



**VISION
SPRING
INITIATIVES**

ANNUAL REPORT

2012-2015

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Vision Spring Initiatives

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary -----	3
Organizational Background -----	4-6
Gender Justice -----	7-8
Education and Research -----	9 - 11
Participatory Leadership/Political education -----	12 – 14
Sexual and reproductive health and rights -----	15 - 16
Networks/Exchange programme/ Youth Outreach -----	17-18
Administration and Finance -----	19 - 22
International, regional and national meetings -----	23
Personnel -----	-23
Partners -----	-24

Executive Summary

Vision Spring Initiatives' interventions derive from the understanding that human rights are inseparable. The various laws and policies signed by our governments are interrelated and indivisible. We recognize that the denial of any right ultimately leads to the violation of other sets of rights. For instance when women and girls are denied education, they lack the prerequisite knowledge to function effectively in leadership and decision making positions. When young people are denied comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education, they fail to make informed choices which may lead to early debut in sexual activities and eventually drop out from school due to social stigma. Based on this understanding, VSI engages in the following thematic areas which it considers critical to the realization of the rights of women and girls: Gender justice, Education and Research, Participatory Leadership/Political education, Sexual and reproductive health and rights, Networks and Exchange programs.

Between 2012 till date, the organization responded to critical issues in the advancement of gender justice in Nigeria. Our overall focus was to contribute to and build on existing initiatives while focusing on our thematic areas.

We partnered with civil society organizations to challenge injustice and cruel judgments against women and girls by state and non-state actors. As a member of Human Rights Agenda Network (HRAN), the organization monitored cases of violence against women in Nigeria. Working with other partners such as Women Law Development Centre of Nigeria, VSI undertook advocacy engaging traditional rulers on their role and the need for male involvement in rights protection.

Under its education and research initiative, the organization undertook basic research on quality of education provided in public schools. Following the findings, gender and participatory leadership trainings were organized in a few schools. The organization also partnered with Working to Advance African Women (WAAW) to provide computer literacy education in 4 schools in the Lagos Metropolis.

On Sexual and reproductive health and rights, Vision Spring Initiatives partnered with the Coalition for the Defense of Sexual rights, International Centre for Reproductive and Sexual Rights, Positive Action for Treatment Access, the Reproductive Health and Rights Advocacy Network Africa among other institutions to provide comprehensive sexuality education and comprehensive sexuality education.

On networks and exchanges, staff and volunteers attended meetings and outreach programs aimed at building skills to effectively tackle cases of violence against persons.

One of the remarkable things that happened in 2014 was the convening of Group of 6 by Vision Spring Initiatives. Detailed report of activities and partnerships are highlighted in the pages that follow

1. Organizational Background

Vision Spring Initiatives (VSI) is a duly registered (RC 908183) non-governmental, not-for profit human rights organization partnering with stakeholders to achieve developmental rights of children, young people and other vulnerable groups and supporting their attainment of these rights using a multipronged approach and diverse strategies.

Our vision is that collectively with women, adolescents and minority groups we create a world based on gender equality and social justice.

Our mission is to ensure that our constituencies have practical tools for the realization of our vision. We will collectively build on existing initiatives, engage in debates, research, education, advocacy, network building amongst other strategies.

We strongly believe that rights are interrelated, inalienable and inseparable and cannot be achieved in isolation. We therefore focus on the following thematic areas towards achieving our mandate:

1. Gender justice (Central and the core of VSI programming)
2. Education and Research:
3. Participatory Leadership/Political education
4. Sexual and reproductive health and rights
5. Networks/Exchange program / Youth Outreach

Our objectives

- To promote gender equality in all spheres of our programming and develop literary skills amongst women and young persons.
- To advocate for the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people and vulnerable groups
- To promote and advance education and research in Nigeria
- To promote participatory leadership and advance youth inclusion in decision making
- To engage with strategic stakeholders and demand implementation of Laws and Policies that guarantee the rights of citizens
- To collaborate with like-minded organizations and find areas of knowledge sharing and build strategic partnerships

Our target Beneficiaries:

Children, Young people, minority and vulnerable groups

1. OUR WORK ON GENDER JUSTICE

Gender justice is central and the core of VSI programmes. Discrimination and violence against women and girls are major causes of poverty all over the world. Ensuring that women and men / boys and girls benefit equally is at the core of all VSI intervention programs. Gender justice and equality therefore underpin all our work and interventions.

