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Preventing Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Abuse Against Adolescents in Bauchi and Gombe States

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Executive Summary

Gender-based violence (GBV), sexual harassment and rape of adolescent girls emerged as critical concerns across Bauchi and Gombe States. FGDs revealed widespread under-reporting of abuse, family concealment due to stigma, weak enforcement of protection laws, and limited community reporting structures.

This brief proposes multi-sectoral strategies to strengthen child protection systems, enforce existing laws, and build community accountability for preventing sexual violence against adolescents.

Problem Statement

Adolescent girls face:

- Sexual abuse by peers, teachers, relatives and community members
- Family concealment of rape cases due to stigma
- Weak reporting and referral mechanisms
- Limited enforcement of child protection laws

Evidence from Stakeholder FGDs

“When a girl is raped, they hide it because they don’t want to expose it. They say if they expose it, she will not get married.”

— *Civil Society Representative, Gombe State*

“We had a case where a father and his friend were raping young girls in primary school. They claimed it was religiously acceptable.”

— *CSO Representative, Gombe State*

“After being abused, girls shy away from the community and drop out of school because of fear of being teased.”

— *Head Teacher, Gombe State*

“If they hide the perpetrator, he will do it again to another family until it reaches your own immediate family.”

— *Community Stakeholder, Bauchi State*

Policy Recommendations

1. Establish confidential GBV reporting desks at ward and LGA levels.
2. Strengthen enforcement of Child Rights Act and VAPP Act.
3. Build survivor referral systems linking schools, PHCs and social welfare.
4. Partner with traditional and religious leaders to change harmful norms.

Key Decision Makers

- State Ministries of Women Affairs & Social Development
- State Justice Ministries
- Nigeria Police Force
- Local Government Social Welfare Departments

Call to Action

CPED and ANeSA project team call on Bauchi and Gombe State Governments to operationalize functional GBV referral and enforcement systems in all LGAs.

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About ANeSA

Addressing Neglected Areas of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Sub-Saharan Africa (ANeSA) is a seven-year, CAD 29.9 million initiative co-funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and Global Affairs Canada. ANeSA supports greater realization of neglected sexual and reproductive health and rights by underserved and marginalized populations.

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