

# **Inception Workshop on the Project: Gender Inequality and Rural Women's Health in post-Covid-19 Nigeria: Working with policymakers and non-state actors to promote inclusive and sustainable rural women's health in Nigeria**

Duoban Hotel and Suites, GRA, Benin City-November 29-30, 2022.

## **SUMMARY REPORT**

*Compiled by Osagie and Ernest*

### **Introduction**

In sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria has one of the highest overall gender gaps, with a score of 0.635 in 2020, according to the World Economic Forum. However, this gender gap is underestimated because it fails to account for the significant gender inequality prevalent in rural and impoverished communities.

Rural women's contributions to Nigeria's development are often overlooked and underestimated since household work is typically considered part of their role as wives and mothers rather than an economic activity. A recent survey by the Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED) shows that women and girls in rural Nigerian communities have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of education, food security, health, livelihoods, and increased unpaid responsibilities.

The diversion of resources from rural healthcare services to pandemic response negatively impacted women and girls' access to essential healthcare. Social norms in rural areas prioritize men and boys in healthcare access, further hindering women and girls. Additionally, limited water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities in rural areas struggled to meet increased demand during the pandemic, reducing women and girls' access to hygiene and sanitary materials. Increased workloads made it difficult for women to take time off for healthcare.

Further research is essential to address knowledge gaps regarding recovery programs that include diverse women's voices and promote gender-transformative changes. Policy-oriented research is needed to eliminate barriers to women's resource access, engage men and boys in changing gender relations and cultural norms, and create equitable economic recovery strategies. Gender-disaggregated data is crucial for measuring the pandemic's impact and post-COVID-19 recovery. Effective policy strategies should involve close collaboration between researchers and policymakers at all stages of the process.

Given the prevailing gender inequality in Nigeria's rural communities, post-COVID-19 recovery efforts must prioritize equality and inclusiveness. These efforts should focus on gender-aware programs challenging gender norms, promoting equitable relationships and decision-making, empowering women and girls, sharing domestic and care work between genders, and improving essential health systems.

This project aims to address the above highlighted issues, particularly in Edo and Delta States of Nigeria. These states were selected because they reflect the prevailing patterns of gender inequality and have relative safety for project implementation. Furthermore, CPED, the lead applicant, has established working relationships with policymakers and non-state actors in these states, which will facilitate project design and implementation. The project's core goal is to promote gender equality in post-COVID rural Nigeria through knowledge generation, innovative women's empowerment approaches, and scaling of effective interventions, recognizing that transforming social structures and norms is crucial to empower women.

This report presents the outcomes of a two-day inception workshop for the research initiative titled "Gender Inequality and Rural Women's Health in post-Covid-19 Nigeria: Working with Policymakers and Non-State Actors to Promote Inclusive and Sustainable Rural Women's Health in Nigeria." The workshop held on November 29th and 30th, 2022, at the Durban Hotel and Suite in GRA, Benin City, was organized by CPED in partnership with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada, the University of Windsor, Canada, and the Edo State Ministry of Health. The primary focus of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of the research team members and junior researchers involved in the "Women Rise" project in Edo and Delta states. The two-day capacity-building event which was attended by project researchers and other key stakeholders proved instrumental in imparting timely, pertinent, and novel insights that helped deepened participants' comprehension of the women rise project.

The workshop also served as a platform for pinpointing and solidifying benchmarks for monitoring progress, validating objectives, and collecting additional data that will inform the research project's implementation. Furthermore, this report encapsulates essential messages and valuable lessons derived from the diverse thematic discussions held during the workshop.

## **Day-1**

### **Opening Session and the Presentation of the Women Rise Project to Participants**

The inception workshop formally commenced with the opening remarks given by the chairman, board of trustees of CPED, **Professor Gideon Omuta**. In his remarks, the BoT chairman opined that gender inequality and the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant and interconnected effects on the health of rural women in Nigeria. He said that many women experienced increased care burden due to the closure of schools and increased care for children and elderly during the pandemic. He maintained that the increasing unpaid caregiving reduced women's time for self-care, added to stress and exhaustion, and has had an adverse effect on their mental and physical health. In his welcome remarks, the executive director of CPED and the project principal investigator, **Professor Emeritus Andrew Godwin Onokerhoraye** welcomed all participants and urged them to feel free to contribute their quota to the success of the workshop. He also took the opportunity to extend his appreciation to the project funder, the International Development Research Center (IDRC) of Canada, as well as the University of Windsor, Canada, and the Edo State Ministry of Health for their collaborative partnership in the project.

