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Exploring Humanitarian Efforts for Social Change in Nigeria
through the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in Abuja

A Research Paper Presented by:
ANIEKAN BASSEY UDO (694917)

(Nigeria)

MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Human Rights, Gender & Conflict Studies Social Justice Perspectives

Major:
SJP

Supervisor:
THEA HILHORST

Second Reader:
WIL HOUT

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Inquiries:

International Institute of Social Studies
P.O. BOX 29776
2502 LT The Hague
The Netherlands

t: +31 70 426 0460
e: info@iss.nl
w: www.iss.nl
fb: [http://. facebook.com/iss.nl](http://facebook.com/iss.nl)
Twitter: [@issnl](https://twitter.com/issnl)

Location:

Kortenaerkade 12
2518 AX The Hague
The Netherlands

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List of Acronyms

CSOs:	Civil Society Organizations
EU:	European Union
FCT:	Federal Capital Territory
FGM:	Female Genital Mutilation
FIDA:	International Federation of Women Lawyers
GBV:	Gender-Based Violence
IOM:	International Organization for Migration
LGA:	Local Government Area
MICS:	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
NAPTIP:	National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons
NBS:	National Bureau of Statistics
NCWS:	National Council of Women Societies
NDHS:	National Demographic and Health Survey
NDHS:	Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey
NGOs:	Non-Governmental Organizations
NHDF:	Nigerian Health and Development Foundation
NPC:	National Population Commission
UN:	United Nations
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VAPP:	Violence Against Persons (Prohibition)
VAWG:	Violence Against Women and Girls
WRAPA:	Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative

Abstract

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) constitute a major challenge in Nigeria, with women and girls facing the alarming rate of violence and abuse. This situation necessitated increased humanitarian services through International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Nigeria, Stand to End Rape Initiative (STER), Nigeria Police Gender Unit, CLEEN Foundation, ActionAid Nigeria, including European Union-United Nations Spotlight Initiative, with the aim of addressing the issues of GBV and enhance social change across communities in Nigeria. To this end, this study examines the humanitarian efforts of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in combating and fostering social change in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The study utilized qualitative approach, incorporating data from relevant stakeholders and GBV Survivors through interview as well as secondary sources. The data was analysed thematically using content analysis and identifies recurring themes. The study is anchored on empowerment theory as its point of departure. This theory is relevant because of the initiative's framework directed towards addressing and empowering and reintegrating GBV Survivors. Findings from the investigation reveals that the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative contributed immensely to the elimination and empowerment of Gender-Based Violence cases in Abuja through legal framework, awareness/campaign, provision of psychological support system for GBV survivors. Challenges militating against effectiveness of the initiative were also identified, this include, limited reach in rural communities, poor coordination among stakeholders, cultural stigma associated with GBV, and inadequate funding. The study recommends among others for expansion of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to cover more rural areas, collaborate with religious and traditional rulers to reduce cultural stigma militating the fighting against GBV, and increase in finance. These measures if properly implemented will go a long way to address Gender-Based Violence issues in Abuja and Nigeria in general.

Relevance to Development Studies

This study titled: "Humanitarian effort for Social Change in Nigeria through the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in Abuja" is significant to Development Studies. Through the examination of targeted interventions, especially on prevalence cases of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), it contributes to larger coverage of social and economic development. Through fostering legal framework and collaboration, focusing on empowering women and girls, the initiative address key areas like gender equality, social inclusion, and human right abuse, which are cardinal components in development studies.

Keywords: Humanitarian Aid, Social Change, EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Women Empowerment, Survivor Support Programs

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Chapter 1: Introduction

There have been a growing issues of Gender-Based Violence in Nigeria in recent years, particularly among women and girls coupled with other human rights related challenges which have generated debates among scholars, analysts including human rights activists. Report however shows that by 2022, more than 30 percent of women and girls aged between 15-49 have so far experienced physical violence in Nigeria, while 15 percent have also faced sexual violence (Adebayo, Johnson & Smith, 2022). In view of the gravity and dynamics of these challenge, the European Union (EU) and United Nations (UN) Spotlight Initiative was launched in 2017 with the aim of curbing issues of Gender-Based Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) across various regions in Nigeria. The initiative represents a humanitarian service primarily funded by the European Union and implemented through a partnership with the United Nations, relevant institutions in Nigeria including Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), to enhance social change in Nigeria.

The EU-UN Spotlight Initiative constitute of six (6) pillars, ranging from prevention, protection, legal reform, quality services, data management, as well as women empowerment. The relevant stakeholders in include, Civil Society Organizations (COSs), Ministry of Women Affairs, International Federation of Women Lawyers, (FIDA Nigeria), Nigeria Governor's Wives Forum (NGWF), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Nigeria, Police Force, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), community leaders among others (Okafor & Ibrahim, 2023). With these categories of humanitarian services under the auspices of EU-UN Spotlight, the organization have been actively engaged in tackling issues of violence against women and girls, with the aid of restoring rights of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) within the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja and other regions across Nigeria. Significant aspect of the initiative is to establish

legal reforms and create policy framework in collaboration with Nigerian government with the objective of reducing Gender-Based Violence issues in Nigeria at least 30 percent by 2030.

In the light of the above, therefore, this study examines the humanitarian role of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The study evaluates the perceptions of communities in Abuja as it concerns the measures adopted by EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, and its effectiveness in addressing Gender-Based Violence in Nigeria and Abuja particular.

1.1 Justification and relevance of this research

This study is considered timely and important in view of the prevalence of Gender-Based Violence, harmful traditional practices including domestic violence perpetrated against women and girls in in recent years. Statistics from the National Population Commission reveals that, over 30 percent of Nigerian women faces various forms of Gender Based Violence (NPC, 2023). However, assessing the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, which was launched to address such burning issues is important as the intervention aimed towards transforming social change and harmful cultural practices through targeted humanitarian efforts.

Adegoke, Okafor and Abubakar (2023) emphasize that in Nigeria, cultural norms contribute immensely to escalating issues of Gender-Based Violence, as traditional beliefs frequently result to gender inequality including violence. For instance, customs such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and early marriage persist unabated and regarded as major challenges facing women and girls in Nigeria. Statistics from World Health Organization (2022) reveals that about 25 percent of girls in Nigeria get married before the age of 18, this is contrary to existing Child Right Acts in Nigeria, and explains the dynamics trends and practices of Gender Based violence (WHO, 2022). In addition, there are profound cases of male dominance and female submission among various ethnic groups in Nigeria. These customs practices often lead to

domestic violence where women are being forced to leave marital homes for inability to give birth to certain gender most especially, the male sex.

The relevance of this study is apparent in view of the components and frameworks designed by EU-UN Spotlight Initiatives such as Legal and policy formwork, strengthening institutions, data and monitoring, access to essential services among others. For instance, the EU-UN Spotlight collaborates with Nigerian government to strengthen legal frameworks through reform. The Initiative also supports adoption of Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act in some Nigerian states, which makes some cultural norms such as underage marriage a criminal offence, including domestic violence and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Similarly, the relevance of this study stem from the EU-UN Spotlight community-based programme and awareness, ranging from radio shows, community dialogues, promotion of gender equity and respect for the rights of women and girls, as well as engagement with traditional and religious leaders from various communities. Notable among these initiative is the collaboration between Spotlight Initiative religious leaders in Kaduna State through establishment of campaigns against child marriage within communities in the state.

Furthermore, the relevance and justification for examining the efforts of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja arise from their continuous campaign and advocacy for social change against Gender Based Violence across various communities. The organization was seen in both remote and satellite communities in recent years such as Gwagwalada, Kuje, Dei-Dei, Nyanya, Bwari, Mararaba, Gwagwa, Kubwa, among others. This however, serves as motivating factors to examine the perceptions of communities in the FCT, Abuja to ascertain the measured adopted and its effectiveness of in eliminating the challenges of Gender-Based Violence.

1.2 Background to the Study

The EU-UN Spotlight Initiative is an international programme designed to eradicate all forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) by 2030. It represents a dedication and collaboration between European Union and the United Nations. Specifically, the initiative targets Gender-Based Violence (GBV), which have been a major sources of concern in Nigeria over the years, including urban centres such as Abuja (NAPTIP, 2023). The initiative which was established in 2017 and launched in 2019, is dedicated to address all types of violence against women and girls through policy reforms, community engagement, empowerment, and support services. Nigeria represent one of the sixteen (16) countries earmarked by EU-UN Spotlight initiative, which have recorded significant in humanitarian supports, highlighting the necessity to address age-long cultural norms and other forms of violence against women and girls in Nigeria.

