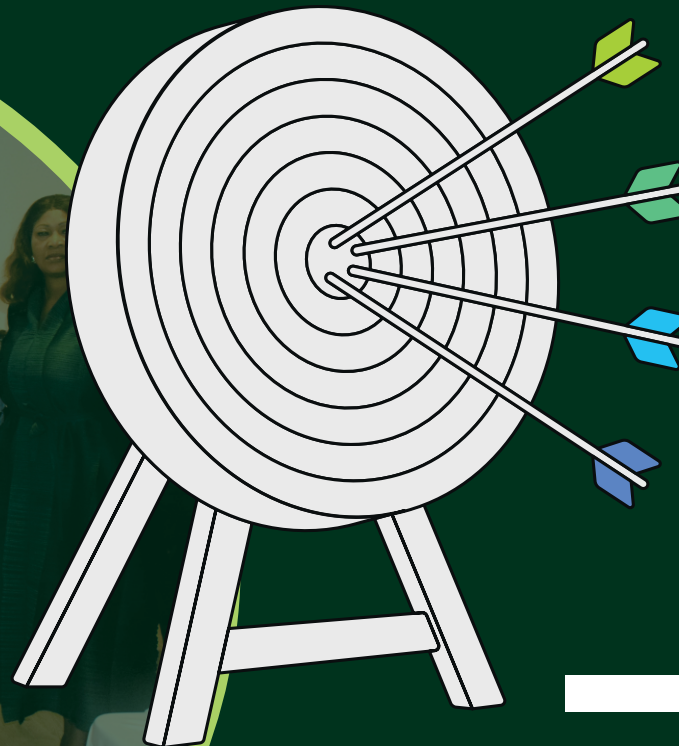


Comprehensive Endline Assessment of the Pamoja Activating Choices (AC) Project: Establishing a Community-Led Movement for Safe SRHR Access in Lagos



Transforming SRHR Landscape

The ultimate goal of the project



Empowering Communities

Providing knowledge and resources



Strengthening Health Systems

Improving access to services

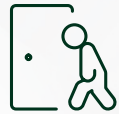


Policy Advocacy

Influencing regulations for SRHR



Executive Summary



Restricted SRHR

Limited access and advocacy.



Expanded SRHR

Increased access and advocacy.

The Pamoja Activating Choices (AC) Project, spearheaded by the Youth Network for Community and Sustainable Development (YNCSD), represents a strategic and multidimensional intervention designed to navigate the highly restrictive and socially sensitive environment of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in Lagos State, Nigeria. This endline assessment provides an exhaustive analysis of the project's performance, from its inception in February 2025 through its implementation phases, culminating in late 2025. By synthesizing internal activity reporting with broader socio-legal developments, this report evaluates the

efficacy of the project in shifting stakeholder attitudes, building sustainable advocacy movements, and leveraging digital technologies to expand access to critical health information. The evaluation is grounded in the recognition that maternal mortality in Nigeria is a public health crisis of significant proportions, with unsafe abortion contributing to approximately 30-40% of maternal deaths nationwide.¹ In Lagos specifically, the suspension of the "State Guidelines on Safe Termination of Pregnancy for Legal Indications" (STOP Guidelines) in July 2022 created a critical vacuum that the Pamoja AC project sought to address through evidence-based advocacy and capacity strengthening.

Socio - Legal Context and the Reproductive Rights Vacuum in Lagos State

The operational environment for the Pamoja AC project is defined by a century-old legal framework and recent political volatility. The primary legislation governing reproductive health in southern Nigeria remains the Criminal Code Act of 1916, which criminalizes induced abortion except for the purpose of saving the life of the mother.¹ Within Lagos State, this is codified in the Criminal Laws of 2011, specifically Sections 145, 146, 147, and 203. While Section 201 of the Lagos State Criminal Law theoretically permits termination to save the life or physical health of the mother, the absence of clear clinical guidelines has historically left medical practitioners in a state of legal uncertainty and fear of prosecution. This ambiguity results in the denial of life-saving care, particularly for survivors of sexual violence, who are often forced to carry pregnancies to term or seek dangerous, clandestine alternatives.