**Mrs. Mary Igharo**, one of the principal investigators in the project, serving as a representative from the Ministry of Health, expressed her gratitude to CPED for spearheading this initiative. She

also conveyed the ministry's commitment to closely collaborate with CPED and the University of Windsor to successfully implement the project. Mrs. Igharo assured that the government would prioritize the findings that would emanate from the project implementation by ensuring they receive the necessary attention and consideration. During her address, the executive director, International Council for Women in Africa and a project team member, Professor (Mrs.) May Nwoye acknowledged women as adept stewards of natural resources, pillars of community care, and advocates for community-driven initiatives, encompassing poverty alleviation and environmental preservation. She expressed her gratitude to CPED for its steadfast support for the women and the indigent people in the rural communities in Nigeria through its actionable research and intervention projects.

The workshop's keynote address was delivered by **Dr. Francis Onojeta**, a Policy Maker in Delta state and Project team member. He addressed the issue titled "Differential Impact of Covid-19 Containment Measures on the Welfare of Household Members and their Livelihood in the Niger Delta Region". In his presentation, Dr. Onojeta stated that the primary objective of the topic was to investigate how Covid-19 containment measures have affected the well-being and livelihoods of household members in the Niger Delta Region, and that it seeks to understand the differential impact of these measures, taking into account factors such as gender, age, and socioeconomic status. On Employment and Income Disparities, the policymaker opined that formal sector workers in the region faced job losses and reduced working hours due to lockdowns and business closures that impacted their income while the informal sector workers, who make up a significant portion of the population, experienced income shocks as well yet frequently lacked access to social safety nets". He stressed that women in the Niger Delta Region, particularly those engaged in informal work or as daily wage labourers, were disproportionately affected by income loss, as they often worked in sectors heavily impacted by restrictions, such as trading and hospitality. On the area of access to healthcare, Dr. Onojeta said his records show that rural households faced challenges in accessing healthcare services due to limited healthcare infrastructure and transportation barriers, worsening existing healthcare disparities between urban and rural areas. He went on to say that vulnerable populations, including the elderly and those with pre-existing health conditions, faced higher risks from Covid-19. On the area of education, the presenter stated that schools closure and the shift to remote learning disproportionately affected households with limited access to digital technology, which was more common in rural and low-income areas of the Niger Delta Region. This he said led to disparities in children's access to education.

Some other differential impacts presented by the keynote speaker are highlighted below:

- **Food Security:** Rural households who depended on agriculture for their livelihoods faced disruptions in the supply chain thereby affecting their ability to access inputs and sell their produce. Vulnerable populations, including children and pregnant or lactating women, faced increased risks of malnutrition due to food shortages and disruptions in the availability of nutritious food.
- **Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** There was an increase in gender-based violence during lockdowns and movement restrictions. Women and children were particularly vulnerable to domestic violence and abuse, which led to differential impacts on their well-being.
- **Government Interventions:** Government interventions, such as cash transfers and food distribution programs, had varying effectiveness in reaching vulnerable populations. Some households faced challenges in accessing these relief measures.

- **Local Economy and Livelihoods:** The Niger Delta Region is significant for its oil and gas industry. The pandemic led to fluctuations in global oil prices, impacting employment and livelihoods in this sector differently.