There have been a significant increase and reports in cases of gender-based violence Nigeria in recent years. Prominent among the cases in the report from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, which indicates more than 30 percent of women and girls in Nigeria ranging from 15-19 years experienced physical violence (NBS, 2023). Similarly, the National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) reports that 37% of married women in Nigeria faces emotional and psychological trauma, physical and sexual abuse including violence from their spouse (National Population Commission [NPC] & ICF, 2019). This alarming figures justifies the need for requisite intervention to safe and empower the victims of such circumstances. Therefore, Spotlight Initiative is aimed at eliminating these challenges through prevention, protection, legal reform, quality services, data management, including women empowerment. In the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, the initiative has made tremendous progress to apply the six (6) pillar strategic approach, by collaborating with both government and

Non-Government organizations, as well community leaders to strengthen the frameworks and enhance the welfare of welfare of violence survivors.

Notable among the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative is the legal frameworks and policies to enhance and safeguard women and girls from violence. Through this framework, the organization supports the implementation of existing laws such as, Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act and promote the adoption of such laws across the state level. Legal reform is vital to the establishment of enabling environment in enhancing gender equality and eliminating Gender-Based Violence (GBV) (Obianwu, Goga, Iwuagwu, Ogunsola, Alayande & Awosika-Olumo, 2020). Similarly, the reform is aimed at creating a template for standardization of legal practices across states in Nigeria to strengthen the protection and justice for gender-based violence survivors. In the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, social workers, law enforcement officers, and healthcare providers, have been trained at various categories through EU-UN Spotlight to handle gender-based violence cases effectively. Recent data shows that over 6,000 service providers in Nigeria have been trained recently through this EU-UN Spotlight initiative, which have added value in proper management of cases and support for gender-based violence survivors (United Nations Population Fund, 2021).

To promote integration of gender-based violence survivors, the Spotlight Initiative established a One-Stop Centers in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja which provide a well secure and supportive environment to survivors, thereby making the survivors free from all forms stigmatization and discrimination. Report indicates that, so far the centre have supported more than two hundred thousand (200,000) women and girls across with various forms of categories of violence-related issues in Nigeria (UNFPA, 2021).

However, despite these significant results, the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative is facing several challenges truncating prospects towards achieving its targeted objectives. Prominent among them include, poor coordination from stakeholders and community members, insufficient funding (Adeyemi & Abubakar, 2020). This necessitate further research to succinctly juxtapose the efforts of the initiative in Nigeria.

It is in view of the above that this study investigates the humanitarian efforts of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in promoting social change in Abuja. The study specifically explores the perceptions of community members in Abuja on the measures adopted through the initiative and its effectiveness in combating gender-based violence.

1.3 Research Objectives and Questions

Primarily, this study seeks to examine the humanitarian role of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative for Social Change in Nigeria. However, the specific objectives include, to;

- i) examine the nature of existing cultural norms associated with Gender-Based Violence against Women and Girls in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.
- ii) assess the way of community members in Abuja perceived the measures adopted by the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in Abuja.
- iii) evaluate participants' perception on the effectiveness of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in Abuja.
- iv) identify the challenges militating against the effectiveness of measures adopted by EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in addressing Gender-Based Violence among Women and Girls in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Research Questions

The underline questions were raised to guide this study.

- i) What are the nature of existing cultural norms associated with Gender-Based Violence among Women and Girls in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja?
- ii) How do the community members in Abuja perceived the measures adopted by the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative?
- iii) How do the participants in Abuja perceive the effectiveness of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative?
- iv) What are the challenges militating against the effectiveness of measures adopted by EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in addressing Gender-Based Violence among Women and Girls in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja?

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focused the period from 2017-2023, this period is significant as it marks the beginning and establishment of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in Nigeria. The period also represents the alarming increase in gender based violence cases in Nigeria as earlier reported and cited by National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). In addition, the chosen period will aid rigorous investigation on the effectiveness of the six (6) pillars of Spotlight Initiative as it concerns gender-based violence cases in Nigeria.

The geographical coverage of this study is the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Abuja being the Capital City of Nigeria is home to six (6) Area Councils, such as Abuja Municipal Area Council, Gwagwalada, Bwari, Kuje, Kwali and Abaji Area Council respectively. However, few communities were randomly selected for this investigation. The selection was based on the degree of cultural norms practices as well as reported cases of gender based violence in recent years.

Notable issues discussed in the study include nature of existing cultural norms in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja; perspectives of community members as it concerns the measures adopted by UN-UN Spotlight; effectiveness of existing measures in place, and the challenges faced in the implementation of such measures in promoting social change and wellbeing of the gender-based survivors among communities in Abuja.

1.5 Chapter Outline

This work is structured into five chapters. The first chapter (Chapter One) introduces the topic, it outlines the objectives of the research and questions, it further discusses the justification and relevance of the study. The scope of the work and finally provide an outline of the study. The second chapter presents the conceptual framework, review related literature on the subject under investigation, and explore the theoretical framework that guides the research. Chapter Three itemize the research design, including the population, sample, and sampling techniques utilized in the study. It also describes the data collection and analysis methods, address reliability and validity concerns, and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the study, along with ethical considerations and positionality. The fourth chapter is the presentation and analysis of data. Finally, Chapter Five provides a summary of the findings, draw conclusions, and offer recommendations based on the research outcomes.

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature, Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

2.0 Introduction

This chapter define key words used in the study, with a review of scholarly studies as it concerns topic under investigation. It also discusses the relevant theory utilized for better understanding of the study.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Culture

Culture is generally define as a way of life. It refers to common beliefs, norms, practices and values that define the way people behave in a society. Culture comprises physical elements such as traditions, social behaviours, intangible features like languages and rituals. Culture, as define by Geertz, is an inherited practices transferred trough emblematic systems which enable individuals to relate, preserve, communicate and understand perspectives about life (Geertz, 1973). On the other hand, Hofstede reiterated that culture is the way and manner through which people perceive and react to certain happening in their environment. Therefore, cultural practices unite people together and promote common understanding within the society.

2.1.2 Cultural Change

Cultural change is the process of converting common norms, values, beliefs, and societal practices over a period of time. This occur through various means like technological advancement, social interactions, economic and political systems. In the view of Giddens (2009), cultural change happens gradually or suddenly and could be as a result of internal development, such as exposure to various culture, migration and external influence such as globalization. Therefore, cultural change is the transformation of cultural practices from status quo through social dynamics.

2.1.3 Gender

Gender is the range of biological, mental, physical and behavioural characteristics relating to feminine and masculine i.e (female and male). Just like sex, gender refer a social construct that inspire personal identity and various roles in society. Traditionally, family gender roles where the men provide and women takes charge of caregivers are increasingly being challenged as a result of superiority complex. However, gender is connected with the societal expectations or biological sex and intersects with various social categories such as class and race (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004).

2.1.4 Gender-Based Violence

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is another concept that defies for universal acceptable definitions. This is due to the scholarly perceptions and experience at different circumstances. However, gender-based violence is primary seen as a cultural and harmful practices towards individuals as a result of gender which incorporates different types of emotional, sexual, physical and psychological abuse. Gender-based violence also involves, human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual assaults. These practices commonly perpetrated against women and girls. Its effects on the life of individual cannot be overemphasized. According to World Health Organization (2022), gender-based violence weakens the health and overall wellbeing of people resulting to disruption and psychological trauma. García-Moreno, Zimmerman and Morris-Gehring (2015) stated that gender-based violence is a significant violence of the right of the people and present enormous challenge towards gender equality.

2.2 Review of Related Literature

2.2.1 Nature and Prevalence of Cultural Practices associated with Gender-Based Violence

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a prevalent and dynamic issues exist in cultural practices and norms bedevelling women and girls across different states in Nigeria. The influence of cultural norms on gender-based violence is significant, as the practices mostly intensify and expose women and girls to violence. Cultural norms and traditional practices in Nigeria play vital role in the way and manner people exhibit attitudes toward gender and violence. Recent data shows that about 30 percent of women in Nigeria have experienced various forms Gender-Based Violence as different times (National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, 2023). This indicates the prevalent nature of cultural norms associated with women and girls and its significant impact on persistent violence on women and girls in Nigeria. Is it however important to note that, cultural and harmful practices, notably early marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) are mostly endemic in certain states and regions of Nigeria. According to World Health Organization (WHO) reports, approximately 20-25 percent of women and girls in Nigerian aged between 15 to 49 years have experienced female genital mutilation at various times, with North East and South Western Nigeria constitute the highest cases (WHO, 2022). The offence of such practices (Female Genital Mutilation) sometimes tend to justify it on the ground that cultural beliefs constitute purity and social acceptance, despite its harmful consequences on the victims. In the case of early marriage, most perpetrators justify the practice on the basis of assisting the female child from indulging in social vices such as fornication and other unforeseen circumstances. This practices affects them economically and educationally, thereby making them very vulnerable to Gender-Based Violence. A report by UNICEF shows that about 44 percent of girls mostly from Northern Nigeria get married before they assume the age of 18 years (UNICEF, 2021).

