

## **Beacon of Hope Initiative progress Report**

### **AWOS Program Update from October 2022 to April 2023**

Program implementation was carried out in twenty (20) communities of eight (8) States in northern and central regions of Nigeria from August 2022 to April 2023. A total of 1,400 beneficiaries were reached. Beneficiaries reached were from the following states:

1. **Adamawa State:** Dong and Kofare communities were reached through Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) Universal Reformed Christian Church (URCC) Women Fellowship.
2. **Bauchi State:** Dunga community was reached through Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) Women Fellowship.
3. **Benue State:** Agee, Mbakpoghul, Mzughul, Shikaan and Yeke communities were reached through Universal Reformed Christian Church (URCC) Women fellowship.
4. **Borno State:** Dungi and Debiro communities were reached through EYN Women Fellowship.
5. **Kaduna State:** Angwa Misisi and Stonje community reached through Evangelical Church of Winning All (ECWA) Women Fellowship
6. **Nasarawa State:** Agyaragu, Angwa Ali and Brumbrum communities were reached through Evangelical Reformed Christian Church (ERCC) women fellowship
7. **Plateau State:** Kwall, Kpasho, and Lah-wal-Gut communities were reached through Evangelical Church of Winning All (ECWA) and Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN), Women Fellowship. Respectively.
8. **Taraba State:** Zena and Nwonyo communities were reached through the Evangelical Reformed Christian Church (ERCC) women fellowship.

#### **Breakdown of beneficiaries are as follows:**

- Widows reached with trauma healing and Economic Empowerment - 600
- Orphans provided with school scholarship - 400
- Caregivers trained on providing of care and support to orphans - 400

#### **Orphan support/ Caregivers training**

Traumatized orphans brought about by violence or activities of terrorists were selected from target communities through women fellowship committees and community leaders. Priority was given to double orphans. Orphans were supported with school fees of fifty-four thousand naira (estimated \$108) each covering a three-year period. Caregivers shared that the support provided

to orphans was timely, as beneficiary orphans were able to enroll back into school which was a challenge before this intervention. The orphans are happily learning in school with improved ability to read and write. Caregivers were also trained on how to provide support to their orphans and other children in their care such as education, psychosocial care, healthcare, nutrition, and legal protection, clothing, health and housing. Some caregivers said the support was simply God at work.

Dan Aaron an orphan from Dunga community said, *“Now I know God’s love is real. Support came from someone I don’t know and just like that I’m back to school. I will never forget this”*



**Orphans at Kpasho community**



**Caregivers training at Mbakpoghul community**

### **Economic Empowerment to selected widows**

A total of 600 traumatized widows were trained on basic business principles covering topics such as choosing an appropriate business, developing a business plan, marketing, money management, business ethics and proper record keeping among others. Each trained beneficiary received forty-five thousand (\$90) as micro business startup capital. Training and provision of economic empowerment grant provided the incentive needed by the widows to engage in self-help ventures. The economic support enabled the widows to earn some income and meet some needs of their families. This has greatly reduced dependance on others who sometimes take advantage of them. These beneficiaries are involved in crop farming, animal rearing, sale of grains/tubers/vegetables/soup ingredients and food selling. Beneficiaries were also introduced to cooperative savings and loan.



**Terkumbu working on her rice farm**



Martha on her yam farm



Economic empowerment training at Yeke community

### Trauma Healing

Trauma healing sessions were held with 600 traumatized widows from target communities using “*Healing the Wounds of Trauma: How the Church Can Help*”, a manual developed by the Trauma Healing Institute of the American Bible Society.

Some of the widows shared finding the lessons very helpful. They shared their joy of having an opportunity to express and share their pain freely for the first time. They were encouraged listening to the experiences of others and praying for one another. Some mentioned finding some relief after making up their minds to forgive those that caused them pain. They also shared of being reminded that God still loves them and has great plans for them. They appreciated the opportunity to participate

Japari Yampaya a widow from Kofare community said, “*After the session where I took my pain to the cross, I felt as if a heavy burden weighing me down was lifted. I felt relieved*”.



