



CEDPA/Nigeria Better Life Options Program Final Report

April 2011

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Cover photos: CEDPA Better Life Options program graduates

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Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
BLO	Better Life Options
CAF	<i>Choose a future!</i>
CBO	Community Based Organization
CEDPA	The Centre for Development and Population Activities
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HQ	Headquarters
LGA	Local Government Area
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PLWHA	People Living with HIV/AIDS
PSC	Project Support Committee
RH	Reproductive Health
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Software)

Background

Nigeria is one of the most populous countries in Africa with a population of over 154 million inhabitants.¹ Throughout the country, poverty is widespread despite its vast oil wealth. According to its basic social indicators, Nigeria is ranked among the world's twenty poorest countries. Prolonged military regime, inadequate political will, rapid population growth and poor management of available resources have hindered effective implementation of education policies. The biggest casualties of this inefficiency are women and girls.

While 73 percent of Nigerian males are literate, less than half (48 percent) of their female counterparts can read and write. In the southern region of Nigeria, 21 percent of females and 19 percent of males have never attended primary school.² In addition to low overall attendance rates, some regions of Akwa Ibom state have incredibly high student-to-teacher ratios. In Eket Local Government Authority, there are 129 students for every teacher in primary school, making quality education elusive for many youth.³

Nigeria has the second-highest number of HIV/AIDS infections in the world⁴, surpassed only by South Africa⁵. Although Akwa Ibom state in the southern region of Nigeria has the second highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the country, 92 percent of those living in the region believed they had no risk of contracting HIV, and many were unaware of appropriate methods to prevent the infection⁶. While there is a clear need for reproductive health and HIV/AIDS education, most youth do not discuss sexual matters with their family members.⁷

Given the education and health challenges in southern Nigeria, it is evident that a participatory approach is needed to encourage youth to return (or enroll for the first time) to school, communicate with parents about common health issues, and gain greater awareness of reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. In order to achieve sustained impact on the ground, it is necessary to involve the community at large, and particularly parents and others who communicate with youth and shape their opinions and attitudes about education and health issues.

Executive Summary

CEDPA was awarded a two-year grant (December 2008 – February 2011) by ExxonMobil to strengthen the Better Life Options project in Nigeria (originally implemented 2006-2008). This project was a follow-on to the ExxonMobil Foundation grant for the pilot phase of the project, which was designed to improve the education, health and quality of life of Nigerian youth (10-19 years) in Akwa Ibom State. The goal of the follow-on project was to create a sustainable

¹ National Population Commission of Nigeria: 2006 final census result.

² Federal Ministry of Health, Federal Republic of Nigeria. *National HIV/AIDS and Reproductive Health Survey*. Abuja: Federal Ministry of Health, 2003. and National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA). *Draft 2005 HIV/AIDS Sentinel Report*. Abuja: NACA, unpublished.

³ Local education authorities in Eket, September, 2006.

⁴ Although only 4% of adults are infected, Nigeria's large population makes the number staggering.

⁵ UNAIDS. 2008. "Sub-Saharan Africa AIDS Epidemic Update." UNAIDS: Geneva.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Only 9 percent of fathers and 20 percent of mothers reported speaking to their adolescent children about sexual or reproductive health. Ibid

Better Life Options program in Akwa Ibom State to reach girls and boys at educational risk and encourage them to return to formal or vocational school.

The project objectives were to:

- increase the capacity of existing partners to implement the Better Life Options program;
- ensure more effective linkages with the formal school system in Akwa Ibom State; and
- document and communicate the contributions of the Better Life Options Program in Akwa Ibom.

The main activities for the two-year follow-on project continued to empower young girls and boys (ages 10 – 19 years old) in the four target local government areas (LGAs) of Akwa Ibom State, to envision and attain a better future. CEDPA used its Better Life Options and Opportunities Model and newly adapted *Choose a Future! (CAF!)* manual to improve the knowledge, life skills and gender awareness of participating youth, and prepare them to make healthy and productive choices regarding their education, reproductive health and civic participation within an enabling environment and supportive community.

Objective one results:

CEDPA worked with four local implementing partners to carry out project activities during the pilot and follow phases: two non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and two community-based organizations (CBOs) to reach youth in the four target LGAs (Eket, Esit Eket, Ibeno and Onna). CEDPA also established Project Support Committees (PSCs) in each LGA comprised of local community leaders – village chiefs, women leaders, religious leaders, youth and other stakeholders to support specific program activities. In order to increase their capacity, CEDPA offered 15 training sessions to program staff in areas ranging from conflict management, to leadership, financial reporting and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). All trainings were carried out by CEDPA staff or expert consultants.

Facilitated assessments of the local partners showed that organizations improved capacities by an average of 53 percent in the four program areas assessed: program management, financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and management systems. Among the four areas assessed, organizations showed an average of 70 percent increase in scores for monitoring and evaluation systems, reflecting successful skills gained by organization staff as a result of training carried out by CEDPA staff in principles of monitoring and evaluation and technical skills in Excel and SPSS computer software.

