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South West

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Critical stakeholders

Against the backdrop of exclusion from participation and empowerment of women and vulnerable groups in social and economic development, a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), the Educational Co-operation Society (ECS) in consortium with other four non-profit organisations has embarked on a project, aimed at changing the narrative.

The project, which focused on Lagos, is on promoting empowerment of women and vulnerable groups for participation and inclusion in social and economic developments in peri-urban areas of Lagos State.

Overall goal

The other consortium NGOs in the project/action apart from the lead Educational Co-operation Society are the Institute for Media and Society (IMS), Healthy Living and Women Empowerment Initiative (HELWEDI), Advocacy for Anti-Bribery/Corruption/Crime Prevention Initiatives (AABC, CPI), and Koloba Lala Women Progressive Association.

The overall goal of the project, according to the Managing Director, ECS, Dr. Chudi Ihenacho, is to contribute to the realisation of gender equality and social inclusion of women and people with disabilities in local development processes within Lagos State.

Specifically, the project aims to strengthen capacity of women through processes of advocacy, training on gender equality and financial management in order to enable them to participate effectively

ECS, Others: Enhancing women, vulnerable groups' empowerment



Training of women group at Ayobo training centre



Empowerment of participants at Egbeda training centre

ly in decision-making and development initiatives at community levels in some communities, including Alimosho, Mushin, and Ibeju Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the state.

The consortium project is funded by the British Council and the European Union within the Agents for Citizen-Driven Transformation Programme (ACT), which is a strategic response to invest in and engage with the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Nigeria with view to strengthening their capacity to engage effectively and influence sustainable development, towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria.

Action plan

Speaking further, he noted that

during the duration of action, which is six months, beginning from July 2022 to February 2023, the women will not only enhance their capacity for participatory processes, but also lead development initiatives to meet basic social needs in their communities.

He said: "Apart from the offer of basic financial management skills to enable some 270 women to grow their small businesses, the project would also endear gender equality values to local leaders in target communities, as well as help them to appreciate the position of women enough to support participation of women in social development processes that affect them.

Gendersupport

"Gender equity and equal-

ity is one of the SDG goals yet to be achieved in Nigeria, particularly in Lagos State, where the disparity is more markedly manifest in spite of past interventions by various development institutions and the government.

"What is more, as the economy regresses and the social protection net gives way, more of the population falls into poverty and social services become less accessible to most rural dwellers. In the circumstance, the position of women and other vulnerable groups is further compromised, augmenting the disparity in gender across board."

According to ECS, the current action by the consortium is therefore a practical and multi-dimensional incorporating educational approach to drive gender equality

Through the project, gender-equality studies have accordingly been extended to teachers, pupils, and other educators at the basic levels in the target communities.

As a result of this intervention by ECS-led Consortium, Ihenacho stated that the capacities of no fewer than 320 Women, including women living with physical disabilities in Alimosho, Mushin, and Ibeju, have been strengthened enough to grow their petty businesses, and participate in decision-making or development initiatives in their communities. Besides, local leaders in target communities, he further pointed out through the project, now recognise the position of women and support participation of women in social development processes.

Charitable trust

Meanwhile, the Educational Co-operation Society (ECS), which was incorporated in Nigeria under the Companies Decree in 1974, as a charitable trust limited by guarantee, RC 13503, is a non-profit and non-governmental organisation that envisages a Nigeria where all persons have access to education of good quality and personal development, irrespective of their social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds.

On the broad aim and mission of the Society he said, it is to promote projects throughout the federation, which further education, social welfare and development of character in accordance with Christian principles.

Reeling out some of the projects of the Society over the past four decades, Educational Co-operation Society, according to the Managing Director, has promoted several projects which enhanced youth leadership and auxiliary academic training in various states across the country.

"ECS has also successfully carried out rural development projects in co-operation with foreign missions in Nigeria, corporate bodies, and a few European NGOs.

By means of its projects, the Educational Co-operation Society has, for several years, been making substantial contributions towards solving specific problems in Nigeria," he added.

US-Africa Leader's Summit: Biden okays \$55bn for Africa's devt

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WITH AGENCY REPORTS

Respite came the way of Africa yesterday as United States Vice-President Kamala Harris insisted that the continent's demographics would inevitably lead it to become a key global player in decades to come.

Opening the US-Africa Leaders Summit in Washington, Harris highlighted Africa's youthful population, stressing that the Biden administration was resolute in meeting Africa's challenges.

She spoke at the three-day gathering that is bringing in leaders from 49 African nations and the

African Union for high-level talks.

Based on this, Harris announced that the administration would invest an additional \$100 million to expand the Young African Leaders Initiative and that the US Export-Import Bank was entering new memorandums of understanding that will clear the way for \$1 billion in new commercial financing in Africa.

The vice president's appearance at the forum was one in a series of events designed to showcase the US' interest in and commitment to Africa after years of what some officials have lamented as a lack of involvement in the continent, which has increasingly become a

battleground for global influence between the US and China.

President Joe Biden, who met with African leaders on Wednesday, signed an executive order establishing the President's Advisory Council on African Diaspora Engagement.

The African diaspora includes nearly two million African immigrants as well as many African American descendants of enslaved people who have close connections to the continent.

About 60% of Africa's population is under 25 and the young population is to grow to 80% by 2050, which Harris said makes increased focus on the continent necessary.

Osun'll continue to remember Oyetola – Ex-commissioner

Ayobami Agboola,
OSOGBO

Former Osun State Commissioner for Finance Bola Oyebamiji has said people will continue to remember the developmental strides of the immediate past Governor Gboyege Oyetola.

Oyebamiji, who said he had no regrets about serving under the for-

mer administration, said Oyetola brought unprecedented development to the state in four years.

The Balogun Musulumi of Irewole/Isokan/Ayedaade said this during the foundation stone of the first Ikire Muslim Hospital initiated by the Ikire Association of United imams and khateebis in the Molak area of Ikire.

Oyebamiji said the Oyetola administration had turned around

the fortunes of the entire Osun for the better; hence the people will continue to remember him for good.

Oyebamiji said the hospital will help in boosting the health sector in and around Ikire.

He said: "I am so honoured to be part of the history of the laying of the foundation of this good project. I am sure this will go a long way in solving the health challenges of our people."