The consequences of cultural norms are enormous among other domestic violence coupled with sexual harassment. The International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) earlier report in Lagos indicates that more over 63 per of women experienced domestic violence at various points in their life time (FIDA, 2022). On the other hand, a report by Women’s Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA) reveals that cultural practices which supports domestic violence in most homes today contribute immensely to unabated rise in the harmful behaviour, while many of these cases are unreported as a result of social stigma and belief that such practices is private or personal business. This has derailed arrest by security agencies such as Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) whenever such cases were being reported (WRAPA, 2021).

Similarly, aside domestic violence, another significant and bothering challenges is sexual violence which continue unabated with severe concern. The Nigerian government has established various laws in the past, including the introduction of Nigeria Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP Act) of 2015 aimed at addressing all forms of Gender-Based Violence, however, challenges persist particularly as it concerns cultural barriers truncating reporting and seeking justice for victims of such circumstances. Reports from the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) shows that 70 percent of women and girls facing domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence do not report to relevant authorities. Reasons for this development is however link to lack of trust in the Nigerian justice system, where less privilege are mostly denied justice for powerful individuals, while others fail to report as a result of stigmatization in the society (NDHS, 2022).

2.2.2 Perspectives on the Measures adopted by EU-UN Spotlight Initiative

The EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, employs various measures in an attempt to eliminate various forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) worldwide (Nigeria inclusive), where cultural practices and other forms Gender-Based Violence (GBV) continues unabated. As stated earlier, gender-based violence appears to be more profound in social, cultural, and economic aspect of life, constitute significant challenge to the autonomy of the victims, dignity, health, security and social life. The EU-UN Spotlight Initiative employs multinational approach ranging from reforming the legal framework, fostering social, awareness, as well as support through empowerment programs to survivors of gender-based violence.

The EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in Nigeria developed six (6) key pillars as measures toward addressing gender-based violence. This include; creating and enforcing laws and policies, strengthening institutions, promotion of gender-equitable social norms, providing quality services through empowerment the survivors. The initiative aimed to complement and align the state laws with the international human rights standards to enhance the existing framework put in place by Nigerian government to address gender-based violence issues. To Akinola (2020) the initiative adopts Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act, in Enugu State, and have been very relevant and efficient in protecting the wellbeing of the survivors.

In Sokoto and Adamawa states, the Spotlight Initiative also established community-based programs with the integration of religious and traditional leaders as major drivers and advocate in the restoration of the rights of women and girls in the states. This initiative is monumental in the efforts towards addressing social and cultural norms. To ensure a long term plan of this initiative, both states was reported to have been integrate Spotlight programs into the State's Islamic Law tagged: 'Husbah'. The Hisbah is an established institution with Islamic principles across Northern

States of Nigeria which function in form of community-oriented police force within the context of Islamic law. This institution upholds moral standard on Islamic principles and social order. To this, all forms of maltreatment and domestic violence such as wife beating is being address under this jurisdiction. (Ojo & Fapohunda, 2021). This becomes important as such changes to address gender-based violence at the grassroots level foster long-term framework in the attitude of the society as it concern gender-based violence.

The Spotlight Initiative create awareness-oriented platforms by working closely with relevant institutions in Nigeria such as International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), local community (religious and traditional rulers), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Human Right activists. This platform enhances the identification and reporting of cases of gender-based violence across communities in Nigeria (EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, 2023).

Another significant milestone measures put in place by the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative is capacity building. Capacity building Initiative focus on improving skills and resources of service providers, such as social workers, health care workers, and legal professionals. For instance, in Lagos State, the initiative has organized and funded training sessions funded to over 550 professionals to effectively support GBV survivors. This initiative contributes to over 25 percent increase to gender-based violence cases reported in recent years (Bello, 2022).

In addition, the EU-UN Spotlight data collection represent a landmark achievement towards eradicating gender-based violence in Nigeria. This programme implemented in various states, enabling accuracy in tracking the menace associated with gender-based violence. This framework has proved to be effective in so many states in Nigeria with increase in report of cases of GBV. For instance, data collection in Bauchi State in 2022, indicates 25 percent reduction of gender-based violence cases following data collection intervention by the Spotlight (Okonkwo et

al., 2023). This initiative is expected to decrease the rate of cultural norms and other forms of violence practices in view of the high level of awareness and numbers training enjoin by social workers and healthcare practitioners across states in Nigeria.

Moreover, the empowerment for women and girls through creating economic opportunities and educating the gender-based violence survivors by Spotlight Initiative has been significant. The program is aimed towards retention rates for women and girls and addressing school enrollment issues facing the GBV survivors, which is particularly common in Northern states of Nigeria. This initiative recorded success over the years with about 12 percent increase in school attendance for victims of gender-based violence. This was complemented with provision of vocational training and access to microcredit for gender-based violence, and has reduced their level of economic dependency (Eze and Nwankwo, 2023).

2.2.3 Participants' Perception on the Effectiveness of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative

An assessment of the effectiveness of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative indicate significant success, though with mixed outcomes. The strategies adopted by the initiative which include community-oriented awareness, survivors' access to support, empowerment program and legal protections was reported to have reached more than 500,000 beneficiaries in Nigeria through community-outreach programs, while over 12,000 survivors have also been able to receive assistance through a well-trained health works and personnel of the law enforcement agencies. According to Olatunde and Musa (2023) the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative have been very effective and have improved the awareness of gender-based violence among participants, across various states in Nigeria and urban centres such as the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, in partnership with government agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations which have increased over the years (Olatunde & Musa, 2023). In the survey conducted by Ibrahim and Adeoye (2022) to evaluate how the participants felt about

the awareness of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative on gender based violence in Nigeria, the investigation reveals that about 68 percent of them agree that the initiative's awareness have so far contributed to changes in behaviours among members in certain communities.

Okeke and Olayemi (2023) noted that critical pillar of EU-UN Spotlight initiative which appear to be very effective over the years is the legal and institutional frameworks which is aimed at combating Gender-Based Violence. According to the scholars, the Spotlight Initiative have so far influenced the enactment as well as enforcement of laws to a greater extent and protect women and girls in Nigeria (most especially the GBV survivors). The author made reference to the establishment relevant frameworks such as Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act, which has seen significant implementation across states in Nigeria as a result of the initiative's increase in advocacy.

Similarly, data collection is another significant aspects of the initiative that have recorded success in recent years. Nwankwo and Adesina (2024) stated that, the Spotlight Initiative has contributed immensely to the availability of data on Gender-Based Violence across states in Nigeria. The initiative has also enhanced data collection with improved and proper monitoring and evaluation of Gender-Based Violence issues, and have assisted in informed policy decisions as well as resource allocation.

In addition, the Spotlight Initiative have also performed credibly through the provision of support services for Gender-Based Violence survivors. Okonkwo and Ibrahim (2023) reiterated that, the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative led to increase in the availability of legal aid, shelters as well as provision of psychosocial support for GBV survivors. These humanitarian efforts have been very effective and in no small measure help the survivors in rebuilding their lives and also help them to seek justice.

Finally, the engagement of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) by the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to enhance the fight against gender-based violence have yielded positive results. Balogun and Olorunfemi (2023) stated that the Civil Society Organizations's collaboration with Spotlight have been effective in community mobilization in their advocacy for policy changes most especially across states in Nigeria lacking adequate support system from the government. The knowledge of the CSOs in the rural community and networking system have been very vital in making sure they reach out to numerable people in the targeted communities.

2.2.4 Challenges Militating Against the Effectiveness of measures adopted by EU-UN Spotlight Initiative

Despite the high level of success recorded by the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in Nigeria, authors have lament about the incessant and inherent contradictions that have bedeviled the initiative to effectively implement its framework of combating Gender-Based Violence and enhance social change in most part of Nigeria including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. however, significant among the challenge is the inherent sociocultural barriers in many regions that continue the practice of Gender-Based Violence unabated. Ukpong (2023) reveals that there are inherent cultural norms practices in certain communities that refused to welcome the EU-UN Spotlight initiative. Some cultural norms exhibit by these communities include male preference over girl child, and have also be a source of domestic violence, where the head of the family expects that the wife gave birth male child by all means.

