



FIDA NIGERIA COUNTRY

REPORT 2021 - 2024

Introduction

This Country Report of FIDA Nigeria covers the period from 2021, when the last International Report was presented, to October 2024.

Executive Summary

FIDA Nigeria has continued to be a driving force in advancing women's and children's rights in Nigeria. This report therefore provides a comprehensive overview of the organization's activities and achievements during this period, focusing on leadership changes, and the composition of standing committees, strategic direction, and impactful interventions.

Part A

FIDA Operational Structure and Administration

1. Our Secretariat

As part of the organization's strategic goal of building an innovative and impactful Organization with strong leadership and unalloyed support of its executive team, FIDA Nigeria owns a fully equipped and highly functional national secretariat situate at No. 2 Ankpa Close Garki Abuja. We have continued to operate effectively through the following work departments and units: Programs, Administration, Finance, Legal, Communications and IT; and Monitoring and Evaluation.



2. Administration and Management

FIDA Nigeria operates through a well-structured governance system to ensure the effective delivery of its mandate. The National Executive Committee oversees day-to-day administration, while the National Executive Council provides strategic guidance. Several specialized committees drive different aspects of the organization's work, including the Parliamentary Committee, the Convention Committee, the Project Committee, the Public Relations Committee, the Ethics/Disciplinary Committee, the Finance Committee, the

Litigation/ADR Committee, the Special Litigation Team (Ad-Hoc), the Continuing Legal Education Committee, Zonal Coordinators manage activities in different regions, and the 8-member Board of Trustees.

Board of Trustees:

The following persons continued to form our Board of Trustees structure;

1. Chief (Mrs) Theresa Omawunmi Ikimi (Chairperson)
2. Prof. Jummai A.M. Audi (Secretary)
3. Hon. Justice Mary U. Odili, JSC (Member)
4. Hon. Justice Elsie N. Thompson (Member)
5. Hajija Fatima Kwaku MFR (Member)
6. Mrs. Susan O. Onyeche (Member)
7. Dr. Zuwairatu Ibrahim Mantu (Member)
8. Mrs. Veronica O. Odunuga (Member)
9. Late. Hon. Justice Margret Mary Igbetar (Member)

National Executive Committee (2021–2024)

In November 2021, a new executive team assumed office following a transparent and democratic election held during the FIDA Nigeria Triennial General Meeting.

The Officers are:

- i. Amina Suzanah Agbaje – Country Vice President (CVP)
- ii. Evelyn Membere-Asimiea – Deputy Country Vice President (DCVP)
- iii. Eliana Martins– National Secretary
- iv. Beatrice Awah – Assistant National Secretary
- v. Chineze Obianyo – National Treasurer
- vi. Olubunmi Arajuwa – National Financial Secretary
- vii. Christiana Adejumo – National Publicity Secretary
- viii. Nachamada Shaltha – Assistant National Publicity Secretary
- ix. Rhoda Prevail Tyoden – Ex-Officio

This leadership team is responsible for steering FIDA Nigeria through its strategic objectives and ensuring the continued protection and promotion of the rights of women and children across the country.



Part B

Execution of FIDA Nigeria's Mandate through Strategic Plan Engagement

Outcome 1: Effective Implementation of Legal Frameworks

1. Enabling Capacity for the Adoption and Implementation of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA), 2015: FIDA facilitated the adoption of the ACJA in 14 states and translated the ACJL into local languages for community outreach, with support from the MacArthur Foundation.

2. Strengthening Collaboration amongst Criminal Justice Actors: This initiative improved compatibility between ACJA/ACJLs and anti-corruption laws in Kano, Rivers, Anambra, Ekiti, and Bayelsa states through sensitization campaigns and Practice Directions, supported by the MacArthur Foundation.



3. Enhancing the Capacity of 20 FIDA Members on the Maputo Protocol: FIDA improved the understanding of the Maputo Protocol among 20 members, with support from Alliance for Africa.

Outcome 2: Innovative and Impactful Management Efficiency

1. Women's Voice and Leadership Project: Established a referral system for Paralegal Clinics and developed community by-laws in the FCT to improve access to justice for women and girls, with support from Action-Aid.



2. The Roles of Women in Conflict Resolution and Peace Building: Enhanced grassroots participation in peace-building in Plateau State and developed a security strategy for conflict mitigation, supported by the Canada Fund for Local Initiative (CFLI).



Outcome 3: Increased Access to Justice for Women and Children Including Persons Living with Disabilities

1. Strengthening Civic Advocacy and Local Engagement (SCALE) Project:

Improved service delivery for SGBV, CEFM, and TIP through community leader capacity building and by-law development in Plateau, Bauchi, Katsina, Ebonyi, Delta, and Edo states, supported by Palladium Group.



2. United Nations Spotlight Initiative (UNSI) Project: Focused on eliminating violence against women and girls by working on legislative frameworks and establishing Special Courts across six states, supported by UN Women.