Trauma healing session at Yeke community



Healing session at Mbakpoghul community

## **DORCAS' STORY**

Dorcas Atime a 39-year-old widow with 4 children from Ngira community of Benue State lost her husband due to an attack by armed herdsmen in 2016 while they were residing in Taraba State. Properties worth huge sums were destroyed with many people injured. Following the attack, Dorcas and her children were forced to flee the community and relocated back to her family home in Ngira Benue State. As a widow with no source of livelihood, life became very difficult for her family. When Dorcas looked at her hungry children and their living condition, she became devastated and often cried. She was angry with those who put her in this state and wished she could avenge her husband. She struggled each day doing odd jobs to provide food for her children and sometimes meet some other needs. Life lost its meaning.

Dorcas was selected as a beneficiary through the women fellowship when the AWOS project was implemented in her community. She went through the healing group sessions and economic empowerment training. At the end of the healing group sessions, Dorcas saw that she harboured unforgiveness in her heart and decided to forgive all who caused her pain; this took off weight from her heart and brought her great relief. She said at a point in her life she felt God had abandoned her, but now she knows He is with her and still loves her. She also participated actively in the business training sessions where she was taught basic business principles and provided with a startup capital of N45,000 (estimated \$90). She now sells yams and is happy making an income. She joined a Village savings and loans group in her area where she actively saves and hopes to expand her business.

With her income, she is now able to meet some of the family's basic needs and can afford to send her children to school. She is happy not depending on others like before and also glad to help others. This she said has improved her self-worth.

In her words; "I am very grateful to AWOS and Beacon of Hope Initiative for this assistance rendered to me. This has given meaning to my life once again".



## **Dorcas selling her yams**

### **News Update**

#### **Dozens killed in Nigeria amid clashes between herders and farmers**

The attack happened on Wednesday in Umogidi community in Benue State, where tit-for-tat clashes are common between nomadic herders and settled farmers competing for land and resources. “The 46 casualties were from the bodies of victims found and retrieved. Many people are still missing, so the number of those killed may be higher,” Paul Hembra, security advisor to Benue State governor,

<https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20230407-dozens-killed-in-nigeria-amid-clashes-between-herders-and-farmers>

#### **Fresh attack on Niger communities: 4 soldiers, 6 others killed by bandits**

Bandits have again launched a fresh attack on some communities in Niger State, killing 11 people, including a Major in the Nigerian Army and three other soldiers.

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/03/fresh-attack-on-niger-communities-4-soldiers-6-others-killed-by-bandits/>

#### **Armed groups kill dozens in Nigeria’s Benue state**

At least 74 people were killed in two separate attacks by gunmen this week in Benue state, north central Nigeria, local officials and police have said.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/4/8/armed-groups-kill-dozens-in-nigerias-benue-state>

#### **Gunmen attack Benue community, kill seven people**

At least seven people were on Thursday killed by suspected gunmen in Abagana in Makurdi, Benue State capital, the police have said. The police spokesperson in the state, Alele Catherine, said several people sustained injuries following the attack which occurred around 10 p.m.

<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/576938-gunmen-attack-benue-community-kill-seven-people.html>

### **Boko Haram Terrorists Launch Attack On Borno Community, Kill Farmer, Abduct Eight Others**

Fighters of the Boko Haram sect have invaded farmlands in Makilwe village, Jere Local Government Area of Borno State, killing one farmer. Sources said the insurgents armed with sophisticated weapons sneaked into the farms on Tuesday evening.

About eight farmers were also abducted by the terrorists. According to one of the sources, families of those abducted have been contacted by the sect who demanded millions of Naira as ransom.

<https://saharareporters.com/2023/01/18/breaking-boko-haram-terrorists-launch-attack-borno-community-kill-farmer-abduct-eight>