In his conclusion, the keynote speaker stated that any policies initiated by government should be the type having the propensity of addressing the impact of Covid-19 in the Niger Delta Region and tailored to the specific needs of different groups and sectors. He advised that the government should prioritize equity, resilience, and long-term recovery to ensure that no one or community is left behind in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Plenary Session- The Women Rise Project**

This session chaired by Professor (Mrs.) Felicia Okoro was aimed at introducing the Women Rise Project to all participants. The first speaker in this session was the project principal investigator and the executive director of CPED, Professor Emeritus Andrew G. Onokerhoraye. The project's principal investigator presentation was centred on the 'Overview of the Women Rise Project in Edo and Delta States and the Roles of Project Team Members and Policy Actors'. In his presentation, he intimated the participants that the project being funded by IDRC, Canada would be carried out in partnership with the University of Windsor, Canada and the Edo state Ministry of Health. He stated that the project overall objective was *to contribute to Nigeria's achievement of SDG Goal 5 to "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" and also Nigeria's Gender Policy on "eliminating harmful cultural and religious practices" by generating a body of evidence on scalable and context specific approaches to promote gender equality and improved access to health.* He made it clear that the project would comprise of research and intervention activities, and also gave insight into the project's five (5) specific objectives and methodology that includes conceptual framework, research design framework, project activities and the key intervention activities. "Key highlights from the presentation by the project's principal investigator, aimed at ensuring the successful implementation of the project, include the following:

- Systematic Review of Existing Literature.
- Community Engagement and Mobilization.
- Development of field survey instruments including (a) household questionnaire, (b) In-depth interviews; (c) Focus group discussions; and (d) Life history interviews.
- Primary data collection entailing household survey, in-depth interviews, focus group discussion, life history surveys and photo voice survey, and the analyses of the data collected (both qualitative & quantitative).
- Detailed surveys of the social context of gender inequality in the six pilot communities, especially their linkages with women's paid and unpaid work and its impact on women's health care during the COVID-19 and after.
- Promotion of gender equality through challenging gender norms and promoting behaviour change.
- Enhancing inclusion by promoting leadership roles for women and other vulnerable groups so that they can become key agents of change.
- Promotion of improved women's access to essential health care.
- Selection of six pilot communities for intervention activities.
- Setting up community-based project implementation committees (CPICs) that will be actively involved in the interventions. Since women are key members of the CPICs and

this will take some of their productive time, efforts will be made to compensate them for the time spent.

- Development of a gender equality and inclusion training manual and the training of facilitators.
- Peer education by trained facilitators on gender equality entailing the promotion of behaviour change communication and advocacy.
- Targeted support for women/girls on use of women/girls' essential health care.
- Enlightenment on reducing women's time burden, especially with respect to unpaid responsibilities.
- The involvement of policymakers in the Edo State Ministry of Health. The Policymaker Co-Principal Investigator will be actively involved in the project's implementation.
- The establishment of sustainable platforms of interactions among policymakers, researchers, women leaders and other stakeholders.
- Communication and dissemination of project results during the implementation period and after its completion.

### **Plenary Session- Strategies for Women Empowerment in Nigeria**

The purpose of this session was to stimulate the development of fresh insights and practical observational strategies for advancing women's empowerment in Nigeria. The session chaired by **Dr. Johnson Dudu, Project Team Member**, gave opportunity to two (2) astute presenters. First of the two was **Dr. (Mrs.) Rebecca John-Abebe**, also a Project Team Member who presented on the issue "Achieving Gender Equality in Rural Communities: Key Strategies for Empowering Women in Decision Making" stated that her work explores crucial strategies aimed at achieving gender equality in rural communities, with a specific focus on empowering women in decision-making processes. She opined that rural areas often exhibit deeply ingrained gender disparities, limiting women's participation in vital decisions that impact their lives and communities. Some of the key strategies emanating from her research are as follows:

- Improving access to quality education for girls and women is fundamental as it provides them with knowledge and skills, ultimately boosting their confidence and enabling active participation in decision-making processes;
- implementing awareness campaigns to challenge stereotypes and traditional norms that hinder women's participation. These campaigns can foster community support for gender equality;
- providing training and mentorship opportunities to develop women's leadership skills and enhance their ability to engage in decision-making roles;
- establishing or reforming local governance structures to ensure women's representation and participation, including quotas and reserved seats for women in decision-making bodies;
- creating economic opportunities for women through microfinance, skill development, and entrepreneurship programs, enabling them to have a say in economic decisions;
- ensuring women have access to healthcare services, family planning, and reproductive rights, which enable them to make informed decisions about their health and family life and;

- involving young people, both boys and girls, in initiatives that challenge gender norms and promote equality from an early age.