Objective two results:

One hundred ninety-four (194) beneficiaries took part in the original evaluation and completed two follow-up surveys in March 2009 and 2010 to track long-term individual impacts. Analyses of the survey data included descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha to test reliability of scales, Chi-squares/T-test and ANOVAs to determine differences between sites and gender. In addition to the survey, regular monitoring data was collected to determine the percentage of participants who enrolled or re-enrolled in formal or vocational training, disaggregated by sex.

Key findings of the analysis showed that the majority of respondents dropped out of school because they could not afford it, but as much as 35 percent of survey respondents and 51 percent of the recent graduates re-enrolled in formal or vocational schools after completing the program.

There was significant variation across the different sites with respect to the core indicators tested. Onna had the lowest scores except in the area of HIV/AIDs knowledge. The gender-based violence index was high in Ibeno, even though they had the highest gender attitude and reproductive health knowledge indices. Onna also had the highest number of girls living in the poorest income category. Lowest scores recorded from Onna may have been as a result of poor program administration by the implementing partners, PresbyAids, evident from the results of a recent capacity building assessment carried out on all partners.

Objective three results:

CEDPA documented the BLO program through various media agencies as well as through images and professionally developed brochures and case stories. The final dissemination meeting brought together more than 250 community members and program participants to showcase the events and distribute program materials.

History

Founded in 1975, CEDPA is an internationally recognized non-profit organization that improves the lives of women and girls in developing countries. In 2005, as part of its Educating Women and Girls Global Community Investment Initiative, the ExxonMobil Foundation provided CEDPA a three-year grant to implement the Better Life Options: Empowering Girls and Boys for Future Leadership (BLO) project in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The primary goal of the project was to empower young girls and boys (10 – 19 years) to envision and attain a better future. The project focused primarily on girls at educational risk and was implemented in four LGAs (Eket, Esit Eket, Ibeno and Onna) through local NGOs and CBOs.

After a successful pilot program, CEDPA was awarded a two-year, follow-on grant (December 2008 – February 2011) by ExxonMobil Foundation to strengthen the Better Life Options project in Nigeria. The **goal** of the project was to create a sustainable Better Life Options program in Akwa Ibom State to reach girls and boys at educational risk.

The main **objectives** were to:

1. Increase the capacity of existing partners to implement the Better Life Options program.
2. Ensure more effective linkages with the formal school system in Akwa Ibom State.
3. Document and communicate the contributions of the Better Life Options program in Akwa Ibom.

CEDPA sought to realize its objectives through a program of non-formal education and youth development activities by adapting its internationally renowned *Choose a Future!* curriculum to the context of Akwa Ibom State. The curriculum covers topics such as self-image, goal-setting and plans, gender, family roles and relationships, marriage and parenthood, puberty,

reproduction, health, and the environment with the aim of mobilizing young people who are out of school to envision and attain a better future.

The core project activities were to facilitate life-skills classes for 1,000 out-of-school youth (80 percent girls/young women, 20 percent boys/young men), based on the adapted *Choose a Future!* manual, CEDPA's non-formal education curriculum modified during the pilot phase of the BLO program. Classes were facilitated by community members, often teachers from the local secondary schools, in Eket, Esit Eket, Ibeno and Onna. Facilitator trainings and activities were managed by four local NGOs and CBOs in Akwa Ibom, and coordinated by CEDPA Nigeria's Calabar office and staff.

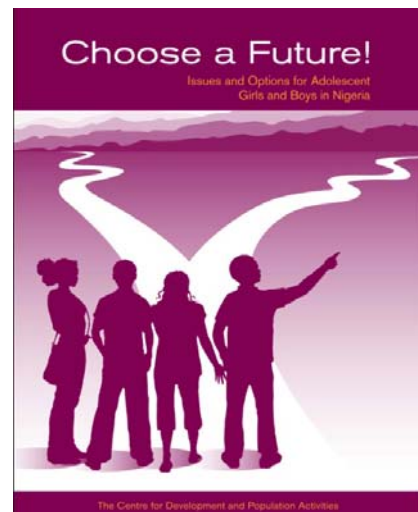


Figure 1. Life skills curriculum cover for Nigeria

In addition to implementing the life skills curriculum, program staff worked with community members and local NGOs to gain support and build capacity for youth programs.

Community stakeholders, such as village leaders, government officials, education professionals and other community leaders were engaged during the original pilot project, but formal committees were further strengthened and/or established during the follow-on project. CEDPA established PSCs comprised of stakeholders and community leaders in each of the four target LGAs and provided training in fundraising, advocacy and workplan design. In addition to establishing new community organizations, local community based organizations and NGOs served as implementing partners and were given trainings on various topics to strengthen their capacity to manage and implement youth-focused programs.