Project under Gender Justice-

Policy Advocacy-VSI's policy advocacy project enables it to engage in advocacy to promote the inclusion of women and girls in Laws and policies relating to gender, as well as the enactment of these Laws and the Constitutional commitments towards equality and closing of gender gaps.

Legal Reform –VSI's legal reform project enables it to challenge obnoxious and discriminatory Laws, asking for their repeal and demanding institutionalization and implementation of Laws that respect in equal terms the rights and dignity of men/women and boys/girls.

Interpretation and Simplification of Laws – This initiative provides the opportunity for young people to benefit from interpretation and simplifications of Laws to enable them use these Laws to hold governments accountable and demand implementation of these Laws. The Laws are simplified for different age groups and for easy grasping for the users.

2. Education and Research:

Vision Spring Initiatives' Model school and Crèche project-for infants and children (still under construction) will provide space for young girls and a few boys to 'unlearn' gender stereotypes and gain knowledge on gender and roles. While girls learn that they can undertake any role and responsibilities if they are provided with the knowledge they require, boys learn to respect girls and ultimately become 'champions' in challenging stereotypes. This is one VSI's long term project and charges a fee for the education provided which then is ploughed back towards sustaining the organizations initiatives.as research has shown that gender stereotypes are formed at an early stage in life is a bane to gender issues. Through Vision Spring Initiative's gender manuals young people's reading culture will be enhanced.

VSI's Gender and human rights Institute Project-for gender trainings, curriculum review and development, including ensuring they are relevant to time and needs, teacher training, counselors, school debates,

Research –All interventions promote evidence-based research.

3. Participatory Leadership/Political education Project {Women hold only 14% of world's government seats}.

Project under Participatory Leadership/Political Education-

Participatory and horizontal approach to leadership-VSI's leadership project draw from many years of partnering and engaging in leadership approaches that are inclusive and horizontal , respecting diversity, enhancing communication skills, every body's input and commitment and sharing results and challenges.

VSI's Political Education Project- election preparation, preparation as voters and those to be voted, school clubs on elections and citizenship, manifestoes and preparing youth for elections and violence free elections

4. **Sexual and reproductive health and rights Project:** {Sexual and reproductive health and rights- from a development perspective}

Project under Sexual and reproductive health and rights' project

Women and young peoples' sexual and reproductive health and rights remain the most debated issue including lack of its inclusion as a development issue: Comprehensive sexuality education, information about life skills, communication strategies, diversities and differences, sexualities, bodily autonomy, bodily care, self-esteem, VAW, sexual violence and responding to them.

5. **Networks/Exchange Programme/ Youth Outreach:** {Youth represent developed and on-going development. They have passions, determination and constitute half of the world's population}.

Project under Network/exchange Programme / Youth Outreach

This space enables young people and other groups to dialogue and reach a consensus and the understanding and the yearnings of young people-create safe space for exchange, information sharing, dialogues, debates, peace initiatives amongst others.

2. Gender Justice (Central and the core of VSI programming)

Gender justice is at the core of Vision Spring Initiatives work. During the years under review, the organization ensured it keyed into existing initiatives to push for the rights of women and girls as equal citizens. Working with Human Rights Agenda Network (HRAN), the organization documented cases of violence against women in Nigeria. It provided counseling services to women and a few men. Some other cases were referred to appropriate authorities such as the Police, Office of the Public Defender, Ministry of Justice and Social Welfare. In 2014, the organization handled case of abandonment, providing counseling services where appropriate and finally referred the case to the Ministry of Justice. The case of incest and rape was also reported and handled in the same year. The case was reported to CSO partners such as Partnership for Justice who provided guidance in the case handling.

