

Beacon of Hope Team

AWOS Program Update from March 2022 - September 2022

In the period under review March 2022 to September 2022, Beacon of Hope Initiative carried out ministry in Adamawa, Benue, Kaduna, Plateau, Taraba and Yobe States of Nigeria where 330 traumatized widows were reached with economic empowerment support and trauma healing, while 220 orphans and their caregivers were reached with school fees support and capacity training on OVC (orphans and vulnerable children) care respectively.

1. **Benue State:** Kyado and Yeke communities were reached through Universal Reformed Christian Church (URCC) Women Fellowship.
2. **Plateau State:** Kwanga and Jebbu Miango communities were reached through Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) Women Fellowship.
3. **Adamawa State:** Bodeno and Pwakayo communities were reach through EYN Women Fellowship.
4. **Kaduna State:** Stonje community reached through Evangelical Church of Winning All (ECWA) Women Fellowship
5. **Taraba state:** Zena and Nwonyo communities reached through Christian Reformed Church in Nigeria (CRCN).
6. **Yobe State:** Potiskum and Yusufari communities reached through Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) and Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) Women Fellowship respectively

Breakdown of beneficiaries are as follows:

1. 330 widows reached through Economic Empowerment training and trauma healing
2. 220 orphans were provided with school scholarship for a period of three years.
3. 220 caregivers received training on provision of care and support to orphans

Economic Empowerment to selected widows

Traumatized widows were trained on business startup and expansion using BHI economic empowerment Manual. Areas covered include choosing an appropriate business, developing a business plan, marketing strategy, financial management and proper record keeping among others. Also, the widows were introduced to savings and loans where members save and have access to funds generated locally for the purpose of investment or expansion of their businesses. Beneficiaries were provided with business start-up grant of N45,000 naira (estimated \$105) to

run businesses of their choice. Widows testified that the skills and grants given to them has motivated them to engage in self-help ventures that is generating some income for their households. Beneficiaries are involved in several business activities such as peasant farming, trading, sale of grains/tubers/vegetables/soup ingredients and clothing.



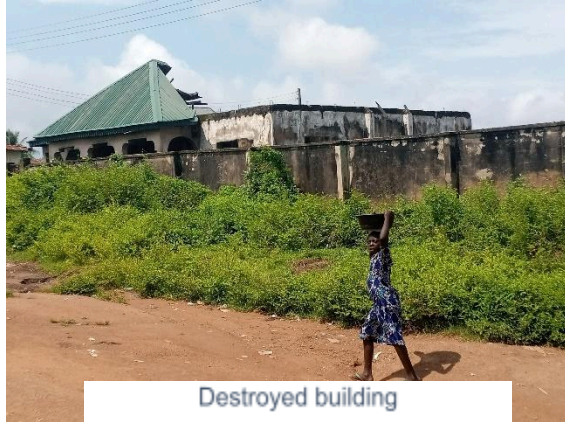
Business training at Tsoje Community



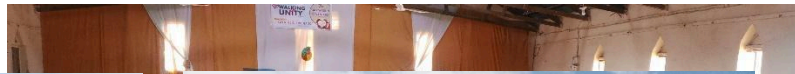
Business training at Potiskum community

Trauma Healing

The traumatized widows were taken through trauma healing sessions using the manual “*Healing the Wounds of Trauma: How the Church Can Help*”. Beneficiaries appreciated the healing sessions which helped them to express their pain and find strength not to give up on life. Some shared of being happy as they realized that God still loves them even though they have experienced bad things. They have found great relief right from when they decided to forgive those that hurt them. Others also shared of improved health as a result of the healing process.



Destroyed building



Burnt building from an attack

Orphan support/ Caregivers training

Orphans were selected by women fellowship committee in local congregations based on set criteria and priority were given to orphans who lost both parents. Orphans from target communities were supported with school fees of fifty-four thousand naira (estimated \$118) each for a period of three years. The support provided traumatized orphans the opportunity to be back to school. An orphan shared feeling loved and cared for as he goes to school every day. A caregiver also testified how she now understands the importance of being friendly and able to

talk and listen to her son rather than being harsh with him most of the time in a bid to make him disciplined.

I am happy going to school with my friends. I want to be a doctor when I grow up to help sick people” Emmanuel James, 10 years old orphan from Yusufari community



Ladi Bulus’ Story

Ladi and her husband Bulus with their two children lived in Angwa Juma’a community in Plateau State, Nigeria where they made a living from crop farming.