The policy landscape experienced a significant shift in June 2022 when the Lagos State Ministry of Health launched the 40-page STOP Guidelines, which were developed over four years by multidisciplinary

experts in law and obstetrics. The guidelines aimed to standardize medical protocols for legal indications, including obstetric conditions, heart diseases, kidney failure, and psychiatric disorders. However, the immediate and intense pushback from religious and philosophical interest groups led to the suspension of these guidelines by Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu on July 8, 2022. The state cited the need for "further sensitization" and "stakeholder engagement" as the rationale for the suspension, effectively halting progress toward reducing maternal mortality associated with unsafe abortion. It is within this "suspended" reality that the Pamoja AC project was launched, focusing on the very sensitization and engagement the government claimed was lacking.



Legal Provision	Source	Implications for SRHR Access in Lagos
Section 145, Criminal Law of Lagos 2011	Link	Criminalizes the procurement of miscarriage; carries a 3-year felony conviction.
Section 201, Lagos State Criminal Law	Link	Permits termination if the mother's life or health is endangered; lacks implementation clarity.
STOP Guidelines (2022)	Link	Provided clinical standardization for legal terminations; suspended due to religious pressure.
Maputo Protocol (Article 14)	Link	Guarantees rights to safe abortion in cases of rape and incest; Nigeria is a signatory but lacks full domestic implementation.

Project Design, Objectives, and Stakeholder Mobilization

The Pamoja AC Project was designed with a clear focus on shifting the "needle of support" among key power brokers in Lagos. The central objective was to achieve at least a 40% increase in the number of key stakeholders in Lagos State who support informed and contextualized advocacy for safe abortion and SRHR within a six-month period. This target was based on an initial baseline of 15 stakeholders identified during the inception phase in February 2025. The stakeholders were strategically mapped based on their influence, interest, and relevance, including representatives from the health sector, legal advocates, media professionals, civil society organizations (CSOs), and government officials.

The inception meeting, held from February 25th to 27th, 2025, focused on establishing stakeholder ownership and mapping collaboration opportunities for long-term impact. By engaging these actors at the earliest stage of implementation, YNCSD ensured that the advocacy agenda was not viewed as an external imposition but as a collective response to

local health challenges. The project utilized a participatory methodology, combining structured presentations with interactive sessions to foster a shared understanding of the project's vision. The mathematical target for final stakeholder support, derived from the baseline $S_0 = 15$ and a growth rate $G = 0.4$, was calculated as: $S_f = S_0 \times (1 + G) = 15 \times 1.4 = 21$

As the project progressed, the scope of engagement expanded significantly beyond this initial cohort, particularly through the movement-building activities and the digital campaign, which mobilized a much larger network of allies across the state.



Values Clarification and Attitude Transformation (VCAT) as a Change Mechanism

A primary obstacle to SRHR reform in Nigeria is the deeply entrenched personal and religious bias held by policymakers and healthcare providers. To address this, the Pamoja AC project centered the Values Clarification and Attitude Transformation (VCAT) methodology in its implementation. VCAT is not merely educational; it is a transformative psychological process that requires participants to engage in self-reflection regarding their biases toward abortion and bodily autonomy. The sessions utilized interactive exercises and case studies to help participants understand how societal and religious influences shape their attitudes.

The impact of the VCAT training was measurable. After engaging in the exercises, 80% of participants reported a better understanding of the impact of stigma and personal biases on reproductive health advocacy. More importantly, the sessions facilitated a shift from a "judgment-based" to a "rights-based" approach. This transition is critical for medical professionals who may personally oppose abortion but have a professional and ethical duty to provide

life-saving care under the legal indications currently permitted by Lagos law. The training successfully converted initial resistance into progressive acceptance, particularly through the use of real-life case studies that humanized the consequences of denying care.



VCAT Outcome Indicator	Result Observed	Narrative Implication
Perception Shift	Significant movement toward rights-based advocacy.	Reduced likelihood of providers withholding care due to personal stigma.
Knowledge of Stigma	80% increase in understanding of bias impact.	Stakeholders are better equipped to counter the "stigma narrative" in public discourse.
Stakeholder Commitment	Formal pledges to push for policy discussions.	Moves the movement from training to active legislative and community engagement.
Resistance Management	Progressive acceptance among initially resistant actors.	Demonstrates that VCAT is effective even in conservative socio-religious cohorts.

