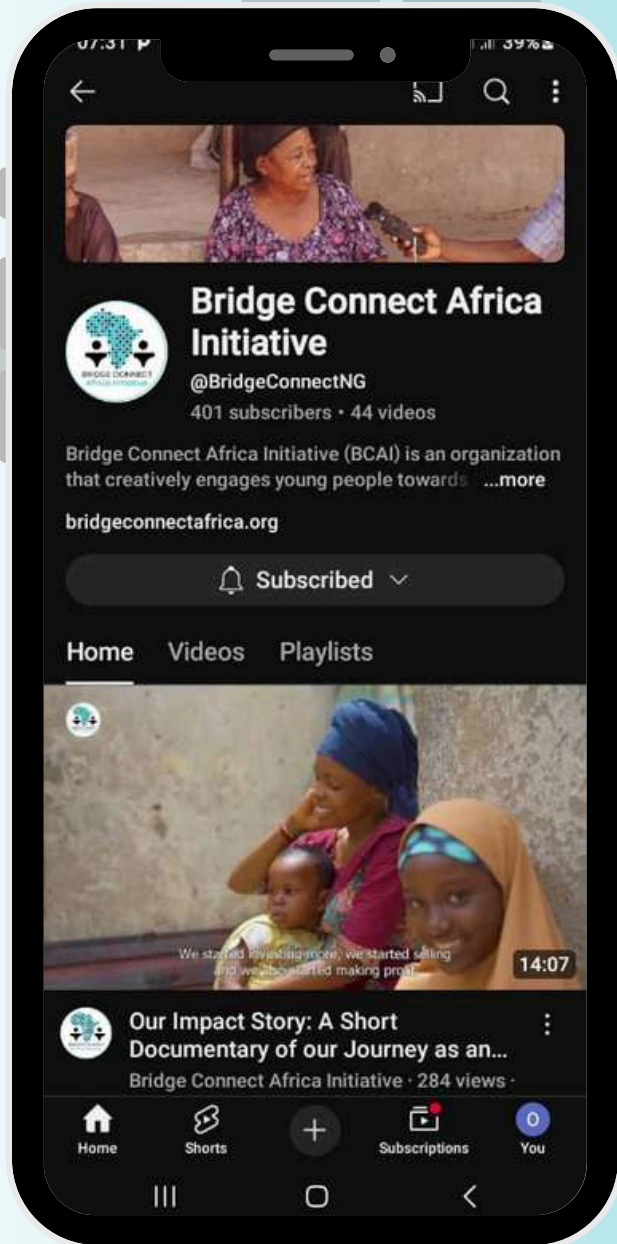
Followers:
2000+

30K
736
Reached

68
Contents



Followers:
2000+
71,560K Impressions

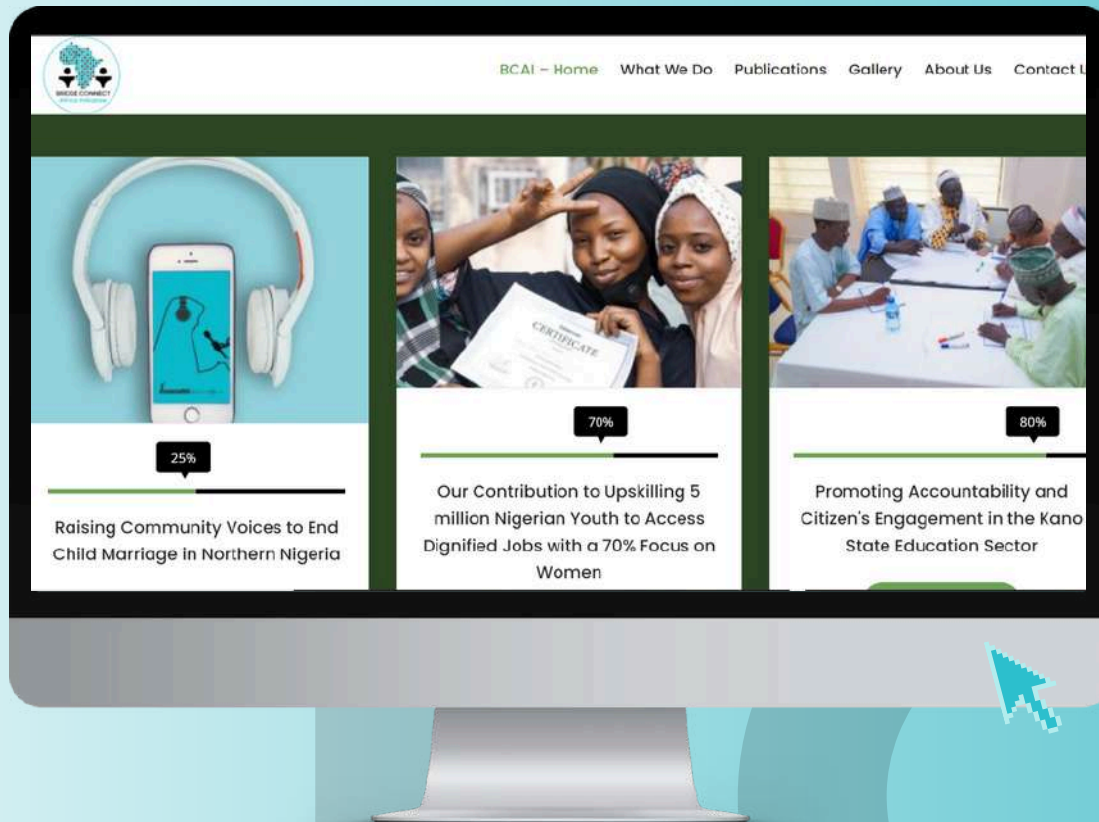


YouTube

SUBSCRIBERS
400
360 VIEWS

Blog/Website Content published: 8 Subscribers: 319

www.BridgeConnectAfrica.org



WAVES PROJECT

Testimonial



Aisha Ado

I would like to start by saying that I learned a lot from this training right from the first day. This program truly opened my eyes, especially after attending the earlier GBV workshop. Inspired by that learning, I organized a small group of younger women in my community who sell street food. I realized that the lack of a steady income and proper knowledge about running a business can exacerbate GBV, particularly financial abuse. During one of our discussions, a lady shared her GBV experience with me. Using the knowledge I gained from the training, I advised her to start a small business to become economically empowered and gain the confidence to leave an abusive relationship.

Sadiya Haruna Said

I am grateful for our last GBV workshop. From what I learned, I have been teaching other women in my community, empowering them with knowledge to improve their situations. I must also say that the needs assessment was eye-opening. Through the business development training, I realized that many of the issues I had been struggling with in my business which I even mentioned during my needs assessment were directly addressed during the workshop. I was really surprised at how well the BDSP understood my pain points and provided practical solutions. Also, I learned so much about tracking my income and expenses, which will help me better manage my business finances. This training has also connected me with other women, and I am excited about the possibility of forming business partnerships, especially through the cooperatives we were taught about.



Asabe Umar

I run a poultry business, and this five-day workshop helped me identify the mistakes I've been making. I was on the verge of giving up because my chickens often die during the harmattan season, causing significant losses for a small business owner like me. However, I received mentorship from the BDSP, who specializes in poultry farming. He shared valuable tips that I began implementing immediately after the training. According to him, harmattan can actually be the best period to profit from poultry farming, especially with the festive season increasing demand. With the insights and strategies I've learned, I'm confident I can make better decisions and start seeing positive results soon.

YOLHAC PROJECT

Testimonial



Fatima SULAIMAN Muhammad

I found the statistics on HIV prevalence among Nigerian youths to be alarming and eye-opening. The idea of empowering youth champions to lead social media campaigns is a great approach. The training was well-structured, and the facilitator was knowledgeable and engaging. I appreciate the opportunity to learn about effective communication for HIV advocacy and look forward to applying these skills in my advocacy

FAVOUR FELIX

It was educative and insightful. Learnt more about social media advocacy, communicating effectively, and using the right call to action and hashtags, I learned more about using social media as a tool for HIV Advocacy and how to use each social media platform



