

Progress Report on African Widow and Orphan Support on Work Done from July 2019 to February 2020

1. Introduction

We express sincere appreciation to African Widow and Orphan Support for the generous support and gifts of love toward empowering traumatized widows and orphans due to terrorist attacks of Boko Haram and armed herdsmen in northern Nigeria. So far, a total of 1,006 beneficiaries have been reached between July 2019 to February 2020.

1. **Benue State:** Three Communities reached are Kurungu, Yogbo, and Yina through Universal Reformed Christian Church (NKST) Women Fellowship.
2. **Plateau State:** Three communities reached are Kanke, Rapyam and Ratatis through Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) Women Fellowship.
3. **Nasarawa State:** Three communities reached are Keana, Ezzen, and Alushi Washo through women fellowship of Evangelical Reformed Church of Christ (ERCC).

Detailed Beneficiaries Reached

1. 350 widows went through trauma healing sessions
2. 16 women fellowship leaders were selected from the beneficiary communities for healing group sessions.
3. 270 widows received economic empowerment (30 widows were selected in each beneficiary community for business training and grant)
4. 185 orphans were provided with school fees (tuition) for three years (at least 20 orphans were selected in each target community)
5. 185 orphans' caregivers trained (Each orphan had a caregiver trained on orphan caregiving in the selected communities)

Orphan Selection and Training of Caregivers

Committees set up by the women fellowship in local congregations were responsible for the selection of orphans based on set criteria. Each selected orphan's school fees (tuition) for a period of three years is covered under the supervision of a caregiver, community leader, and women fellowship leader. A total number of one hundred and eighty-five (185) orphans were provided with school scholarship of forty-five thousand naira (about \$128) each.

One hundred and eighty-five caregivers received training to provide support for the orphans in their care. Areas covered include; education, psychosocial care, healthcare, feeding, and legal protection. Orphans who lost both parents were given priority in the selection process.

Adagadzu an orphan from Alushi Washo community said,” the school scholarship was answered prayer as i did not know where my tuition fee would come from, but God heard my prayers and sent AWOS. Because of you, I am back to school. Thank you AWOS, God bless AWOS”.

Iveren a caregiver in Yina community shared that the training helped her appreciate the importance of listening to and spending time with children. In the past she thought children should only be instructed and not be heard. She further made a commitment to be there for her children



Caregivers training at Kanke

Orphans at Rapyam

Economic Empowerment for Traumatized Widows

Traumatized widows had their capacity built on self-help ventures. They received training on business worldview and business principles which include choosing an appropriate business, marketing strategy, proper record keeping, money management, business plan and good business ethics. Each trained beneficiary received thirty thousand naira (about US\$85) as micro business startup capital. Beneficiaries are involved in animal rearing, sale of grains, tubers, vegetables, fruits, and food selling. Beneficiaries were also introduced to community savings and loans

group where they save to generate local resources. Beneficiaries are grateful for the opportunity to be able to provide support for their families.

Dooshima from Kurungu community said, “I am grateful to AWOS for wiping my tears and giving me hope. With the training and grant received, my worldview regarding business changed which spurred me into establishing a fish selling business. I am now able to meet some of the needs of my family. God is indeed good. Thank you”.



Business training at Kurungu community



Business training at Rapyam community



Business training at Yogbo community



Business training at Ezzen community

Trauma Healing

Trauma healing sessions were held with 366 women (350 traumatized widows and 16 women leaders) using the manual “*Healing the Wounds of Trauma: How the Church Can Help*”. Participants testified to receiving help and hope not to give up on life. The trauma healing

sessions continue to encourage the process of forgiveness and healing in communities. Many widows were discouraged about carrying on with life due to painful experiences. They now testify of their hope being rekindled and courage to move on as they trust in God.

A widow from Yogbo community shared that she found some relief after sharing her pain and being prayed for during the healing sessions. She also said she found encouragement as she listened to testimonies from other participants.



Conclusion

Beacon of Hope Initiative, beneficiaries and communities greatly appreciate African Widow and Orphan Support for the love and gifts. Individuals and communities are receiving help and encouragement which continues to make a difference in their lives. We pray for God's blessing on AWOS.