

**BHI Project Report on African Widows and Orphans Support  
from July to December, 2015**

**Introduction**

Beacon of Hope Initiative received support for widows and orphans in traumatized communities who have experienced communal crises and terrorist attacks. These activities resulted to displacement of thousands of people particularly widows and orphans.



Church of the brethren Mubi



Bullet holes on church car at Kwarhi Clinic destroyed at Kwarhi



## **Project States and Communities**

The project was implemented in fifteen communities in four states as follows:

Borno State :( Four Communities) Lassa, Askira- Uba, Chibok, Maiduguri

Adamawa State: (Five communities) Mubi- North, Mubi- South, Yola, Kwarhi and Numan

Plateau State :( Two communities) Dyemburuk, and Barkin Ladi

Benue State (Four communities): Anyiin, Akete, Naka and Agatu

The project was implemented through the following denominations and a local community-based organization:

Church of the Brethren in Nigerian, Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, Church of Christ in Nations, Universal Reformed Christian Church, Anglican diocese of Makurdi and Grant Christian Services

At the denominational level Beacon of Hope Initiative worked through the following women fellowships or ministry that have strong developmental links with beneficiary communities

1. Communities in Borno State through the Women's Ministry of Church of the Brethren
2. Communities in Adamawa State through the Women's ministry of Church of the Brethren and the Women's fellowship Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria
3. Communities in Benue State through the Women's fellowship of Universal Reformed Christian Church, Anglican Diocese of Makurdi - Mothers Union, and Grant Christian Services- A local community based organization.
4. Communities in Plateau State through the Regional Church Councils Du and Barkin-Ladi of Church of Christ in Nations.

**Orphan Support:** A total of 304 (166 males and 138 females) orphans selected had their school fees paid for a period of three years under the supervision of a caregiver, community leader, and women's ministry. The nominating committee/women ministry in the beneficiary community also made commitment to continue engaging orphans in education, shelter, clothing, psychosocial care, healthcare, feeding, clothing and legal protection/ rights etc. Orphans' caregivers were trained in each target community to provide support for beneficiaries including trauma healing. This is important because the mental health of widows and orphans had received no attention by internally displaced camp handlers and health providers. Yet observers verbalized that widows and orphans are beginning to display signs of trauma, such as aggressiveness and inability to sleep. an are becoming shy to make new friends. Beneficiary orphans also attended training sessions and contributed by sharing how they feel

**Need:** There is a huge need and so the project could not reach all orphans and vulnerable children who met the selection criteria. BHI encountered orphans whose parents were killed outside family home. Many children had to hide in the bush for several days with a group of people who had fled their villages. African widow and Orphan Support is therefore meeting a real felt need in Nigeria.



Anyiin displaced orphans



Picture of Displaced Orphans in Akete



Agatu orphaned and displaced children. Orphaned and displaced orphans at Numan





**Mubi beneficiary widows**



**Kwarhi beneficiary widows**



**Care givers training at Dyembruk**



**Payment of a beneficiary widow**



**Economic training: Askira-Uba group**



**Care givers training Michika**

A total of 492 traumatized widows from the 15 communities listed above were trained in economic empowerment world view, understanding what business is all about, principles behind running a successful business, business planning marketing ways to achieve economic empowerment, business opportunity identification, skills identification, business values (such as hard work, honesty, integrity, customer satisfaction, patience/persistence, excellence) and records keeping. Each of the 492 widows received fifteen thousand naira each (equivalence of about US76.53) as startup capital for small business of their choices such as farming, petty trading, sale of provisions, sale of grains/tubers and other food items/soup ingredients, and sale of food and other edible items sale of water and soft drinks, tailoring, vegetable selling, gari and palm oil producing. The groups were also introduced to cooperative savings and loans and are in the

process of electing leaders and development of guidelines to commence. Beneficiaries express appreciation to the sponsors of the project.

### **Trauma Healing**

The project has so far identified of trained 15 traumas healing facilitators who have completed or going through the trauma healing discussion lessons with 600 beneficiary widows in the following communities: Mubi North, Mubi South, Kwarhi, Michika, Yola, Numan, Askira-Uba, Chibok, Maiduguri, Barkin-Ladi, Dyemburuk, Anyiin, Agatu Akete and Naka.

The manual “*Healing the Wounds of Trauma: How the Church Can Help*” booklet written by Harriet Hill, Margaret Hill, Richard Bagge, and Pat Miersma to guide group discussions was provided to all beneficiaries for their use. Some beneficiaries testified to being comforted and healed.

### **Conclusion and Appreciation**

Community and religious leaders from beneficiary communities are very grateful for the project. African Widow and Orphan Support continue to stand out as an organization that has built the capacity of traumatized widows through education and financial assistance. Many widows are testifying of being healed as a result of undergoing the trauma healing sessions. Several widows have also been empowered economically and are now earning additional income. Orphans who would have been out of school have now enrolled to continue their education.

The provision of business grant and entrepreneurship training has helped beneficiary widows to engage themselves in basic businesses of their choice to support their families and also reduced the burden of depending on others for survival.

The trauma healing sessions have facilitated the process of forgiveness and healing in communities. Due to traumatic experiences many who felt God had abandoned them have seen love and hope through the ministry of African Widow and Orphan Support. As a result of the trauma healing sessions many widows have testified of its usefulness and that their wrong views about God resulting from their sufferings have changed. They are delighted that God had finally reached them through the donors.

Beneficiaries and communities see the grant as a symbol of God’s abiding presence among his people. Community and religious leaders are grateful for the opportunity to learn how to live in the midst of conflict and adversity and look ahead with hope and renewed strength

Beacon of Hope Initiative also express sincere gratitude to African Widow and Orphan Support for this generous grant. Without the support, we would not have been able to train and empower widows and orphans the way we did. For sure, individuals and communities are being empowered and they remain grateful and pray for God’s blessings on everyone involved in making this ministry possible.

Religion that God our father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. James 1: 27



Thank you : African Widow and Orphan support