



## ■ Technical Brief

# BEHAVIORALLY FOCUSED APPLIED POLITICAL ECONOMY ANALYSIS

Using a Behavioral Lens to Improve the Effectiveness of Local Leaders in Prevention of Gender-Based Violence in Ebonyi and Sokoto States of Nigeria

**POLITICAL ECONOMY** refers to the intersecting incentives, interests, and values that shape the operations of complex systems and the actions or decisions of key actors. Factors related to the political economy have direct bearing on the **behaviors** exhibited by individuals and institutions alike.

### BF-APEA Quick Facts

**Geographic focus:** Ebonyi and Sokoto States.

Local government areas covered: 4

Target communities: 8

**Scope:** Increased local leader engagement in the prevention and mitigation of IPV, SV, and CEFM

**Implementation period:** May 20 – August 10, 2021

## CONTEXT

In Nigeria, most social institutions, policies, and laws remain discriminatory to women and girls, systematically marginalizing and excluding women's meaningful participation in both private and public spheres. These norms and inequalities give way to countless abuses against women, many of which are considered gender-based violence (GBV). The culture of silence surrounding intimate partner violence (IPV), stigma against survivors, and lack of faith in the criminal justice system continue to drive the under-reporting of IPV incidences in Nigeria. Access to formal services is low, and service providers/first responders across sectors (health, law enforcement, judiciary, legal aid, social services, and temporary shelter) lack appropriate skills on how to provide survivor-centered post-GBV services. Additionally, sometimes service provider bias hampers the provision of appropriate post-GBV care to survivors (MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership, October 2021).

To help address these issues, the MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership project in Nigeria is implementing a program aimed at preventing and mitigating the consequences of violence against women and girls and addressing possible drivers of child early and forced marriage (CEFM) in Ebonyi and Sokoto States. To achieve its purpose, the project used the Behaviorally Focused Applied Political Economy Analysis (BF-APEA) approach to examine the role of local leadership in promoting positive social norms, as well as implementing laws and policies related to sexual violence (SV), IPV, and CEFM. This process was engaged by the MOMENTUM team in Nigeria and its local partners to identify desired behaviors by local leadership who have the potential to contribute to positive norm formation.



## OBJECTIVES

To understand the complex contextual and sociological factors that hinder (or enable) the achievement of safer behaviors that protect the health and rights of young women.

To examine the role of “local leadership” (discussed in more detail below) in promoting positive social norms, as well as implementing laws and policies related to IPV, SV, and CEFM.

To examine the extent to which legal and policy frameworks currently influence the behaviors of key actors and identify opportunities for improved implementation of existing laws and policies.

## APPROACH, STRATEGIES, AND INTERVENTION FINDINGS

The BF-APEA process involved seven major activities:

1. **Determined and refined goal** for assessment and brainstormed initial impediments.
2. **Validated understanding of impediments** based on desk review of existing literature and dedicated analysis of legal and policy framework as it relates to IPV, SV, and CEFM.
3. Identified, mapped, and prioritized behaviors that could overcome impediments.
4. **Validated and refined goal, impediments, and behaviors** through **multi-stakeholder workshops** (at state and local government area [LGA] levels).
5. Conducted primary research on the prioritized behaviors.
6. Created and validated **behavior profiles and behavior summary**.
7. Used findings to help inform **activity design**.

The steps of the BF-APEA process were achieved as follows:

### STEPS ONE-FOUR

The MOMENTUM team, including local implementing partners, collectively articulated the goal of the BF-APEA, which was to engage local leaders in GBV prevention and response. The BF-APEA process brought together key stakeholders to collectively articulate the goal, list known impediments to the goal, and identify a set of critical behaviors necessary to resolve those impediments and achieve the goal. From there, the team conducted primary research to understand the political economy of each of those behaviors. That research was distilled into a set of key factors per behavior and the stakeholders were brought back to validate those factors and co-create strategies to resolve them.

### STEP FIVE

The BF-APEA’s primary research component had two main deliverables: qualitative research on the factors influencing prioritized behaviors, and a dedicated legal and policy analysis to better understand the extent to which the legal and policy frameworks currently influence the behaviors of key actors and to identify opportunities for improved implementation of existing laws and policies.

Contributions to BF-APEA primary research will, for example, pursue interventions that not only encourage the participation of local leaders in norms-shifting exercises (including adapting curricula to better address

impediments that prevent local leaders from acting on GBV), but also identify how to increase the local leaders' efforts in driving these activities on a sustainable basis. Interventions also focus on the roles local leaders can play in GBV response and prevention activities, such as serving as survivor advocates, and in making the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act more accessible and understood at the community level through translation, dissemination, and trainings.