3. Engagement, Coordination, and Sharing of Lessons on GBV Prevention between Religious, Traditional, and Government Leaders in Nigeria: Promoted gender-sensitive communities and reduced VAWG through coordinated action and shared learning in Lagos, Ekiti, and Plateau states, supported by the Ford Foundation.

Outcome 4: Improved Participation in Governance

1. Enhancing Participation and Representation of Women and Women with Disabilities in Politics and Governance: Increased political involvement of women and women with disabilities and provided support for the Bayelsa State

Gubernatorial Elections, supported by the Canada Fund for Local Initiative (CFLI).

2. Advancing Women's Political Participation Project: Boosted women's political engagement through training and support for election observers in Kaduna, Borno, Plateau, and Kwara states, supported by UN Women.

Outcome 5: Strengthened Grassroots Presence

1. Promoting Democracy and Good Governance through Participation: Enhanced awareness and participation in local governance processes among women and women with disabilities, supported by Goree Institute.

2. Mitigation of Gender-Based Violence through Training of Community Paralegals: Improved local access to justice and addressed gender-based violence by training community paralegals in the FCT, supported by the Swiss Embassy.

3. Addressing Social Norms Affecting Women's Status: Challenged social norms perpetrating violence against women through community leader collaboration and grassroots advocacy, supported by the Ford Foundation. Overall, these interventions have advanced FIDA Nigeria's strategic goals, enhancing legal frameworks, management efficiency, access to justice, political participation, and grassroots presence.

Part C

Organizational Effectiveness

1. Statutory Meetings

All the governing bodies of FIDA Nigeria held their statutory meetings; Yearly Annual General Conference for all members, the Quarterly National Executive Council (NEC) and the National Executive Committee meetings held either virtually or in person to discuss the operations of the organization and branches in the quarter, challenges, and to also build the capacity of the council members as well as share best practices to support and boost the morale of challenged branches. Ahead of these NEC meetings, branches are required to send quarterly reports for review and discussion. These reports contain not only activities but also cases as handled by their free legal clinics.

2. Africa Regional Congress

The 2023 FIDA Africa Regional Congress (ARC) was successfully hosted in Abuja, Nigeria, from August 23rd to 27th, under the leadership of the Africa Regional Vice President, Mrs Joy Ejim. The event brought together participants from seven African countries, with FIDA Nigeria representing the largest delegation. The congress, themed "Digital Technology and Gender Equality: Maputo Protocol and African Women in Focus," featured discussions on leveraging technology for gender equality. FIDA Nigeria's Country Vice President, Amina Agbaje, was a panelist and presented the FIDA Nigeria Country Report, which was highly appreciated. The event was a testament to FIDA Nigeria's outstanding organizational efforts and hospitality.



3. Free Legal Representation and Clinics:

We continue to uphold our mandate by conducting free legal clinics from Mondays through Fridays, 9am–5pm with 24-hour hotlines running when the physical clinics are not open. Legal clinics are also conducted during outreaches; schools, communities, correctional centers, markets, rallies, etc. These operations are guided by standard operating procedures for case management.



4. Data Collection Platform:

FIDA Nigeria has developed and institutionalized a data collection site, enabling branches to regularly upload and report on the cases they handle. This system ensures streamlined case management and enhances our ability to monitor and track progress across all branches. Furthermore we have available data to analyze and learn from

Part D

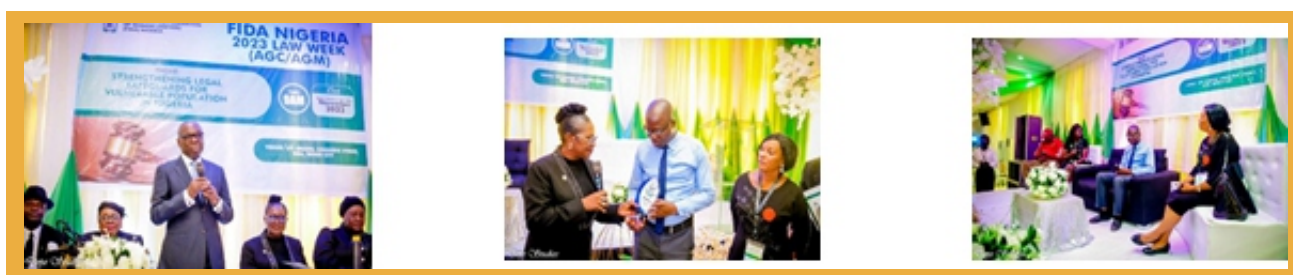
Organizational Growth, Expansion, and Community Impact

FIDA Nigeria has significantly expanded its impact through initiatives like adopting medical wards in public hospitals to support indigent women and children. With 46 branches and over 6,000 members, FIDA ensures grassroots access to justice across the country. The organization actively involves female law students as paralegals, offering critical first-response services for gender-based violence in their communities. Additionally, FIDA has trained around 600 paralegals who serve as community responders, reflecting the organization's commitment to social welfare, justice, and human rights advocacy.