Secondly, in some states particularly in South West and South-South regions such as Lagos and Rivers, there have been incessant challenges to related to Gender-Based Violence. These states constitute high level of awareness as well as institutional support in the area of gender equality in the urban areas, but faced with the issues of sexual harassment and domestic violence in work

places. However, the division in the rural-urban areas further complicate the reach of EU-UN Spotlight initiative as well as its impact in such location, due to the fact that the rural areas lack basic necessary infrastructure that support detailed response of Gender-Based Violence mechanisms (Adeniran & Obioha, 2022). Reports of the National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) 2018, states that about 30-35 percent of women and girls across in Nigeria have experienced physical violence abuse, and 11 percent experienced sexual violence-related cases (NPC & ICF, 2019). Unfortunately, despite this alarming statistics, most of these cases are underreported due to fear of stigmatization and cultural barriers. In some Northern states, like Kebbi, Borno and Yobe, with severe cases of Boko Haram insurgency, the rate of Gender-Based Violence in such areas is very high as a result of conflict and displacement. There are indication that conflict-related sexual violence is very common in such areas and have been a major source of concern, as displaced women and girls in such areas are actually vulnerable (UN Women, 2020).

On the other hand, there have been challenges of funding, which constitute major obstacle to the success of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative. While there are existing measures by the European Union backed by the United Nations to effectively finance the initiative, it is however obvious that, the existing challenges in Nigeria and other targeted countries exceed the available resources meant to address the humanitarian services. Omotoso (2023) stressed that, a lots of grassroots organizations, critical to the success of the initiative continue to struggle and faced with funding, which affects the capacity of the implementation, coupled with complex nature of the administrative requirements as imposed by international donors, which makes it difficult for smaller organizations to navigate.

As a result of complex nature of socio-political and economic factors of Nigerian state, the initiative finds it difficult to properly coordinate with relevant stakeholders in combating gender-

based violence and enhance social change. Okechukwu (2023) stated that, to properly address Gender-Based Violence, there is a need for a multi-sectoral approach which will include, healthcare, education, justice, and social services. However, this coordination is lacking and often results in ineffective responses from the EU-UN Spotlight, as the entire process turns out to be a one-man affair. For the Spotlight Initiative to effectively achieve success, there is a need for relevant stakeholders to harmoniously work together, but this is not the case with the initiative.

On the other hand, the approach adopted by the initiative in data collection and monitoring has been widely faulted by scholars. Adebola (2024), stressed that the organization's reliance on quantitative methods as indicators to measure success recorded in social change does not necessarily provide a true picture of the situation of the challenges. For instance, using reported cases of gender-based violence across communities as justification for measuring the level of success of the initiative might be right, because there are lots of cases of various forms of cultural norms, harmful practices, domestic violence and sexual harassment that are underreported, mostly as a result of stigmatization. Similarly, heavily reliance on external consultants for monitoring and evaluation on the cases of gender-based violence is an outright disconnection as regards to the data collected and real success, because the external consultants have little or no idea of local context compared to community members, traditional or religious leaders from certain communities.

2.2.5 Gap in Literature

Existing literature on humanitarian efforts for social change in Nigeria through the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative shows immense contributions in understanding Gender-Based Violence (GBV) as well as the outcome of the initiative. Meanwhile, a critical examination of the frameworks designed by the initiative to effectively eliminate gender-based violence were not fully implemented particularly as it concerns the inherent and prevalent nature of cultural norms in the Federal Capital Territory,

Abuja. While previous studies have largely discussed the mechanisms adopted by the EU-UN Spotlight and its present results, they failed to adequately examine the means and manner through which such frameworks relate with various diverse cultural contexts from certain communities as well as the dynamics of gender-based violence experienced by women and girls across various states in Nigeria.

For example, Akinola (2021) in his study titled: “Legislative reforms and gender-based violence in Nigeria: The role of the Spotlight Initiative” identifies significant influence of legislative reforms in combating issues of Gender-Based Violence. However, the study does not critically evaluate how such reforms implemented at the local level and how resistant of certain cultural norms/practices will challenge its effectiveness. Secondly, Okeke (2022), in his study titled: “Strengthening institutional response to gender-based violence in Nigeria: Insights from the Spotlight Initiative” examines the institutional responses to gender-based violence, but lacks comprehensive investigation of how such responses help eliminate cultural dynamics of Gender-Based Violence across states in Nigeria.

The current study fills this gap by examining the effectiveness of the implementation of the Spotlight Initiative’s frameworks in eliminating issues of Gender-Based Violence in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja as well as promoting social change in the area. This was achieved by exploring perspectives of community members on the measures adopted by EU-UN Spotlight Initiative and its effectiveness. Examining the dynamics of cultural contexts of GBV specifically with rural communities gives better understanding with first-hand information about how humanitarian efforts have helped eliminate this ugly menace.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on empowerment theory as its point of departure. Empowerment theory is a framework designed to help individuals and communities to take charge of their wellbeing and drive social change. This theory is propounded by Julian Rappaport in 1981. The theory states the importance to empower in shaping their own futures (Rappaport, 1981).

Basic assumptions of Empowerment Theory

The empowerment theory believes that empowerment is an inherently social, and develop through interactions among community members and groups, while the processes and outcomes largely depends on cultural and socio-political contexts (Zimmerman, 1995). Significant area of the theory is the fact that it considers the relevance of community participation in making decisions. It emphasize for empowerment to occur, communities and individuals must actively connected and discuss issues affecting them. By so doing, it creates a sense of ownership and responsibility with potential relationship with stakeholders leading to meaningful change (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995).

Weakness of the theory

Despite its contribution, empowerment theory is criticized on the basis that it can be exaggeratedly idealistic, bigheaded that community and individuals naturally make empowering decisions is given the opportunity. This assumption failed to consider the dynamics and challenges facing marginalized groups in the society, like cultural barriers, limited resource access, as well as systemic inequality, On the other hand, empowerment theory is sometimes seen as individualistic endeavour, negating the processes required for proper social changes in the society (Carr, 2003).

Relevance of the theory to the study

Empowerment theory is justified and relevant in examining humanitarian efforts for social change, such as that of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, as it concerns elimination of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). The theory prioritizes the importance of building individuals' autonomy and power to exercise their rights and make decisions for wellbeing. However, the Spotlight Initiative aims to eliminate gender-based violence addressing root causes of harmful cultural norms and practices. This initiative can help affected women and girls regain confidence with requisite skills they need to overcome such cultural challenges. For instance, through legal framework of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, the Gender-Based Violence survivors can enjoy justice through the support of the initiative, which ordinarily will not have enjoyed if the survival failed to report or discuss the challenge with relevant institutions, such as Spotlight.

In addition, when cases of cultural norms, and other forms of gender-based violence are being reported to relevant authorities or Spotlight Initiative, it will be properly examined and monitored with a plan of reiterating the survival back into the society which will be accompanied with the necessities to enhance the wellbeing of affected victims. Many survivors have been benefited from this process through skill acquisition programs (especially EU-UN Spotlight livelihood programs) as well as seeking justice,

Chapter 3: Methodology and Method

3.0 Introduction

To achieve the objective of this study, the researcher utilized case study methodology. However, this method is relevant to the understanding of the topic under investigation because it involves the combination of interview and secondary sources such as documents, articles, and other existing data for comparative information. To this end, the methodology approach is pertinent and suitable in explaining the Humanitarian efforts of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in enhancing Social Change in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

3.1 Research Design

The techniques of data collection and design are vital in every scientific investigation, hence, its credence to the understanding of the work and this research is no different. Therefore, the present study adopts a descriptive qualitative design for its investigation. It involves the collection of data through interview from sixteen (16) respondents. Structured interviews were used to capture respondents' opinions. Participants for the interview constitute of key stakeholders involved in the initiative, such as Non-Governmental Organizations, relevant institutions, security agencies and survivors of Gender-Based Violence respectively. The interviews were designed using open-ended questions which allows the participants make detailed explanations, personal perspective on their understanding on the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in Abuja and Nigeria in general. While the data collection for this study involve recording and transcribing of the interviews, then followed by analyzing responses to identify common themes and insights.

In addition, the investigation also made use of oral recording formats of presentation, while the interpretation of this recording was done through phone conversation by the researcher and with the aid of research assistants during the field work. A researcher conducted an interview with

Spotlight Initiative representatives through a phone calls, traditional and religious leaders from selected communities in Abuja, social workers engaged in the program, counselors, as well as human rights activists within Abuja. The discussion strictly focused on humanitarian efforts of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative for social change, particularly in addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

However, all data collected from the interview were subjected to validity and reliability by complementing it with personal observations and secondary sources generated in the course of the investigation.