Amina Mubarak Ahmed

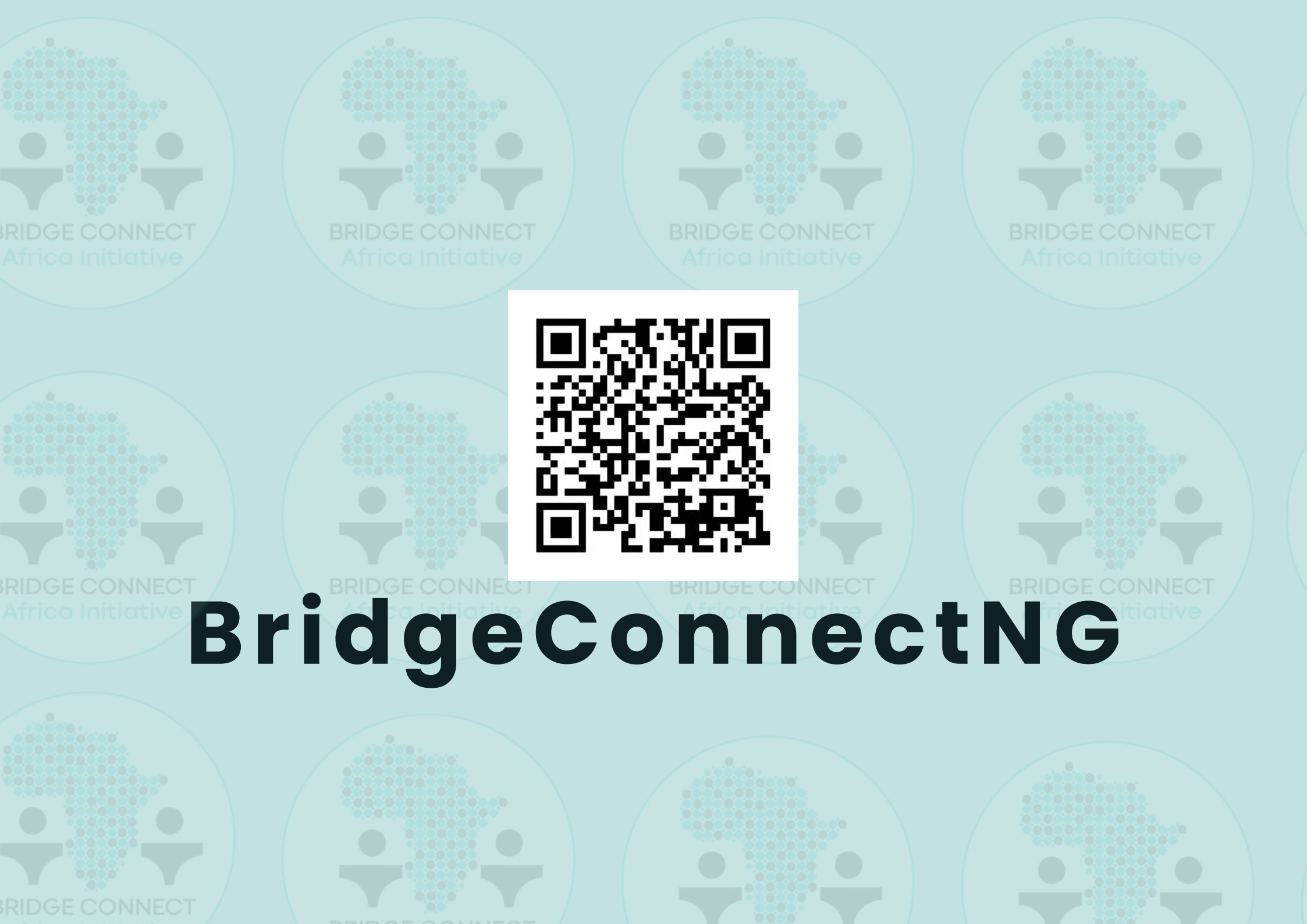
I have a better understanding of how to effectively use my social media platforms for effective advocacy campaign



PARTNERS



We owe our impacts to the support and commitment of our funding partners. Their invaluable contributions have been the driving force behind our milestones, transforming lives and empowering communities. We are grateful for their partnership as we continue striving for greater achievements.



BridgeConnectNG