The second and last speaker for the session, **Professor (Mrs.) May I. Nwoye**, a Project Team Member and Executive Director of ICWA concentrated on rural women leadership and empowerment strategies. In her presentation, she stressed that in many rural communities in Nigeria, women face unique challenges and disparities that hinder their leadership potential and overall empowerment. Some of her recommendations for policymakers, grassroots organizations, and community leaders committed to advancing rural women's leadership and fostering inclusive development are as follows:

- Providing quality education and skill development programs tailored to rural women's needs, enabling them to build confidence and competence;
- facilitating access to financial resources, microfinance opportunities, and entrepreneurship training to empower women economically and encourage their participation in leadership roles;
- creating platforms for rural women to connect, share experiences, and access support networks that foster leadership development;
- advocating for legal reforms that promote gender equality and implementing policies that ensure women's representation in decision-making bodies;
- recognizing the pivotal role of women in agriculture and providing them with resources, training, and access to markets to enhance their leadership in this sector and;
- integrating a gender perspective into budgeting and resource allocation to address women's specific needs and promote their leadership opportunities.

## **Day-2**

### **Plenary Session- Covid-19 and Rural Women's Income and Health**

This session which was overseen by **Professor (Mrs.) May Nwoye** focused on the economic activities of woman and their health during and after Covid-19 pandemic. The first speaker to take the podium was **Professor (Mrs.) Dicta Ogisi**, a Project Team Member who titled her presentation to be "Covid-19 and its Impact on Agricultural Production in Nigeria". She revealed that the outbreak of Covid-19 and its associated containment measures disrupted the agricultural sector (which plays a pivotal role in the country's economy) in various ways. According to her, some of the ways it impacted agricultural sector in Nigeria include:

- Disruption in agricultural supply chains which vehemently impacted the movement of goods, inputs, and labor;
- difficulties in accessing markets, leading to price volatility and losses, particularly for perishable crops;
- labour shortage due to lockdown and restrictions on movement;
- Shortages in farm inputs and;
- financial constraints faced by farmers due to decreased income, increased costs, and limited access to credit.

Professor Ogisi also highlighted some of the resilience and adaptability by the farmers and government to include:

- Adoption of technology in agriculture, including digital platforms for market access, e-extension services, and remote learning;
- diversifying crops, exploring alternative markets, and engaging in innovative farming practices;
- introduction of some policy responses by the Nigerian government including stimulus packages and support for smallholder farmers, to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on agriculture and;
- awakening towards emphases on the importance of sustainable and resilient agricultural practices to ensure food security in the face of future shocks.

The second speaker **Dr. (Mrs.) Verere S. Balogun** also a project team member had the privilege of speaking on “Promoting Gender Equality and Essential Health Care: Towards Post Covid-19 Recovery”. She stressed the need of advocating for equitable healthcare services that consider the unique needs of all genders. According to her, by addressing gender disparities in healthcare and supporting women's participation in decision-making, has the tendency to foster resilience and a more inclusive health system as societies emerge from the pandemic. Dr. Verere’s presentation emphasized the following:

- It is important to promoting gender equality within healthcare systems, ensuring that people of all genders have equal access to essential health services;
- Government need to recognize the need to address gender disparities in healthcare as part of the broader post-pandemic recovery process;
- the need to empower women by addressing barriers to healthcare access, promoting women's participation in healthcare decision-making, and advocating for gender-responsive healthcare services;
- the need to put in place a multifaceted approach that recognizes that gender disparities in healthcare are interconnected with broader social and economic factors, and should have the potency to create positive and lasting change for rural women in Nigeria;
- the need to start engaging communities in healthcare decision-making and awareness campaigns is key and;
- that collecting and analyzing gender-disaggregated data is essential for identifying disparities and measuring the impact of gender-sensitive healthcare interventions.