3.2 Data Collection Method

To succinctly juxtapose the effectiveness of humanitarian role of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in eradicating issues of violence against women and girls in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, a qualitative interview method was utilized by the researcher. It focuses on gathering in-depth interview from various stakeholders, including two representatives from the Spotlight Initiative, two traditional leaders, two religious leaders from the selected communities in Abuja such as Gwagwalada and Jukwe area of the FCT, where issues of cultural norms and domestic violence against women and girls is prevalent. In addition, two social workers and counselors, two human rights activists, and six survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) were selected.

Interview Process

The interviews process was conducted using structured questions which was given to both participants in three categories; Gender-Based Survivors, Stakeholders such as EU-UN Spotlight, government institutions, and then community and religious from certain locations where cases of GBV are prevalent, this allow participants the freedom to express their views while ensuring that

the conversation aligned with the objective of the study. The interviews with the Spotlight Initiative representatives aimed to uncover the strategies and interventions implemented under the initiative, their successes (score cards), challenges, and its overall effectiveness on the communities. These representatives provided detailed information about the program's scope, its partnership with local organizations, and the outcomes they observed. In addition, the interview with traditional and religious leaders from Jukwe, Gwagwalada among others communities also details perspectives as it concerns the effectiveness of the initiative in combating Gender-Based Violence in their communities, providing on local context in eliminating the menace.

Other stakeholders such as social workers including counselors were selected for interview. Their selection was based on the fact that the support services provided to survivors of GBV is vital to their wellbeing. On the part of Gender-Based Violence survivors, six (6) participants were selected from six communities in Abuja, this include, Gwagwalada, Jukwe, Lugbe, Dutse Alhaji, Mararaba, and Jahi village. The participants were purposively selected from the above communities in view of their experiences in gender-based violence issues.

Secondary Data

The secondary sources for this investigation include relevant text books, scholarly journals, newspapers, relevant and published thesis. In addition, data were gathered from reports from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as ActionAid, Oxfam, and National Bureau of Statistics with relevant data on the activities of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative.

3.3 Data Analysis Method

Data collected from the field exercise through interview were analyzed with the use of narrative-analytic method. Each of the interview were transcribed to accurately capture the opinion of

participants' expressions. Thereafter, the transcription was then subjected to thematic analysis, with common themes identified with the respective interview participants. However, in analyzing the data collected, a coding process was utilized. In addition, the codes were grouped into categories, reflecting the findings of the study.

3.4 Reliability and Validity

To ensure the reliability and validity of the interview conducted, several steps were employed.

Reliability: A pilot test was conducted using a small sample of respondents similar to the target group like that of Abuja, Nigeria. This process helped immensely to identify potential issues with the interview questions and ensured the interview conducted were interpreted consistently. In the process, an adjustments were made in line with the feedback received to enhance clarity and precision, making it consistency across different opinions from the interview participants.

Validity: To ensure accuracy and validity of the research instrument, questions were developed thoroughly in line with research objectives and relevant literature. This ensured the questions were relevant and covered all targeted areas of investigation on the effectiveness of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative.

3.5 Ethical Considerations and Positionality

As a master's student researcher exploring humanitarian efforts for social change in Nigeria, my positionality is heavily influenced by firsthand experiences with the European Union-United Nations EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in Abuja. As a humanitarian who was directly involved in the project's implementation since September 2019, I have a thorough understanding of its complexities, challenges, and potential to catalyze meaningful societal changes which are not limited to GBV Gender-Based Violence and other challenges faced by young women and girls.

My positionality is perceived from a dual viewpoint: as an observer and a communication assistant on the project. My involvement in the initiative has given me invaluable insights into the realities of humanitarian interventions in Nigeria. This has shaped my understanding of the complexities of navigating cultural, political, and institutional landscapes while striving for meaningful social change. While on this project, I realized that one of the most challenging factors that leads to GBV and VAGW is the cultural aspect which has restrained and silenced young women and girls in our society.

Furthermore, my role as a researcher in this context provides me with a unique perspective in examining the Spotlight Initiative's efficiency in addressing these cultural norms. Drawing on my firsthand knowledge, I can provide rich qualitative data and interpretations that capture the multifaceted dynamics at work.

However, it is critical to acknowledge the potential biases inherent in my positionality towards this research. While my direct involvement provides unparalleled insights, it also necessitates a high level of reflexivity to avoid any biases that may influence my interpretations. Thus, my research strives to balance insider perspectives and critical distance, ensuring a rigorous and objective examination of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative's impact on humanitarian social change in Nigeria in addressing the challenges.

3.6 Limitation of the Study

Geographic Focus: Since different cultural and socioeconomic contexts influence gender-based violence (GBV) differently in different parts of Nigeria, focusing only on Abuja may limit the generalizability of findings to other regions.

Data reliability: The accuracy and dependability of research findings may be impacted by biases introduced by relying solely on self-reported data from GBV survivors and program participants.

Short-Term Perspective: Analyzing the project in a constrained amount of time may fail to consider the humanitarian efforts' long-term viability and wider social ramifications, possibly missing the interventions' cumulative or delayed effects.

Chapter 4: Data Presentation and Analysis

4.0 Introduction

This section is a presentation and analysis of demographic information of participants collected from the field which seeks to examine the humanitarian efforts of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in fostering social change in Nigeria with particular focus on the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents who participated in the Interview

The researcher presents the demographic survey of respondents who participated during the interview conducted. This comprises of individuals from relevant organizations, like such as Non-Governmental Organizations, government institutions, including Gender-Based Violence (GBV) survivors within the scope of this study.

4.1.1 Gender of Respondents

Participants for this investigation comprises of sixteen (16) respondents. 9 of the participants were males which represent 56 percent, while 7 females account for 44 percent respectively. Though, males slightly outnumber females, the higher male participation is attributed to the experiences of participants on the subject under investigation. Therefore, the representation of female participants, being 44 percent in the representation reveals the presence and contribution of women, who often seen as the primary focus of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) interventions designed by the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative.

4.1.2 Age bracket of the participants

As regard to the participants age bracket, the analysis indicates diverse range. Majority of the participants comprising 38 percent (6 participants), are within age bracket of 36 to 45, which shows a strong representation. Similarly, those within the age of 46 and beyond constitute of 31% (5

participants), indicating the engagement of adults in the investigation, who appear to have more insight on the investigation with detailed perspectives on Gender-Based Violence as well as social change initiative of EU-UN Spotlight. Those in the age categories of 26 to represent 25 percent i.e (4 participants), The least group in the investigation, which constitute of 6% (1 participant), is between the age bracket of 15 to 25, indicating minimum representation of that age group. Above all, the representation indicates a considerable participant with life time experience.

4.1.3 Participants Qualification

From the table below, out of total participants, 19 percent are without formal education, 13 percent have attended high school diploma and its equivalent, 13 percent have Bachelor's Degree, 25 percent hold Master's degree, while 31 percent have attained Doctorate programmes. From the distribution, the study indicates that majority of participants which constitute of 56 percent obtained advanced academic qualifications, such as Doctorate degrees and Masters respectively. On the other hand, the remaining 19 participants which have no formal education signifies the inclusion of voices on the part of the respondents most especially the gender-based violence survivors facing the vulnerability of cultural practices and domestic violence.

4.1.4 Years of Experience

From the table below, it is evident that majority of participants possess significant experiences in their various cadre. The table shows that, those with 16 to 20 years of experience constitute the majority of 44 percent, closely followed with 11 to 15 years which constitute 22 percent. Also, participants with 21 years of experience constitute 22 percent respectively. Therefore, the officials with less than 10 years in experience were out rightly missing in the investigation and constitute 0 percent. The implication of the above analysis is that, the investigation comprises of participants

with requisite experience and contribute immensely to the understanding of the subject under investigation.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents for interview participants

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	9	56
Female	7	44
Total	16	100
Age	Frequency	Percentage
15-25	1	6
26-35	4	25
36-45	6	38
46 and above	5	31
Total	16	100
Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
No formal education	3	19
High School or equivalent	2	13
Bachelor’s Degree	2	13
Master’s Degree	4	25
Doctorate	5	31
Total	16	100
Years of Experience of the officials	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 5 years	0	0
6 – 10 years	1	11
11 – 15 years	2	22
16 – 20 years	4	44
21 years above	2	22
Total	9	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

4.2 Data Presentation and Analysis

This section analyzes interviews conducted with participants with the aim of understanding the effectiveness of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV), with support system for survivors, and fosters social change in Abuja.