Since 2012, Vision Spring Initiatives partners with the CLEEN Foundation on its yearly police visitation. In November 2013, the team members comprising Ngozi Nwosu-Juba, Adesoji Charles and Onyeka Chiemejonam visited the Ilupeju Police Station as part of CLEEN foundation's yearly visits and award ceremony to selected police stations in Nigeria. The team was impressed to find that the police station was well kept, cases dispensed in a timely manner, while inmates were treated with respect and dignity before being charged to court or released. The visiting team commended the positive development under the leadership of Divisional Police Officer Gbolahan Olugbemi and commended the Police personnel and CLEEN Foundation for supporting the initiative.

In 2015, the case of domestic violence was reported to the organization, it provided counseling and referred to Ministry of Justice and helped the survivor to get pro bono lawyer through the services of the Lagos state Office of the Public Defender. The case is on-going with Vision Spring providing counseling and follow-up at Ogudu Customary Court, Lagos Nigeria.

Vision Spring Initiatives and Women, Law and Development Centre of Nigeria partnered to mark the *Week of Action against Domestic Violence* in Lagos State. This event which took place in the month of October 2014, coincided with the International Day of the Girl Child. Vision Spring Initiatives started the week by granting radio and television interviews at Eko fm and Galaxy television, calling for an end to violence and demanding more investment in the education of the girl-child.



Gender violence and discrimination against women are attitudes and practices that we cannot afford to live with as humane, dynamic and progressive society. We must ensure that we work together purposefully and assiduously to eliminate these unfortunate practices wherever they exist in our diverse communities. . . His eminence, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, CFR, mni, Sultan of Sokoto at the launch of being a Man in Nigeria: Perceptions and Realities October 22, 2015: A Voices for Change (V4C) Initiative





Members of the non-violence campaign at Onigbongo, Ikeja LCDA Lagos Nigeria

Thereafter the two organizations undertook motorized campaign from Onigbongbo local council development area, demanding protection of the rights of women and girls. In his remark, the Oba of Onigbongbo Oba Fatai committed to take the message to his community and monitor compliance. He also helped in popularizing the message that 'Violence is not our Culture'.



His royal highness, Oba Fatai of Onigbongbo supports the violence is not our culture advocacy

3. Education and Research

In the realization of its objective on research and education which is to promote and advance education and research in Nigeria, Vision Spring initiatives engaged in a number of activities in the years under review. 3 Public schools were contacted to gain insights into educational curricular and how the education provided by those schools is beneficial to the recipients. At the three schools surveyed, it was clear that the beneficiaries had no input in the design of curriculum. This is against the backdrop of the past conversations VSI has had with 60 students of three schools studied. The students had expressed the value of engaging young people through the provision of inclusive and participatory education which will enable them to express their creativity in a supportive and clean environment.



Beneficiaries of VSI's Gender and Leadership Education in partnership with Working to Advance African Women (WAAW) supported by Google

Following these findings, the organization held series of gender and leadership trainings at Ransome Kuti Junior Secondary School, Ogudu Primary School and Igbobi junior school.

At the Ransome Kuti Junior secondary school, it was enlightening to note that the school has sessions that enable young people discover their creative self. The school had vision, mission statements and objectives of the school conspicuously written on the school walls. The students when interviewed confirmed that it challenges them to begin to think about creating their own personal values and goals. Vision Spring Initiatives provided gender and leadership education to a total of 100 students of the school. After the training, special session was held with select students to determine necessary follow-up. The young people through a focus group discussion requested increased participation of parents and guardians, provision of a more holist approach to their education, improved learning environment, and high communication with educationists and involvement of young people amongst other suggestions. Armed with this information, the organization held meeting with management of the school, including an on -the spot assessment of needs of the teachers.