The last speaker in the session **Dr. Johnson Dudu** also a project team member spoke on an interesting issue on the interconnections between the paid and unpaid work of rural women and their overall health. In his presentation, Dr. Johnson noted that rural women often undertake a dual burden, balancing paid employment with a myriad of unpaid domestic and caregiving responsibilities, and admitted that these intersecting roles impact women's physical and mental health. Below are some of the key aspects he considered when discussing this interconnection.

- Dual workload engaged by rural women can range from agricultural labour to off-farm employment coupled with significant burden of unpaid domestic and caregiving tasks, including cooking, cleaning, and childcare.
- Paid and unpaid work often leaves rural women with limited time and energy for self-care and rest.
- The nature of both paid and unpaid work can impact the physical health of rural women.

- The stress associated with balancing multiple responsibilities and societal expectations can affect the mental health of rural women.
- The demands of work may hinder rural women's access to healthcare services. This can lead to delays in seeking medical attention, preventive care, or even maternal health services.
- Policymakers need to recognize the unique challenges faced by rural women and implement gender-sensitive policies and interventions. These might include flexible work arrangements, improved access to healthcare, and support for rural women's economic empowerment.

### **Parallel Session -Group Work**

During the parallel session participants were divided into three groups. Participants in each group were to discuss 'Covid-19 containment measures and its impacts on household income and women's health'. Some interesting points that emanated from their brainstorming and discussion are depicted below:

#### **Group 1- Presentation highlights**

- The Covid-19 containment measures resulted to economic challenges that disrupted the livelihood of households and hence many were unable to meet their basic needs such as food, housing, and healthcare.
- The economic activities and income of numerous households were adversely affected, thereby heightening their susceptibility to poverty.

#### **Group 2- Presentation highlights**

- Covid-19 discouraged some women from seeking essential healthcare services including antenatal and postnatal care primarily due to lockdowns and restrictions on movement.
- Many women could not have access to reproductive health services such as family planning and contraceptives which led to unintended pregnancies and other reproductive health challenges.

#### **Group 3- Presentation highlights**

- Covid-19 containment measures increased women caregiving responsibilities and their ability to participate in the workforce or pursue personal development.
- Numerous individuals and families faced income loss as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, which led to the closure of certain businesses.

### **Plenary session- Stakeholders Engagement in Action Research**

This plenary session chaired by **Prof. Adesina Oladipupo** is designed to focus on the various strategies for engaging the grass-root population in action research in order to get their support.



The first speaker for this session, **Prof. Eddy Akpomera**'s presentation was centered on the need to influence policy makers with research outcomes through sustainable policy engagement. He asserted on how policy makers can be influenced with research outcomes through sustainable policy engagement strategies. These strategies include:

- The need for clear and concise communication of research findings and making the information more accessible;
- Engaging the various stakeholders/policy makers in order for them to integrate research findings into policy decisions;
- Involving policymakers in the research process from the project inception that will lead to more meaningful engagement and policy uptake;
- Gathering feedback from policymakers on relevance of research outcomes in enhancing policy engagement strategies;
- Using different media channels in disseminating research outcomes to policymakers;
- Building sustainable relationships with policymakers by integrating research findings into their decision-making processes and;
- Partnering with policy-focused organizations in strengthening the impact of research findings.

**Prof. Gideon Omuta** a project team member who made a presentation on the “Benefits and Challenges of Engaging Policy Makers in Collaborative Research” informed the audience some of the benefits CPED has enjoyed through its engagement with policy makers in collaboration research. On the benefits, he asserted that;

- collaborative research involving policy makers that are up-to-date leads to informed decision making and effective policy-making;
- collaborative research brings about a better understanding of research findings that will be implemented leading to change;
- policy makers when engaged in research process will reduce the gap between research and policy and improves the chances of successful implementation;
- engaging policy makers/ stakeholders in research makes for better result outcomes and;
- collaborative research assist policy makers to allocate resources more efficiently into key areas.

Some of the key challenges that could be encountered in collaborative research with policymakers, according to Prof. Omuta are as follows:

- **Communication gap:** Researchers and policy makers can have different communication gap that may be difficult to understand, leading to misinterpretation of findings.
- **Time constraints:** Policy makers are often busy with tasks, and are faced with limited time to engage research discussions.