4.2.1 Prevalence of Cultural Norms and its influence on Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) particularly against women and girls is seen as serious challenges in Nigeria and Abuja in particular with significant relationship with traditional practices and cultural norms. However, to properly investigate this menace, the conducted an interview with individual and stakeholders concerned. These comprises of community and religious leaders from selected communities in, law enforcement agencies, officials of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative as well as survivors of Gender-Based Violence in Abuja. In an interview held with a Women Leader from Jukwe in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja on September 11, 2024, the women leader who started with Nigerian pidgin English stated that:

My sister, on **the prevalence of cultural norms in Abuja** ‘I no go lie you oh, Gender Based Violence in Nigeria no be small thing, we in government do talk tire but e no de work’. According to the official, cultural norms among communities particularly in Abuja subject women and girls to a subordinate position. She gave an instances where, traditional practices such as early marriages coupled with expectation of women to tolerate abuse in their various homes for the wellbeing of their family are becoming so much alarming. She identifies a particular case where a young lady between the age of 15 in Jukwe in 2022 was forced into marriage by the parent, while those who should ordinarily speak for the little girl also encouraged her to remain in the marriage, just because the person concern is a wealth man (Field Survey, 2024).

According to Community Head of Giri, in Gwagwalada Area Council of Abuja, in his perspective during the interview conducted on September 11, 2024. The leader emphasized that:

It is obvious in the Giri here the prevalence of Gender Based Violence and other traditional and cultural norms, like the perception that men are the rightful heads of every household, and therefore, whatever type of decision they make stands in the family not considering its impact on the other partner. The community head gave an instance of a case, where a particular widow in the community got embarrassed by her late husband's relatives, with a claim that it is a right for her to marry one of the late husband's brother as stipulated by tradition. This situation explains deep rooted nature of traditional practices perpetuated in Nigeria which undermines women's right (Field Survey, 2024).

Similarly, on 11th September, 2024, an interview was conducted with the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Nigeria Police Force, in Abuja about the experience on the nature of GBV. The Deputy Commissioner, stated that:

Gender Based violence is a serious challenge and very alarming indeed. He laments that no week will pass-by without receiving cases of GBV in our office. Sometimes, such situation is very hard to address because, the more you try to fight the menace the highest it bounces back on you, particularly from the communities' concern. Some of us have been attacked at various points here in Abuja. He also mentioned specifically, instances where the intervention of the police in fighting Gender Based Violence cases have been met with resistance from community members and even traditional rulers who choose to continue with such traditional norms. In 2023 (just last year), there was a case of a woman seeking police help for being molested in a particular community here in Abuja, but unfortunately the community leaders and other members insisted that she settle the matter with the family as traditional demands (Field Survey, 2024).

4.2.2 Perspectives on the Measures adopted by EU-UN Spotlight Initiative

In the assessing the measures adopted by EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in Abuja, the researcher conducted an interview with stakeholders particularly the beneficiaries of the program, (the Gender-Based Survivors). According to them, the initiative has put various measures in place to address issues of Gender-Based Violence. One of the platform introduced by the EU-UN Spotlight is the **livelihood support and vocational training**. To further understand diverse view on the

platform, in interview was held with one of the victims of Gender-Based Violence (Obinna Rita Chidinma), a 28-year-old and resident of Lugbe, New Federal Housing Estate of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, the participants stated that and narrated from experience during interview conducted on September 14th, 2024. Rita is a victim of domestic violence by her own husband. According to her, she gets to know about EU-UN Spotlight Initiative after she was abuse by her husband. Rita narrated to the researcher how she livelihood and vocational training provided helped her recovery from the trauma she undergone. According to Rita:

The livelihood and vocational training I received comprises of all necessary aspect she need to know about (particularly as it concerns fashion and designing). She noted that the only thing the EU-UN Spotlight did not provide for her through the platform is the space (shop) where she will start her business otherwise every working material she needed was provided (Field Survey, 2024).

Similarly, another survivor, Chinasa, who is a 34 years of residing in Jukwe area of Federal Capital Territory (FCT), shared her experience with the researcher. According to the participants, she also benefited from the same Livelihood program of the UN-Spotlight program in Beauty and Cosmetology. Chinana specializes in fixing as well as other fashion-related services in Jukwe. Chinasa was very happy expressing her appreciation about how the training was able to change her life ever since she undergone the training. She stated that:

Before joining the EU-UN Spotlight initiative, she struggled to feed her and children. But thank God for her after the training, it was happy, happy, happy for her. Chinana as she become self sufficient since then and life have been treating her well. Chinasa further that has never been a borrower as she used to before joining the initiative (Field Survey, 2024).

Another interview held with Usman Sadiya, who is 31-year-old residing in Dutse Alhaji axis of the Bwari Area council of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Sadiya shared with the researcher her experiences of sexual violence in her area with one of the institution, though Sadiya did not mentioned name of the institution due to the fact there was an apology. According to Sadiya:

Through the efforts of social workers and collaboration with EU-UN Spotlight legal team, she was called to their office in Gwarimpa, a community not too far from where she stays. She narrated the whole story to them and they were ready to help her get justice if not that she pleaded with them not to do so, However, she admitted that, the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative decided to empower her after the incidence through training and support that helped her to start a petty business and trading in her area there in Dutse Alhaji close to Police Station. Presently, Sadiya is financially buoyant and have been able to provide for her two kids.

To further complement the above interview, a conversation was held with women leader (whose name was withdrawn for security reasons and social worker) from Jukwe area in Abuja shared her perspectives on the measures established by the initiative during interviews conducted on, 11th September, 2024 by 10:48 am.

The participant emphasized that the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to her can be described as game changer in Jukwe. She explained that:

My sister if you ask me about the measure put in place by EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, there are over 6 key pillars actually, but what is important to us is the fact that, we run to them they our rights are violated they help us find justice. Our women and girls also get empowered when they heard of any suffering in the husband's house or otherwise. To me oh, the legal aspect, empowerment and awareness through the people they training are very massive and have help tremendously in transforming the lives of our women here in Jukwe, the whole of FCT and other part of Nigeria as we see testimonies online and on Television stations (Field Survey, 2024).

However, data from the secondary sources shows that, as of 2023 (fourth quarter), more than 280,000 women and girls in Nigeria at various categories benefited from the initiative of EU-UN Spotlight. It is important to also note that in Abuja alone, 59,500 survivors of Gender-Based Violence have been support psychosocially, including healthcare services as well as provision of legal aid. Through the initiative, about 22 centres welfare offices established across Nigeria, while

four (4) of these centres are currently in Abuja (Olajide, 2023). Similarly, the EU-UN Spotlight initiative also establish a Safe Spaces for women and girls in Nigeria, and provide for over 12,500 women in Abuja, with the equipment related to vocational training, life skills, as well as education for enhance their right. Specifically, for the Survivors of Gender-Based Violence, about 4,400 women and girls in Abuja have benefited from the livelihood support programs in skills acquisition and entrepreneurship (Olawale, 2024).

4.2.3 Effectiveness of the measures adopted by the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in reducing Gender-Based Violence in Abuja

In an interview conducted with participants to examine the effectiveness of EU-UN Spotlight, the researcher receive perspectives based on experience and observations at various locations in Abuja. In the words of Janeth Abwa, (a 35-year-old woman) who reside in Jahi village very close to Cash and Carry, in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, she shared her experience with the researcher during the interview held on 14thh September 14, 2024. Janeth, who is also a lady with physical disability, recounted her ordeal about her experience and how she benefited from the the UN-Spotlight Initiative under (Batch 5), which is located at Area 3 area of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. As regard to the effectiveness of the program, Janeth admitted that the **vocational training** in culinary skills she participated was very effective and marvelous. Janeth told the researcher that she was sent to Lyndishes Culinary School located in Gwarimpa, where she learned so many activities in the school including, culinary skills, paint making over a period of three (3) months. However, when Janeth was asked to narrate how effective the measures adopted by the Spotlight Initiative was in eliminating her needs and other survivors of the Gender-Based Violence, Janeth stated that:

I must confess that, the EU-UN Spotlight was massive indeed and have never see such God sent organization. Many organization have been established in Nigeria but have never been transparent and benefit like this initiative. You don't need to know someone and not even God father before recognizing you for assistance. My life has been transformed for good since I join this program. Presently, am blessed with a skill which allow me make a living so easy. I equally hope and pray that more women benefit from this initiative just like I did (Field Survey, 2024).

Similarly, in an interview with Joy Solomon, who is a 33-year-old lady residing in Gwagwalada Area Council of the FCT, Abuja, narrated her difficulties experienced most especially as it concerns psychological and emotional abuse from family members when she was staying in Giri and how the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative assisted her acquire scholarship program as well as grants that help her overcome all challenges she faced in the past. At a point she was able to return to school later and even set up her own personal business. when asked on the effectiveness of the initiative, Joy stated that with gratitude about the opportunity she received that help her to build her life again after when all hope was lost in the past. According to Joy, the scholarship she enjoys enable her resume her school after years of drop out, while the grant received enable her to open a new shop at Dei-Dei area of Abuja where she currently operating and attending school with ease.