Digital Advocacy and the Diva Hotline Campaign Analysis

Recognizing that younger demographics in Lagos are highly digitally active, the Pamoja AC project integrated a robust digital advocacy component through the "Diva Hotline" campaign. Spearheaded by Elizabeth Adewale, this campaign utilized short-form video content to address critical SRHR topics, including missed periods, pregnancy concerns, birth control, and the stigma associated with seeking reproductive health services. Between November and December 2025, the campaign generated approximately 200,000 views and impressions across TikTok, Instagram, and X (Twitter).

The performance of the Diva Hotline reveals important insights into the digital consumption patterns of SRHR information in Nigeria. X (Twitter) served as the primary platform for broad reach and high-level visibility, generating 119,822 impressions. This platform's ability to facilitate retweets and profile visits makes it an essential tool for narrative-shifting and public debate. Conversely, TikTok proved most effective for high-volume video consumption, with




over 62,000 views. The data suggests that while X drives conversation, TikTok drives visual engagement and peer-to-peer sharing. Instagram, though having a smaller reach, provided "high-intent engagement" through saves and shares, indicating that users found the content valuable enough to bookmark for future reference.



DIVA HOTLINE



0800 000 3483

Platform	Total Metric	Engagement Type	Strategic Utility
 X (Twitter)	119,822 Impressions	High Visibility/ Profile Visits	Driving policy dialogue and public reach.
 TikTok	62,657 Views	Quick Consumption/ Shares	Reaching younger, non-follower audiences.
 Instagram	15,526 Views	Meaningful Interactions/ Saves	Retention of informative, life-saving content.
Total Campaign	198,005 Combined	Aggregate Reach	

The campaign's success in reaching new audiences is particularly noteworthy; **45-55%** of views across platforms came from non-followers. This indicates that the content successfully bypassed the "echo chamber" of existing activists and reached individuals who may have been seeking confidential information due to a lack of traditional support structures. The gender distribution—**57% female** and **43% male**—also highlights the campaign's success in engaging men, who are critical gatekeepers in the Nigerian reproductive health landscape.¹²

Movement Building and the PINK Movement Strategy

The "PINK Movement," facilitated by WARDC and supported by the Pamoja AC project, serves as the grassroots engine of the advocacy effort. In October 2025, a movement-building convening was held to assess the group's strategy and progress. The movement has adopted the slogan "Women's lives matter" and core values that include being "Feminist, inclusive, bold, accountable, and nonviolent". A central achievement of the PINK Movement during the project period was the training of 200 girl SRHR champions for grassroots advocacy. This intergenerational approach ensures that the advocacy is led by those most directly impacted by restrictive policies.

The convening utilized a SWOT analysis to identify the internal and external factors influencing the movement's success. Strengths identified included the spontaneous VCAT sessions that aligned member values and the significant progress made in engaging religious institutions like the Women

Wing of the Christian Association of Nigeria (WOWICAN). These religious partnerships are vital, as research indicates that exposure to SRHR messages from religious leaders significantly increases the uptake of modern contraceptives in Nigeria. However, the movement also faced threats, including the "deep-rooted resistance" of certain stakeholders and the continued official suspension of the STOP guidelines.



PINK Movement SWOT Category	Identified Factors	Strategic Implication
Strengths	Progressive alignment through VCAT; strong intergenerational leadership.	Ability to maintain a unified front in a hostile policy environment.
Weaknesses	Inconsistent understanding of the SRHR policy landscape among some members.	Need for continuous capacity building and simplified policy briefs.
Opportunities	Engagement with WOWICAN and rural counselors; digital storytelling potential.	Broadening the coalition to include "unlikely allies" from religious sectors.
Threats	Religious and cultural pushback; official government hesitation (STOP suspension).	Continued need for strategic litigation and narrative shifting to counter opposition.

The refined strategy for the PINK Movement emphasizes humanizing the discourse through digital storytelling and empathy-driven engagement. By moving away from purely legalistic arguments and toward stories that illustrate the human cost of unsafe abortion, the movement aims to inspire public empathy and political will. The adoption of podcasts and multi-lingual radio shows in the 2026 operational plan reflects a sophisticated understanding of the need for local-language advocacy to reach marginalized communities.