Part E

Training and Capacity Building for FIDA Nigeria Members

FIDA Nigeria remains dedicated to empowering its members to address human rights challenges, with a focus on protecting women and children. To achieve this, the organization provides comprehensive training programs, including quarterly Continuous Legal Education (CLEs), webinars, and annual Leadership Training Workshops. These initiatives enhance members' skills in legal advocacy, intervention, and social justice, equipping them to offer effective legal aid, support survivors of gender-based violence, and represent vulnerable women and children. Through these efforts, FIDA Nigeria ensures its members are well-prepared to meet the evolving legal needs of marginalized communities.



Part F

Legislative Advocacy and Walks

i. Legislative Engagement

FIDA Nigeria remains committed to ensuring that gender considerations are effectively integrated into Nigeria's legal frameworks. To achieve this, FIDA actively engages with legislative processes on gender-related issues, regularly participating in public hearings at both the national and state levels. During

these hearings, FIDA presents memoranda to advocate for laws and policies that protect the rights and interests of women and children. By influencing legislation at every level, FIDA plays a pivotal role in shaping a more equitable and inclusive legal landscape for all.

ii. Strategic Advocacy Walk

FIDA Nigeria actively engages in strategic advocacy walks and public demonstrations to raise awareness on crucial issues affecting women, children, and vulnerable groups. These walks serve as a platform to highlight the need for reforms in gender-related legislation, combating gender-based violence, discrimination, and inequality. They also foster collaboration with key stakeholders and reinforce FIDA's commitment to justice and equality.

The "Occupy NASS" movement in 2022, FIDA led a peaceful 10-day occupation of the National Assembly, successfully pushing for the reconsideration of three key gender bills, underscoring its dedication to advancing women's rights in Nigeria.



Part G

Use of Technology and Media

FIDA Nigeria uses technology and social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube to enhance advocacy, increase public engagement, and raise awareness on women's and children's rights. Through press engagements, newsletters, and podcasts, FIDA educates the public on gender-based issues, aiming to shift societal attitudes and combat harmful practices like early child marriage and female genital mutilation. Additionally, FIDA is exploring AI to improve data management, streamline case handling, and enhance the efficiency of delivering legal assistance to indigent women and children.

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📘 FIDA Nigeria International Federation of Women Lawyers

Part H

FIDA Nigeria United Nations ECOSOC Status & Parallel Events at CSW

FIDA Nigeria proudly achieved ECOSOC status gaining recognition from both the United Nations and the African Union. This milestone allowed FIDA to participate in the 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) held in New York. FIDA Nigeria also hosted a parallel event titled "Impact of Legislation on Gender Equality in Society" on March 13, 2024, with key speakers discussing the role of civil society in ensuring effective gender equality laws. This event was attended by FIDA leaders and the FIDA International President.



Part I

FIDA Nigeria: Key Strategic Achievements, Limitations and Challenges, and Future Directions

Key Achievements:

FIDA Nigeria faces several challenges in advancing its mission. Resource constraints hinder the expansion of social welfare programs, which rely heavily on member contributions. Cultural and social barriers, particularly in rural areas, impede progress on gender equality and addressing gender-based violence (GBV). Additionally, FIDA's services remain inaccessible in some underserved and remote regions due to security concerns and limited geographic reach. Finally, sustaining key initiatives, like shelters and strategic litigation, requires more stable, long-term financial support to maintain effectiveness and impact.

Challenges and Limitations:

FIDA Nigeria faces several challenges in advancing its mission. Resource constraints hinder the expansion of social welfare programs, which rely heavily on member contributions. Cultural and social barriers, particularly in rural areas, impede progress on gender equality and addressing gender-based

violence (GBV). Additionally, FIDA's services remain inaccessible in some underserved and remote regions due to security concerns and limited geographic reach. Finally, sustaining key initiatives, like shelters and strategic litigation, requires more stable, long-term financial support to maintain effectiveness and impact.

Future Plans:

FIDA Nigeria is set to expand its shelter services, increase paralegal training, and enhance legal aid programs, particularly in underserved areas. The organization plans to leverage digital platforms to improve access to legal services and expedite case responses. FIDA will continue advocating for gender equality through policy reforms and strengthen partnerships with government and international bodies. These strategic initiatives position FIDA Nigeria to further its mission of protecting women and children's rights, despite challenges in resources and geographic reach.

Conclusion

FIDA Nigeria has made significant progress in advancing the rights of women and children through the launch of a shelter, successful legal interventions, and expanded outreach programs. Despite challenges with resources and geographic reach, FIDA's proactive efforts in advocacy and capacity building demonstrate its commitment to overcoming these issues. Looking forward, FIDA's focus on expanding services, training paralegals, and using digital platforms positions the organization to continue making a meaningful impact.