At Igbobi school, the project was designed to benefit mostly girls and school counselors. The research at the school indicated that girls shy away from science subjects. The organisation organized leadership training and debates where girls spoke for and against studying science courses. The organization used existing manuals and educational materials to carry out the trainings. The outcome was quite revealing and pointed to the need to train and retrain teachers including school counselors.

At ogudu primary school, young people when asked what they require to boost their education said they will like to have computer literacy. In 2012, VSI partnered with a computer firm to provide computer training, utilizing students' break periods.

To mark the Africa Code week, Vision Spring Initiatives and WAAW foundation organized a two day computer training for students selected from 4 secondary schools in Lagos. The training was funded by Google.

In the coming years and based on its experience, the organization will increase the number of schools to benefit from training, including focusing its advocacy with relevant stakeholders on the following:

- Advocacy for education that responds to current needs of young people
- Improved budgetary allocation and monitoring of funds allocated to education.
- Advocacy for education in a clean and hygienic environment
- Participation of youth in design/implementation of curriculum

‘When we educate people, they participate, when they participate, our world is transformed’

- Parental involvement and holistic approach that responds to the yearning of young people as valuable resources to the process
- Adequate allocation of funding for school infrastructure
- Provision of safe schools

In April 2014, Vision Spring was saddened by the abduction of more than 200 school girls from their school. The organisation visited Bornu where it provided psychosocial support to the mothers of the abducted girls. Working with Echoes of Women in Africa the organisation organized press and civil society briefing condemning the act and challenging government to intensify effort towards the release of the girls.



March to the Lagos state government house.

Vision Spring Initiative is worried that situations like this truncate education and strip young people of their rights to education.

4. Participatory Leadership / Political education

Vision Spring Initiatives is a member of *More Women Movement* with the conviction that true democracy must mean women's full participation in leadership and decision making processes. True democracy is characterized by the full and equal participation of women and men in the formulation and implementation of decisions in all spheres of public life. Vision Spring Initiatives in the years under review conducted participatory leadership sessions with women and girls. This is premised on the understanding that women and girls are still far from where they should be both in the private and public spheres.



Cross-section of heads of CSOs and women in politics at a UNDP sponsored event, Abuja Nigeria

Nigeria is signatory to many treaties and commitments but the various governments since independence have demonstrated poor political will towards addressing gender gaps. Some of the documents Nigeria has fallen short in fulfilling include: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development goals. Equality between women and men is a

matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and is also necessary and fundamental prerequisite for equality.



Ngozi Nwosu-Juba, Project Director Vision Spring Initiatives presents communiqué at the end of the Women in Parliament Summit, Abuja Nigeria

Vision Spring Initiatives work under this theme focuses on offering women and young people information that enable them to demand accountability and participation at all levels. The organisation attended series of meetings organized by *More Women Movement* which enabled it to build capacity of women to demand political positions. It also partnered with Gender and Development Action (GADA), where it facilitated sessions on Affirmative Action, encouraging women to register to vote and be voted for.

The organisation also attended series of meetings organized by United Nations Development Programme. The meetings prepared women for the 2015 elections, including building capacity of VSI to monitor the 2015 election.



Political education training in Ebonyi state

In 2015 working with G6 members, the organisation developed a 75 page report on Beijing 20 years after. The report made the following suggestions towards enhancing women's political participation:

- ✓ Gender research on accountability and transparency must be developed and sustained to be used as lobbying tools for increase in women's political participation and representation
- ✓ Media reporting of women politicians must be devoid of gender stereotyping
- ✓ Training of women and men on gender and transformative leadership must continue in order to change the attitude and mind-set of women and men in Nigeria for the health and development of democratic culture in the nation.
- ✓ To increase women's representation in power sharing and decision making in Nigeria, gender sensitive laws and policies must be enacted and implemented.

5. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Women and young peoples' sexual and reproductive health and rights remain the most debated issue including lack of its inclusion as a development issue: Comprehensive sexuality education, information about life skills, communication strategies, diversity, bodily autonomy and integrity, bodily care, self-esteem are issues that require attention in order to effectively chart a way for sexual and reproductive health and rights attainment

Vision Spring Initiatives benefitted and contributed to a week and half psychosocial training organized by International Centre for sexual and reproductive health and rights. This training was necessary to equip Nigerian citizens whose rights to sexuality was jeopardized due to inadequate or lack of machineries for the protection and promotion of sexual rights. This was a response to the passing of regressive laws that contradict the 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria and other national, regional and international treaties that Nigeria is signatory to. INCREASE, the coordinating body of the Coalition for the Defense of Sexual Rights (CDSR) therefore carried out a week and half training to equip coalition members on responding to SRHR issues in their various states.

Through consultancy support from MTV Staying Alive Foundation an organisation based in the United Kingdom Vision Spring Initiatives conducted series of peer education in Ogudu and its environs. The Shuga series produced by MTV and Training Guide helps young people understand that they deserve as much attention as HIV receives. The guide is designed to help young people build their capacity to lead groups of young people (peers) into journeys where they understand their own lives, decisions and behaviors better because of HIV and consequently in a better place to navigate the many risks of their time and beyond. The 3 day trainings conducted at two locations using the manual enabled young people to pay attention and learn about other life skills that might affect their decisions, issues around stigma and discrimination, disclosure, self –identification, negotiations, branding and gender based violence and other lessons learnt throughout the training period.

**IN COUNTRIES WHERE
FEMALE GENITAL
MUTILATION IS
PRACTICED, YOUNG
WOMEN ARE FACED
WITH HEALTH
CHALLENGES THAT
MIGHT AFFECT THEIR
SEXUAL LIFE
PERMANENTLY**

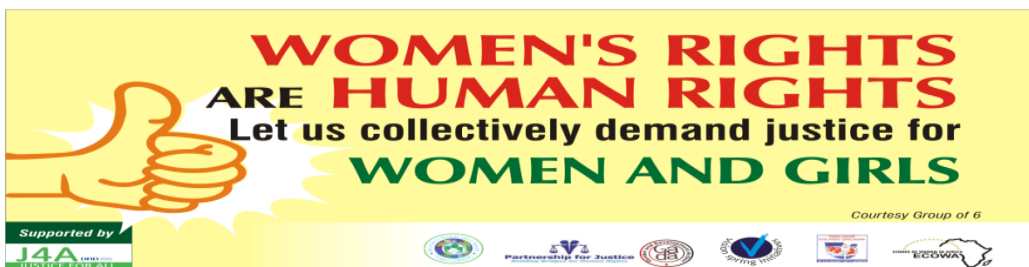
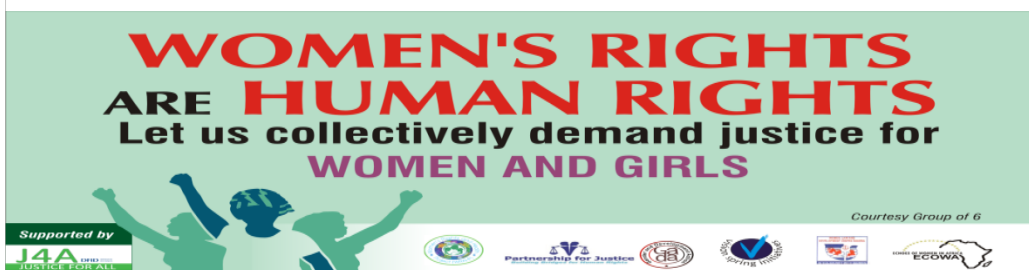


Shuga peer education training

At the end of the trainings, young people confirmed that it challenged them to find their voices and their hearts and effectively express it in ways that can enable them decide to live productive lives, protect themselves, their peers and their communities and ultimately adopt responsible behavior.