The contribution of the BF-APEA policy and legal analysis is to build an environment that is conducive to enforcing relevant laws and policies related to GBV and also engage local leaders and stakeholders to enforce legal provisions that protect women and girls. Continuous advocacy to the legislature and senior government functionaries could lead to increased budgetary allocation for issues related to GBV, which could further bolster the advancement of survivor-centric interventions.

The behavior-focused research was conducted in four LGAs and eight communities of Ebonyi and Sokoto States. A total of 17 focus group discussions with 196 participants comprised of traditional council and community leaders were also held. Key informant interviews were conducted with 221 participants in both states and were comprised of traditional leaders, local government chairs, International Federation of Women Lawyers GBV Desk Officers, representatives from the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare, the Director of Public Prosecutions, and State GBV Response Team Coordinators. A desk review to identify factors inhibiting or motivating prioritized local leader behaviors was also carried out. The results of the behavior-focused research and the legal and policy analysis were shared with the MOMENTUM team in Ebonyi and Sokoto States and informed the development of strategies for each state that accounted for the underlying incentives of a specific behavior to increase the likelihood of implementation.

**TABLE 1: LOCAL LEADER BEHAVIORS PRIORITIZED BY EBONYI AND SOKOTO STATE LOCAL PARTNERS**

Ebonyi Priority Behaviors	Sokoto Priority Behaviors
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Community leaders create an environment conducive to reporting GBV.</li> <li>2. Religious and community leaders lead constituents to reconsider customs that contribute to gender inequality and perpetuate GBV.</li> <li>3. LGA leaders implement GBV-related laws and policies through constituent groups and other local leaders.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Community leaders implement community GBV prevention and mitigation plans.</li> <li>2. LGA leaders collaborate with traditional, community, and civil society organization leaders to improve local GBV prevention and response.</li> <li>3. Local leaders sensitize their constituents to break the culture of silence and report GBV issues.</li> </ol>

## STEP SIX

The team developed profiles for each of the above prioritized behaviors that elucidate pathways to behavior change by clearly linking strategies with the factors that either should be addressed (barriers) or leveraged (motivators) in order to achieve innovative and locally appropriate solutions to gender-based violence (GBV) challenges.

## STEP SEVEN

Findings from this intervention suggest that the BF-APEA resulted in a clearer, deeper understanding of the barriers to increasing local leader engagement on GBV. For example, as one informant noted, the BF-APEA process resulted in better understanding of community processes such as how GBV is reported, recognized the need to engage political leaders, and emphasized the important role of leaders in protecting social norms

even if they disagree with those norms. It also revealed that community leaders want to know more about GBV and pointed to specific knowledge gaps (such as laws, rights, and the intersection with health), along with an imperative to support leaders to overcome a feeling of helplessness to change deep-seated norms and overcome impediments that contribute to gender inequality and perpetuate GBV.

#### LEGAL AND POLICY ANALYSIS:

- The Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act and the Child Rights Act have been adopted in Ebonyi and Sokoto States.
- The Shari’ah courts and use of the penal codes play significant roles in all matters affecting women and children in Sokoto.
- The Ebonyi State Criminal Code: Section 383—including Abolition of Harmful Traditional Practices Against Women and Children Law (2001) and the State Protection against Domestic Violence and Related Matters Law (2005)—are primarily used for addressing cases of GBV.
- Key factors in implementation include the following:
  - Traditional and community leaders prefer to resolve GBV cases at the community level rather than by law and formal institutions;
  - There is inadequate understanding and sensitization of these laws by community leaders, state institutions judiciary, and police; and
  - Funding is insufficient to support survivors to get justice.
- Other factors:
  - There are frequent delays in prosecution of GBV cases.
  - Government officials can interfere with local leader's efforts to address GBV.
  - There is limited collaboration by local leaders on GBV issues compared to other issues.