Joy stated that;

With gratitude, the Spotlight Initiative have really safe my life ever since had an encounter with them and have been very effective. Only God would have known my situation if I did not get the scholarship and even the grant. By now, it would have been difficult to continue my education program not even to talk about the shop am presently operating. Am now an independent woman and I really thank God for that. I also want to acknowledge the awareness platform of the initiative, it is very effective, they might not be everywhere but have put measures in place by training different categories of people in various communities here in Abuja (Field Survey, 2024).

According to the interview held with Rukaya Aliyu, who is resident of Mararaba area in Abuja. The participant who spoke to the researcher in Hausa (one of the top 3 languages in Nigeria) through interpreter, told the researcher how she first heard about the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative.

She stated that through a Human Rights Organization (Brekete Family) where she went to seeking for help in 2022 during pressing issues, at that point she was referred to the initiative and her life have changed after the contact. Rukayya now work as a tailor in her own shop in Mararaba area of the Federal Capital Territory and have been very happy with the progress of her job. According to Rukaya.

The effectiveness of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative is marvelous and cannot be overemphasized. I presently run my own business as a tailoring, I was able to take care of myself without further challenge and have not been begging relatives for personal need. The measures adopted by the Spotlight Initiative was highly effective to me and many others as well and really commend them for their good job. When Rukayya was asked to comment on the awareness initiative of the platform, she stated that the awareness too have gone along way to address the inherent challenges faced in GBV. Before now many people fear to report for the sake of stigmatization, but now I have seen many coming out to do so. I believe this initiative have yielded positive results (Field survey, 2024).

Complementing the above, interview with the Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist of the EU-UN Spotlight Representative during interview conducted on 12th September 12, 2024, on the effectiveness of the measures implemented adopted by the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative. The officer noted that:

The initiative of the EU-UN Spotlight has been very effective and appreciative and has made significant impact on the lives of many women and girls in Nigeria and particularly in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The officer stated that the beneficiaries will actually speaks for themselves narrating ow they benefited. It is not just mouth making, it has benefited a lot of people and have been very effective indeed especially to victims of Gender-Based Violence (Field Survey, 2024).

Complementing the above interview, data from the secondary sources shows that, between January and August 2024, more than 1,500 Gender-Based Violence survivors in Abuja alone have benefited from the free medical services program of the initiative, with over 500 survivors also provided with legal representation in court cases specifically from 2022 till August 2024 (Olawole, 2024).

In an interview with Programme Director (Human Rights Activist) of the National Council of Women Societies (NCWS) conducted on 13th September, 2024) pointed that:

The Initiative has been reported to be very effective in terms of awareness campaigns and also community engagements exercise, including media outreach, as well as school enrolment programs particularly for survivors of gender-based violence. The officer cited certain examples which include the popular “16-Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence” campaign introduced through the initiative and how it has been beneficial to the survivors. The program actually took place in November and December 2023 with the campaign involving dialogue among communities, organizing workshops, as well as media broadcasts with beneficiaries of over three million people (3,000,000) people in Abuja (Field Survey, 2024).

However, data from the secondary reveals that, through the initiative there have been increase in reporting of Gender-Based Violence cases in the last few years, with over 30 percent cases reported between 2020 and 2023. The initiative also provide training for over 500 law enforcement officers and healthcare and social workers in Abuja, to enable them to handle cases of GBV cases which was strongly believe that with the initiative, it will go a long way to address issues of gender-based violence (Akinyele, 2023). Similarly, the part of the initiative or measures has been the introduction of gender desks at various political stations in Abuja, with the responsibility of handling cases of Gender-Based Violence, it was reported that more than 200 cases of GBV have been reported through the initiative since 2021, while of the cases have been successfully resolved.

4.2.4 Challenges militating against effectiveness of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in combating Gender-Based Violence

In interviews held with the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) survivors and other participants across the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, it reveals that though the initiative have recorded tremendous achievement its bid to eliminate issues of Gender Based violence since its establishment in 2017. However, there are still inherent contradictions bedeviling its effectiveness.

According to Janeth Abwa from Jahi Village who shared her experience with the researcher that she did not face much difficulties trying to access the services initiative by EU-UN Spotlight. However, she stated that “during her participation, it was only transportation and logistics issues which he stated that with her conversation with the official of the program, was a result of shortage in funding that have made the organization to limits its spending in recent years.

The participants were asked on their perspectives regarding the challenges facing the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative from effectively combating Gender-Based Violence in their areas. Some of them stated that, there are a lot of stigmatization issues associated with the fight against Gender-Based Violence in Abuja. Janeth Abwa from Jahi told the researcher that:

In my area in Jahi sometimes in August 2023, a community whose names was withheld for security reasons, stated that Police force and other security agencies to arrest perpetrators of Gender-Based Violence, but because of the cultural influence and of some traditional rulers in the community, the efforts of the security agencies proved abortive (Field Survey, 2024).

According to the Project Manager of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in during interview Abuja as well as the Director of Investigation and Intelligence at the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) while responding to the challenges facing the initiative stated that:

We feel that, the primary challenges associated with the initiative is cultural and societal stigma/resistance to effectively address issues of Gender-Based Violence. In many communities in Abuja including where I leave, there are cases of cultural norms and values which strongly supporting gender inequality, and this practice make it very difficult for EU-UN Spotlight initiative to encourage community members to report violence cases or other harmful attitudes toward women and girls in the area (Field Survey, 2024).

Therefore, the participants pointed out that, the effect of these challenges cannot be overemphasized and go a long way to truncate the effectiveness of this initiative. It was however noted sometimes the coordination between various stakeholders across states in Nigeria and Abuja

in particular, including local authorities, law enforcement, as well as Civil Society Organizations, is sometimes weak, and there is urgent need to address above challenges to ensure effectiveness of EU-UN Spotlight. The participants noted that without proper communication as well as collaboration, it will be difficult to create an enabling environment to fighting Gender Based Violence in Abuja. The participants noted that despite the challenges, the initiative is significant to improving the wellbeing of Gender-Based Survivors. To properly address these menace, the participants suggested that:

Understanding the dynamics of Gender-Based Violence in the immediate communities where such menace are prevalent is key to the effective resolution. Therefore, the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative need to implement several strategies including community engagement as well awareness-raising programs which they believe is paramount to total eradication of harmful cultural norms and will also encourage survivors to speak out whenever there are been victimize. Further, the need to engage local NGOs and Civil Society Organizations, will play vital role in providing first-hand information to support to GBV survivors (Field Survey, 2024).

4.3 Discussion

This section discusses the findings from the investigation which seeks to examine the humanitarian role of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in addressing challenges of gender-based violence in Abuja, Nigeria. The following are outcomes from the investigation.

i) Cultural Norms and the Prevalence of GBV

The first objectives of this study examine the nature of existing cultural norms associated with Gender-Based Violence against Women and Girls in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Findings from the investigation reveals that cultural norms and other forms of gender-based violence is prevalent in Abuja, as traditional and cultural values often categorize women in a very subordinate positions in certain communities. While this menace is obvious in the Federal Capital Territory in Abuja, certain areas such Gwagwalada, Jukuwe, Dutse-Alhaji and Lugbe appears to be very

dynamics, with harmful cultural practices such as child marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) continue to exist in such areas. However, this investigation aligns with the study carried out by the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) in (2022), which states that norms and cultural beliefs system continue to be a major source of concern in Nigeria, while driving the rates of domestic violence as well as and sexual harassment perpetrated in the city of Abuja.

ii) Perspectives on the Measures adopted by EU-UN Spotlight Initiative

The second objective seeks to assess the perspectives of community members in Abuja regarding the measures adopted by the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative. The findings reveal that the EU-UN Spotlight have introduced several measures especially the 6 pillars in addressing issues of Gender-Based Violence, ranging from prevention, protection, legal reform, data management, quality services, including empowerment program. The investigation indicates that at the community level, the initiative has not only led to increase in awareness about GBV but have been able to legislative reforms support justice system in Nigeria which bring local laws closer to the people in line with the international human rights standards. This finding aligns with the study conducted by Akinola (2020), who stated that the Spotlight Initiative have strengthen and enhance the capacity of law enforcement agencies in the Federal Capital Territory, making it effective to handle cases effectively.

iii) Effectiveness of Measures Adopted by the Spotlight Initiative

In assessing the effectiveness of measures put in place by the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, findings from the investigation reveals that, various initiative such as legal aid services, awareness creation, capacity-building workshops, as well as empowerment programme (livelihood) have been very massive and made the life of GBV survivors substantially different. From the findings, the

respondents call for the need for more targeted approaches in the Federal Capital Territory, and other regions in Nigeria and particularly in the rural areas where GBV are more prevalence. This echoes the recommendations of the findings conducted by Adewale and Musa (2023), who states that while the Spotlight Initiative appears to be very effective in some areas in the FCT, there is however need for a more strategic focus on some regions of Nigeria with greatest need of such services.