6. Networks/Exchange Programme/Youth Outreach

In 2015 Vision Spring Initiatives conceived of the idea to identify sister organization whose work focus on ending all forms of violence against women, girls and other vulnerable groups. This led to the formation of Group of 6 (G6). In March 2015 the group comprising Gender and Development Action, Partnership for Justice, Vision Spring Initiatives, Women Law Development Centre of Nigeria, Echoes of Women in Africa and Women's Rights and Health Project developed a 75 page review of Beijing +20 supported by Justice for All (J4A). On return from the Commission on the Status of Women meeting in New York, the organisations carried out a step down training for other CSOs and relevant agencies to position them for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals. A work plan was developed to guide its work in this regard.



African Media and Malaria Research Strategic Meeting-June 22-26, 2015

Vision Spring Initiatives was represented at the African Media and Malaria Research Strategic Meeting held at the Rockefeller Foundation, Bellagio Center Italy. The theme for the convening was: developing a strategic media framework to consolidate gains in the fight against malaria and positioning Africa for the RTS's, Malaria vaccine. The African Media and Malaria Research Network (AMMREN) was established in 2006 as a network of African journalists and scientists working together to reduce the burden of malaria and other diseases endemic in most parts of Africa. It has membership drawn from 10 African countries namely: Burkina Faso, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania and the Gambia. The outcome of the meeting was identification of country hub to push agenda for the elimination of malaria in Nigeria. Vision Spring Initiatives was identified as country hub for Nigeria.

Partnership with Human Rights Agenda Network (HRAN)

Vision Spring Initiatives is a member of Human Rights Agenda Network. In January 2015 the organization submitted report of its documentation of abuses and cases handled in 2014. The organization responded to a few cases of domestic violence, child abandonment and incest and rape. It is hoped that the Network will engage in more activities to ensure that violence is reduced to its barest minimum.

Vision Spring Initiatives is a member of the Coalition for the Defense of Sexual Rights. It is a consortium of more than fifteen (15) non-profit independent organizations established in 2006 to respond to issues of sexual violence and non-respect for sexual and reproductive health and rights of Nigerians especially sexual minorities.

International, regional and national meetings attended

As part of its capacity building efforts and learning, Vision Spring Initiatives attended the following meetings and events in the years under review:

Commission on the status of Women, New York 2014, 2015 and 2016

Advocacy and alliances building for post 2015 organized by Reproductive health and rights network (RHANA) an African network currently hosted by IPPFA (September 2013)

Advocacy for inclusiveness of women's and girls' voices in the Post 2015 initiatives in Africa (Kenya April 2014)

Advocacy and alliances building for post 2015 organized by Reproductive health and rights network (RHANA) an African network hosted by IPPFA (July 2015)

Advocacy for implementation of the ECA commitments (Zambia 2015)

Personnel

Ngozi Nwosu-Juba /Project Director

Juliet Abuah / Program Coordinator

Adesoji Juba /Volunteer

Tope Oshinaike / Staff-Part time

Our board

Toyin Ajao

Dolapo Dola-Lami

Baijatu Bello

Ngozi Nwosu-Juba (ex-officio member)

Justice Nkem Izuako

Dr. Ann ojimba

Kola Afolabi

Partners

Reproductive Health Advocacy Network Africa (RHANA), Kenya

Group of 6 organizations (G6)

The African Media and Malaria Research Network (AMMREN), Ghana

FEMNET Kenya

Women Law Development Center of Nigeria (WLDCN)

Coalition for the Defense of Sexual Rights (CDSR)

Echoes of Women in Africa (ECOWA)

CLEEN Foundation

Network of Women living with HIV/AIDs in Nigeria (NEPWHAN)

International Center for Sexual and Reproductive health and rights (INCRESE)

Human Rights Agenda Network (HRAN)

Positive Action for Treatment Access (PATA)

Ransome Kuti Junior secondary school

Ogudu primary school

Igbobi Junior school

Supporters

Urgent Action Fund

MTV Staying Alive Foundation through consultancies

Good-Seed Petrochemical Company

National Agency for the Control of Aids (NACA) and UNDP through consultancies

International Centre for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (INCRESE)

The Astrea Foundation Incorporated –through consultancies

Board members' contribution in cash and kind