Ebonyi and Sokoto team workshops and field-level activities to create broad understanding of key gaps and barriers to attaining the BF-APEA goal. Photo credit: Helping Hands of Sokoto and DOVENET of Ebonyi States

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The legal and policy framework regarding GBV in Nigeria is difficult to navigate. Not only is it complex, given the sheer number of laws, tripartite legal system, and need to domesticate national-level legislation, but cultural norms strongly affect implementation. As MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership Nigeria works to increase local leader engagement in preventing and mitigating different forms of GBV, it will necessarily confront these challenges throughout the project. The following recommendations for MOMENTUM may support local leaders to better understand this difficult terrain and utilize the legal instruments available to them in the fight against GBV. To address the general lack of awareness on existing legislation and accompanying requirements, national and state officials should translate laws into local languages and focus on communicating the technical provisions so that community members can understand them. Local partners also recommended translating policies into community by-laws and school codes to facilitate implementation. Training and capacity development of the police and judiciary should also be scaled up immediately; it is necessary to train new police officers, judicial officials, and judges and to retrain many of those same stakeholders to ensure that the knowledge and skills acquired can transfer and sustain themselves (i.e., if police officers are posted out of state, they can apply the same principles and strategies to a different geographic location with similar laws and policies). Finally, federal officials should consider efforts to make the VAPPA more accessible by conducting public awareness campaigns and sensitization training with stakeholders in local languages. These interventions could harness different forms of media, including print media, radio, electronic media, and social media.
2. Deeply entrenched religious and traditional practices prevent local leaders from domesticating the CRA in Sokoto and from implementing any relevant provisions. These realities should be considered opportunities for local CSOs to meaningfully engage religious and traditional leaders in sensitization activities, public awareness campaigns, and other information-sharing activities. Additionally, with VAPPA's recent domestication there may be an opportunity to take advantage of the momentum and discussion around implementation to advance a broader understanding of GBV and policymaking, particularly the risks posed by CEFM. MOMENTUM could consider working alongside efforts to monitor VAPPA implementation in Sokoto and use the data and knowledge generated from those efforts in programming.
3. One reason local leaders struggle to use legal tools to address GBV is the lack of resources to fully implement them. Advocacy to national-level policymakers to address this weakness should continue, including the VAPPA's lack of prevention activities, educational interventions, and awareness-raising provisions. Efforts should also address the need for specific provisions that mandate response teams and the lack of a budget for implementation. This advocacy could include a focus on encouraging lawmakers to develop an action plan or strategy to implement the Act and any future amendments. This action plan could exist separately from the National Gender Policy, and it could include a more-detailed analysis of areas of the VAPPA requiring amendments and the development of regulations, guidelines, protocols, and standards to address them.
4. Communities should set up memorials and annual memorial days to signpost and celebrate their declaration of prohibition of all types of GBV.
5. In Ebonyi, traditional rulers should refuse oaths of allegiance which commit them to regressive norms, cultures and traditions that hurt women. Before granting them staff of office and recognition, traditional rulers in-waiting should instead subscribe to total eradication of GBV in their communities. MOMENTUM can consider how to address this dynamic through behavior change activities.

## References

1. MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership. *BF-APEA for MOMENTUM Nigeria: Primary Research Findings and Results*. 2021.
2. Civil Resource Development and Documentation Centre (CIRDDOC) Nigeria. *Increasing Prevalence of FGM/C in Ebonyi and Imo States: Implications for Policy and Practice*. CIRDDOC Public Education Series No. 66. p. 7. Enugu, Nigeria: CIRDDOC. 2021. <https://cirddoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/policy-brief-on-fgmc.pdf>
3. Benebo, Faith O., Barbara Schumann, and Masoud Vaezbasemi. 2018. "Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in Nigeria: A Multi-level Study Investigating the Effect of Women's Status and Community Norms." *BMC Women's Health* 18 (136). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-018-0628-7>
4. Pact. 2014. *Applied Political Economy Analysis: A Tool for Analyzing Local Systems. A Practical Guide to Pact's Applied Political Economy Analysis Tool for Practitioners and Development Professionals*. Washington, DC: Pact. <https://www.pactworld.org/library/applied-political-economy-analysis-tool-analyzing-local-systems>
5. Sokoto State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development. *GBV Incidences for Sokoto State*. 2020.

## Acknowledgements

The contributions and participation of the following are sincerely appreciated and gratefully acknowledged.

- MOMENTUM local partners and members of the multi-sectoral task force at the LGA and the State levels
- Community members who are beneficiaries of the project at the state and national levels
- Policy authorities at the state and national levels
- Traditional and community leaders
- Members of the media
- Implementing partners

## MOMENTUM

USAIDMomentum.org

X/TWITTER: @USAIDMomentum

FACEBOOK: USAID Momentum



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



This brief is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of the Cooperative Agreement #7200AA20CA00002, led by Jhpiego and partners. The contents are the responsibility of MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.