- **Institutional barriers:** Bureaucratic bottlenecks within government agencies can hinder effective partnership with researchers.
- **Access to research:** Policy makers might not have easy access to research findings due to paywalls, subscription fees, or technical barriers, limiting their ability to make informed decisions.
- **Access to research:** Policy makers sometimes might not have easy access to research findings due to technical barriers, limiting their ability to make informed decisions.
- **Availability of data:** Policy decisions often require timely and accurate data, which might not be readily available or accessible to researchers.
- **Lack of trust:** Distrust can exist between policy makers and researchers resulting to lack of commitment to research implementation.

**Engr. Job Eronmhonsele** who made the last presentation of the session, enlightened the participants on the most effective way of policy brief development for knowledge translation that will bridge the gap between research and policy recommendation. Some of these, he said include:

- Identifying the target audience
- Define the problem and context
- Summarize the research
- Highlight the key policy implication
- Provide evidence base recommendation

Subsequently, after his presentation, during the discussion and comments, **Prof. Atedhor** in his comments asserted that knowledge translation needs to identify the key message for the target audience for easy assimilation. **Prof. (Mrs.) Ogisi** on her part, emphasized the basic unit of knowledge translation should be up to date systematic reviews and should be a combination of research findings.

### **General Reflection**

This session gave opportunity for the participant to reflect on the emerging issues on the two-day events. The key points noted are stated below.

- Both men and women should be encouraged even though the target population are women
- Promoting and encouraging sustainable health practices to reduce the risk of future pandemic
- There is need to strengthen the capacities of women to access and utilize both agricultural and health technologies and practice
- Women should learn to balance paid work with unpaid work in order to maintain a healthy life
- There's is need to make the program understandable by policy makers and research assistants should be well trained in data collection
- Men should be encouraged to assist women in carrying out domestic chores

- Inclusiveness of women in all stages of implementation will help to build their capacity
- Strengthening collaboration between research and policy makers will facilitate uptake of research recommendation

The closing remarks was presented by the principal investigator, **Professor Emeritus Andrew Onokerhoraye**. He was of the view that the two-day workshop had developed the capacity of the research team members to implement the women rise project. He reiterated that the interest of the team has been spurred for the implementation of the research project. He emphasized that the workshop recommends considering the capacity building of the target population in the short term of the project period in creating impact. It also recommends strengthening partnership between research and policymakers that will facilitate acceptance of research recommendations and a sense of ownership of the project by the people to become sustainable.

### **Conclusion**

Upon the conclusion of the intensive two-day workshop aimed at enhancing the research team's capacity for executing the Women Rise project, it became evident through the insights shared by various speakers and engaging discussions that the team's motivation and readiness for project implementation have been significantly bolstered. The project team aims to work collaboratively with policymakers and non-state actors to develop and implement strategies that will improve the health and well-being of rural women in a way that is both inclusive and sustainable.

## SOME PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN DURING THE INCEPTION WORKSHOP



**Image:** Group Photographs of Participants During Inception Workshop Held in Benin City



**Photo:** Chairman BoT of CPED and member of the Women Rise Project Research Team Making Remarks During the Opening Session of the Inception Workshop



***Photo: Mr. Johnbull, An Environmental Health Officer in Edo State making Comments at the Inception Workshop***



# INCEPTION WORKSHOP ON THE PROJECT:

**“Gender Inequality and Rural Women’s Health in Post COVID-19 Nigeria: towards inclusive and sustainable rural Women’s Health in Nigeria”**