Intersectional Analysis and the Path Toward Legal Reform

The Pamoja AC project's success must be viewed through an intersectional lens, recognizing how gender, class, and socio-political structures intersect to limit reproductive rights. Women in disadvantaged communities are disproportionately affected by the suspension of the STOP guidelines, as they lack the financial resources to access "safe" but illegal services in the private sector, forcing them toward quacks and dangerous self-help methods. The project's focus on the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP Act) and the Maputo Protocol aligns with efforts to protect the most vulnerable, including survivors of rape and incest.

A major legal breakthrough occurred in June 2025 when an Abuja court affirmed that requiring survivors of sexual violence to continue pregnancies violates their fundamental human rights to health and dignity. This ruling provides a powerful tool for the PINK Movement's advocacy in Lagos. By leveraging this judicial precedent, advocates can argue that the continued suspension of the STOP guidelines is not just a policy failure but a violation of the constitutional

rights of survivors. The Pamoja AC project has equipped its stakeholders with the knowledge of "strategic litigation" as a key tool for driving this reform.

In February 2025, the Lagos State Government domesticated the National Reproductive Health Policy, which includes focus areas such as maternal mortality reduction and perinatal death surveillance. While this policy is more general than the suspended STOP guidelines, it provides a broader policy umbrella under which the Pamoja AC project can continue to advocate for specific abortion clinical guidelines. The domestication workshop highlighted the role of Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) and the need for their regulation to reduce complications, a priority that the Pamoja project can align with to build broader coalitions for safe motherhood.



Challenges and Lessons Learned for Future Implementation

Despite the project's successes, several challenges were identified during the implementation period. Time constraints and the late arrival of stakeholders during convenings hindered the initial progress of some sessions. More significantly, the realization that some participants—including those sent as representatives of larger organizations—did not fully understand the purpose of the convening or the principles of being pro-choice highlighted a gap in initial stakeholder vetting. This led to the recommendation that YNCSD should confirm the identities and stances of stakeholders more rigorously in future phases to ensure productive dialogue.

The primary lesson learned is that "narrative shifting requires time".¹² Progressive acceptance was achieved not through aggressive debate but through the use of real-life case studies and the creation of a non-judgmental space for self-reflection. Furthermore, the "varied levels of understanding" regarding Nigerian abortion laws among stakeholders—including some in the legal and health

sectors—indicates that simplified policy briefs are an urgent necessity for the next phase of the project. The project's ability to remain flexible, as seen in the mid-session VCAT workshops conducted when gaps in understanding were identified, proved to be a critical implementation strength.

Conclusion: Toward a Sustainable SRHR Movement in Lagos

The endline assessment of the Pamoja AC Project demonstrates a significant achievement in transforming the advocacy landscape for reproductive health in Lagos State. By exceeding its stakeholder support targets and building a resilient, intergenerational movement, the project has ensured that the fight for the reinstatement of the STOP guidelines is better resourced and more strategically aligned than ever before. The VCAT sessions proved to be the "engine of change," successfully shifting the attitudes of 80% of participants and securing commitments for rights-based advocacy.

The Diva Hotline campaign successfully bridged the gap between policy advocacy and public health information, reaching nearly 200,000 individuals and demonstrating a high demand for confidential SRHR services. The engagement of the PINK Movement, particularly the training of 200 girl champions and the strategic alliance with WOWICAN, ensures that the movement is rooted in local realities and has the moral authority to challenge socio-cultural barriers.

As the project enters its next phase, the focus must shift

toward leveraging the 2025 Abuja court ruling and the domesticated National Reproductive Health Policy to pressure the Lagos State Executive Council to lift the suspension on the STOP guidelines. The momentum generated by the Pamoja AC project—characterized by its values-driven approach and its use of digital technology—provides a clear pathway for achieving a Lagos where reproductive autonomy is not a privilege for the few, but a fundamental right for all. The sustainability of the project's impact is secured through the integration of its advocacy roadmap into the permanent operations of its partner CSOs and the continued agency of the youth-led network it has empowered.





YnCS D



www.yncsd.org



@yncsd