iv) Challenges in Combating GBV

The last objective of this study seeks to identify the challenges militating against effectiveness of measures adopted by EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in addressing Gender-Based Violence among Women and Girls in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. From the findings, it indicates that despite successes recorded by the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, several challenges persist, ranging from stigmatization, resistant to gender equality initiatives in some communities, poor coordination among some stakeholders thereby undermining the effectiveness of GBV interventions of the initiative. However, this finding aligns with the study conducted by Oji (2023), which stress that, absence of community support, particularly from the religious and traditional leaders, affects the success of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study titled: “Humanitarian Efforts for Social Change in Nigeria through the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in Abuja” was carried out utilizing qualitative methods. Data for this study were sourced through interview with stakeholders, including representatives from NAPTIP, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, NCWS, security agencies (notably the Nigeria Police Force), community leaders (traditional and religious leaders), as well as Gender-Based Violence Survivors. Four research questions and objectives were developed to guide the study. From the investigation, the study indicates that cultural norms, ranging from early marriage system, patriarchy and traditional gender roles (preference of boy child), contribute immensely to the prevalence of Gender-Based Violence against women and girls in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. however, these cultural practices sometimes justify violence against women and girls as a disciplinary measure, thereby making the practice very common in many communities in Abuja. In addressing these menace, the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative has put different measures to this regard, where targeted interventions have led to increased awareness, community support, as well as access to justice for survivors. The efforts of the initiative were reported to be very effective, most especially in its focus on advocacy, community engagement, as well as collaboration. However, despite the success recorded, the study identified several challenges, truncating the efforts of the initiative; this include; inadequate funding, limited capacity of some local institutions, as well as high level of cultural beliefs. Therefore, to overcome the challenges, the study suggest strategic solutions aimed at addressing the harmful cultural practices in Nigeria and Abuja in particular.

5.2 Conclusion

This study critically evaluates the humanitarian effort of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and empowering women and girls in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The study was necessitated by the alarming rate of Gender-Based Violence and other forms of domestic violence in the area. From the investigation, findings indicate that, the EU-UN Spotlight initiative contribute immensely towards addressing these menace. Several measures were put in place, this include increasing awareness about Gender-Based Violence, promoting legal reforms through collaboration with Nigerian government, provision of support services to GBV survivors among others. Through these initiative, the EU-UN Spotlight facilitated a framework that could address issues of gender equality and women's rights, as well as creating environment for a sustained social change in Nigeria and Abuja in particular. Despite this achievement, there are existing challenges bedeviling the effectiveness of this initiative, this include; cultural barriers, poor collaboration among stakeholders and limited resources. However, while tremendous progress has been achieved, the present study highlights the significance of continued efforts in the fight against Gender-Based Violence to ensure that long term gains of the EU-UN Spotlight initiative are consolidated across various states in Nigeria including Abuja (the Federal Capital Territory).

5.3 Recommendations

From the investigation, the following were made to uphold and strongmen the findings of this study.

- 1) To address the prevalence Cultural Norms and Beliefs perpetrating Gender-Based Violence in Abuja the study recommends the need for community-driven interventions. To achieve this, partnering with community and religious leaders, in continuous awareness about gender equality

and harmful cultural beliefs if important. In addition, the Gender-Based Survivors should also be integrated in schools and community programs, this will help eliminate all forms of harmful practices including patriarchal norms and early age marriage.

2) There is need to expand reach in across the city Centre in Abuja as well as other states in Nigeria. While the EU-UN Spotlight was said to be very successful and effective, there is need to scale-up efforts and strategies to other regions yet to benefit from the initiative. This can be achieved through awareness, increase in funding for local government as well as Non-Governmental Organizations with close tie with community and rural areas to effectively address marginalized women and girls.

3) To ensure continued effectiveness of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, the organization and relevant stakeholders should enhance its Gender-Based Violence prevention and response services initiated by investing more in data gathering and monitoring as well as adopting effective evaluation method. Through this means, the initiative will continue to benefit more communities in long term bases.

4) To properly address the identified challenges militating against the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative from achieving sustainable interventions, there is need to establish and a viable long-term partnership with the local governments, traditional rules and community leaders, actors in private sector actors, as well as the international organizations, this partnership will also ensure continued funding and support system in addressing the GBV issues.

USE OF GRAMMER AND AI TOOL

This work is generally my idea and based on interviews and information gathered. In a bid to get clear and concise sentences I made use of some AI tools like Quill Bot and Grammarly to paraphrase and restructure my own sentences for a better understanding and a well-arranged work.

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APPENDIX I
LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Respondent,

I am a postgraduate student at the aforementioned institution in the Netherlands, currently conducting research on 'Humanitarian Efforts for Social Change in Nigeria through the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in Abuja.' The aim of my study is to investigate the role of cultural attitudes in perpetuating gender-based violence and to assess the effectiveness of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in promoting social change. This questionnaire is designed to seek your candid opinion on the subject matter.

Kindly note that this exercise is a voluntary interview, which will take less than an hour to process and complete because of its sensitivity.

This is to also inform you that the responses are anonymous, your personal contact details will not be let out to the public. All responses will be discarded after proper analysis of the acquired data.

I am pleased to announce that this data collection will contribute to the development and growth of the humanitarian sector and support the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative project on the way forward regarding the cultural barriers women face in our society.

Your passionate support and participation in this research are voluntary.

Below are my contact details if there is a need for further questioning regarding this research +31630631240 and diplomatannie@gmail.com

You are to please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge without any form of subjectivity and prejudices. Note that the said questions are strictly designed for academic purposes only, and hence, all details given by respondents will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thanking you in anticipation for your kind cooperation.

Accept the assurances of my highest regards for your esteemed consideration.

Yours Sincerely,

Aniekan Bassey Udo

APPENDIX II
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
FOR

EU-UN SPOTLIGHT OFFICIALS

1. In your opinion Sir, how could you describe the trends of Gender-Based Violence in Nigeria?
2. Can you itemize the objectives of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in Nigeria, and how it can be used to address Gender-Based Violence issues?
3. What specific inventions put in place by EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in Abuja to support women and girls who faced various forms of gender-based violence in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja?
4. Can you share the success story of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative directed towards addressing GBV in Abuja in recent years?
5. What are the challenges militating against effectiveness of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja?
6. What are the measures do you think EU-UN Spotlight Initiative should adopt to properly address issues of Gender-Based Violence in Abuja?

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
FOR
SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

1. In your understanding, how relevant is the presence of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to the fight against Gender-Based Violence in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja?
2. How would you perceive the efforts of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in promoting social change among GBV in Abuja?
3. Can you itemize your success story where the initiative has effectively address GBV issues in Abuja?
4. What are the challenges militating against effectiveness of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja?
5. In your opinion, what are the alternative strategies the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative can adopt to effectively reducing Gender-Based Violence in Abuja?

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
FOR
COMMUNITY LEADERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS**

1. In your opinion, what are the nature of existing cultural norms associated with Gender-Based Violence among Women and Girls in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja?
2. How do the community members in Abuja perceived the measures adopted by the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative?
3. How do the participants in Abuja perceive the effectiveness of EU-UN Spotlight Initiative?
4. What are the challenges militating against the effectiveness of measures adopted by EU-UN Spotlight Initiative?
5. From your experience, what strategies the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative could employ to properly address all forms of Gender-Based Violence issues in Abuja?

Informed Consent Form for Participation in a Research Investigation

Title of Research Study: Exploring Humanitarian Efforts for Social Change in Nigeria through the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in Abuja

Name of Principal Investigator: Aniekan Bassey Udo

Institutional Address: International Institute of Social Studies, P.O. BOX 29776, 2502 LT The Hague, The Netherlands

I am a postgraduate student at the aforementioned institution in the Netherlands, currently conducting research on 'Humanitarian Efforts for Social Change in Nigeria through the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in Abuja.' The aim of my study is to investigate the role of cultural attitudes in perpetuating gender-based violence and to assess the effectiveness of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative in promoting social change. This questionnaire is designed to seek your candid opinion on the subject matter.

Kindly note that this exercise is a voluntary interview, which will take less than an hour to process and complete because of its sensitivity.

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Thanking you in anticipation for your kind cooperation.

Accept the assurances of my highest regards for your esteemed consideration.

Yours Sincerely,

Signature _____
Research Participant

Date

Signature _____
Principal Investigator

Date