In the year 2020 Ladi and her husband were accosted by armed Fulani men on their way to the farm. She was three months pregnant at the time. As her husband struggled with their attackers, she was able to escape and ran to her community to find help. Hunters went to the farm and returned with Bulus’ lifeless body.

After her husband was buried, just as Ladi was trying to put her life together her in-laws came to the house and took away everything in the house leaving her nothing, not even a chair to sit on stating that the property belonged to their brother. As if that was not painful enough, they threatened to go with her children. She was surprised none of them considered she had a baby on the way.

Ladi’s children eventually stopped going to school because she couldn’t pay their fees. One of her children was critically ill, but for kind hearted people who paid the hospital bills, her son

would have died. It was a struggle to fend for three children without a source of income, life became meaningless and difficult.

Through the women fellowship in her church, Ladi was selected as a beneficiary of the AWOS program implemented by Beacon of Hope where she participated in a trauma healing group. After the sessions, Ladi slept like a baby for the first time since her husband died. She was able to eat, sit, talk and laugh with her children for hours without shouting at them nor beating them. Before now she saw her children as the cause of her suffering. She also shared that the sessions provided her the opportunity to share her pain for the first time and listen to the experiences of others. The lesson on forgiveness, helped her surrender the pain she felt and unforgiveness towards the attackers and her in-laws. This brought her great relief.

After the trauma healing sessions, Ladi and other beneficiary widows received economic empowerment training and startup capital. She could not stop the tears from streaming down her cheeks. She went into buying and selling of grains which has helped her tremendously to be self-reliant. Her business is growing and she is able to feed her children, enroll them back in school and meet some other family needs.

Ladi said her life has changed, her relationship with people, especially with her children has improved and her living condition is better. They depend less on others for support. She said “I can see how much God loves me and has a purpose for my life, He sent not only comforting words but manna from heaven”. Ladi mentioned that she is no longer suicidal, she believes the Lord is good and close to us always. God bless AWOS, God bless Beacon of Hope.



Conclusion

Thank you, Marvin and all the supporters of African Widow and Orphan Support, for the sacrifice that is making a whole lot of difference in our communities here in Nigeria. May God's face continue to shine on you.

Beacon of Hope Team

Security Update

14 killed, over 30 injured in fresh herders' attack on Benue communities

No fewer than 14 people were on Wednesday night murdered in two separate attacks by suspected armed herdsmen on Mchia and Mou communities of Logo Local Government Area, of Benue State.

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/09/14-killed-over-30-injured-in-fresh-herders-attack-on-benue-communities>

Six killed in herders' attack on Benue community

Six people were killed on Thursday by suspected Fulani herders in a fresh attack in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State.

<https://punchng.com/six-killed-in-herders-attack-on-benue-community/>

Herders invade Benue community, kill three villagers

Suspected herders, on Saturday, invaded a community in Tse Numgbera, in the Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, and allegedly killed three people during the attack.

<https://punchng.com/herders-invade-benue-community-kill-three-villagers/>

4 killed, scores injured as Boko Haram invades Ngulde community in Borno

At least four people have been killed including the Chief Imam of Gima, with several others sustained various degrees of injury when armed members of Boko Haram terrorists invaded Ngulde Community of Askira -Uba local government area in Borno

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/09/4-killed-scores-injured-as-boko-haram-invades-ngulde-community-in-borno/>

Community leaders, others killed in series of attacks in Plateau

Not less than seven persons have been killed in three communities of Takai, Kunet and Kulias of Bokkos Local Government Area of Plateau State by armed men who invaded the communities within less than a week

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/10/just-in-community-leaders-others-killed-in-series-of-attacks-in-plateau/>

Abduction of clerics, attack on Churches in Nigeria

Between June 2021 and June 2022 in Nigeria, a handful of clerics have been abducted and killed while some regained freedom

<https://thenationonlineng.net/timeline-abduction-of-clerics-attack-on-churches-in-nigeria/>

Mass exodus hits Birnin-Gwari, as terrorists battle over Damari

THE epicentre of terrorism in Kaduna State, Birnin Gwari, is beginning to witness mass exodus following intensified attempts by warring factions to seize control of the territory

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/08/mass-exodus-hits-birnin-gwari-as-terrorists-battle-over-damari/>

Seven dead in attack on Chibok community in northeast Nigeria

Chibok first came to the limelight when Boko Haram abducted more than 200 schoolgirls from the community's school in April 2014

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/4/seven-dead-in-attack-on-chibok-community-in-northeast-nigeria>