**Date:** November 29-30, 2022

**Venue:** Douban Hotel, Giwa-Amu Street, Benin City, Edo State



**DAY 1**  
**TUESDAY NOVEMBER 29, 2022**

**9:00am to 10:00 am:** Registration by Participants

**10:00am-12:30pm: Opening Session**

**Rapporteurs:** *Mrs. Iroroturi Iyamba*

**Chairman:** Professor Gideon E. D. Omuta, Chairman CPED Board of Trustees and Project Team Member.

**Opening Remarks:** Professor Gideon E. D. Omuta, Chairman CPED Board of Trustees and Project Team Member.

**Welcome Address:** Professor Andrew G. Onokerhoraye, Project Principal Investigator and Executive Director of CPED

**Brief Remarks:** Mrs. Mary Igharo, Decision Maker, Edo state Ministry of Health and Project Co-PI

**Brief Remarks:** Professor (Mrs.) May I. Nwoye, Executive Director, ICWA and Project Team Member

**Keynote Address:** Dr. Francis Onojeta, Policy Maker, Delta state and Project team member. **Topic:** *“Differential Impact of Covid-19 Containment Measures on the Welfare of Household Members and their Livelihood in the Niger Delta Region”*.

**12.30pm- 1:00pm: Questions/Comments/Discussion**

**1:00pm– 2:00pm: Lunch Break**

**2:00pm– 3:00pm: Plenary Session : The Women Rise Project**

**Chairman:** Dr. Mrs. Felicia Okoro

**Rapporteurs:** *Mrs. Verere S. Balogun*

**Presentation:** An Overview of the Women Rise Project in Edo and Delta States and the Roles of Project Team Members and Policy Actors

**Professor Emeritus Andrew G. Onokerhoraye, Project Principal Investigator**

**3.00pm- 3:30pm: Questions/Comments/Discussion**

**3:30pm– 4:00pm: Plenary Session: Strategies for Women Empowerment in Nigeria**

**Chairman:** Dr. Johnson Dudu, Project Team Member

**Rapporteurs:** *Mrs. Mercy Omuero & Mr. Endurance Obroku, Project Mentees*

**Presentation:** Achieving Gender Equality in Rural Communities: Key Strategies for Empowering Women in Decision Making

**Dr. Mrs Rebecca John-Abebe, Project Team Member**

**Presentation:** Rural Women leadership and Empowerment strategies

**Professor (Mrs.) May I. Nwoye, Project Team Member**

**4:00pm-4:30pm: Group Discussion/Wrap-up and Closing**

## DAY 2

### WENESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2023

**9:30am - 10:30am: Plenary Session: – Covid-19 and Rural Women’s Income and Health**

**Chairman:** Professor (Mrs.) May Nwoye, Project Team Member

**Rapporteurs:** *Ernest Imongan*

**Presentations:** Covid-19 and its Impact on Agricultural Production in Nigeria

**Professor (Mrs.) Dicta Ogisi, Project Team Member**

**Presentations:** Promoting Gender Equality and Essential Health Care: Towards Post Covid-19 Recovery.

**Mrs. Verere S. Balogun, Project Team Member**

**Presentations:** The Relationships between rural women’s paid and unpaid work and women’s health

**Dr. Johnson Dudu, Project Team Member**

**10:30am – 11:30am: Comments/Discussion**

**11:30am - 12:30pm: Parallel Session -Group Work**

**Group Work:** All participants to be placed in groups to discuss: Covid-19 Containment Measures and Its Impacts on Household Income and Women’s Health

**12:30am 1:00pm: Group Presentation/Feedback**

**1:00pm – 2:00pm: Lunch/Networking**

**2:00 - 3:00pm: Plenary Session: Stakeholders Engagement in Action Research**

**Chairman:** *Professor Adesina Oladipupo*

**Rapporteurs:** *Osagie Aitokhuehi*

**Presentation:** Influencing Policy Makers with Research Outcomes through sustainable Policy Engagement strategies.

**Professor Eddy, Akpomera, Project Team member**

**Presentations:** Benefits and Challenges of Engaging Policy Makers in Collaborative Research

**Professor Gideon Omuta, Project Team Member**

**Presentations:** Developing Policy Brief for Knowledge Translation in Action Research

**Engr. Job Eronmhonsele, Project Team Member.**

**3:00pm – 3:30pm: Comments/Questions**

**3:30pm – 3:50pm: Reflection on the Two-Day Inception Workshop and Next Steps**

**3:50pm – 4:00pm: Closing Remarks by Project Principal Investigator**

**END OF INCEPTION WORKSHOP**