This report presents the results of the BLO project based on several assessments carried out throughout the program. Findings from the program data are reported in the sections that follow based on the three program objectives (see above). Detailed program findings are included in the indicator report and C-CAT reports (see appendix).

Evaluation Methodology

In order to assess the effects of the follow-on phase to the BLO Program in both the community and among beneficiaries, data was collected using surveys, CEDPA's Capacity Assessment Tool (C-CAT), program monitoring and qualitative interviews throughout the lifespan of the project.

To evaluate the long-term impacts of the BLO project on the beneficiaries, CEDPA carried out two follow-up surveys at the four target LGAs. The main objective of the follow-on survey was to gather data to better understand beneficiaries' knowledge and attitudes about issues covered in the program. Survey data from a cohort of graduates from the initial pilot phase (2005-2008) is used to ascertain knowledge, attitude and behaviors of youth two years after completing the program. The first survey was administered in March 2009 and the second was completed in March 2010.

Of the original 244 youth surveyed in the pilot program, 243 were available for follow up in 2009, and 174 in 2010. Therefore, results for changes in knowledge, attitude and behaviors are based on the responses from the 174 youth who were available for interviews in both 2009 and 2010. Scales and indices were created based on a Cronbach's reliability of .650 or higher, and Linear Mixed Modeling was used to determine changes in scores between 2009 and 2010.

In addition to survey data, CEDPA's Capacity Assessment Tool (C-CAT) was administered to partner NGOs at the baseline and endline of the program to measure the capacity of NGO staff to manage programs, funds, monitoring and evaluation, among other areas. The tool was administered by the BLO M&E manager to all the directors, project coordinators, project accountants and field coordinators from PresbyAids Organization, Eket Women Development Association (EWDA), Lilies Organization and Esop Mbaba Organization, respectively. The tool examined the perceptions of staff and the C-CAT facilitator in four core areas of organizational capacity: financial management, program management, management systems, and M&E. Assessment scores were reviewed with the organizations' staff and strengths and weaknesses were identified at baseline to inform the specific capacity building activities implemented throughout the lifespan of the project.

Further monitoring data from the beneficiaries participating in the second phase of BLO (2009-2010) to show the number of youth enrolled and completing the *CAF!* curriculum, as well as the number and percentage of youth re-enrolling in formal and vocational schools.

Objective I. Capacity building for local partners and project support committees

To meet objective one, CEDPA carried out systematic capacity building trainings for both implementing partners and newly established PSCs to help create a sustainable method for addressing youth issues with an engaged and supportive community. Over the duration of the program, CEDPA and hired experts carried out fifteen organizational trainings for PSC members and program staff in various areas, including leadership, M&E, advocacy, fundraising and conflict mitigation.

Because the main goal for the PSCs was to recruit active and influential members, establish supportive groups with roles and encourage regular meetings and participation by members, the capacity of the PSCs was not formally assessed. However, program monitoring data and qualitative interviews with PSC members provide some insight into the importance of their involvement in the success of the program.



Figure 2. PSC members and program staff with BLO beneficiaries in Eket

PSC members took part in workplan trainings, community sensitization meetings, fundraising workshops and advocacy trainings throughout the project. During the second year of the project, one example of capacity building was a two-day workshop conducted by a local branch of Afribank to improve PSCs' capacity for resource mobilization and financial management of endowment funds. CEDPA networked with a bank manager (from Afribank, Eket branch) who conducted the training at no cost, as part of his support to CEDPA projects in Akwa Ibom communities. This training helped the PSCs to develop a plan for mobilizing their communities to support beneficiaries' return to formal schools. Also during the second year of the program, CEDPA HQ staff carried out a three day workshop on advocacy for PSC members and project staff. One of the PSC members, a former principal said, "I've been really impressed by the other trainings." The workshops have motivated her to become more involved – to reach out to other community leaders and engage them in the program. "I'm really into it. I really want to be involved on this project," she said referencing the advocacy training in which she participated.



Figure 3. M&E training for partners

To facilitate capacity building among local partners, CEDPA staff and consultants conducted formal trainings and orientations for implementing partner staff. Specific trainings were based on assessed strengths and weaknesses and included project management, M&E, computer software skills, conflict management and financial reporting. By the end of the project, partners reported setting standardized accounting system with effective codes. In some of the organizations a formalized supervisory mechanism was established to replace the somewhat ad hoc system in place.

Program staff also learned how to use project templates and improve both report writing and proposal development skills. Moreover, a culture of annual audits and working with multi-year strategic plans emerged among partner organizations. Finally, CEDPA's M&E manager trained partner staff to use analytical software packages such as SPSS and Microsoft Excel during the project. According to a staff member from Lilies Organization in Eket, "the capacity building process is the greatest thing about working with CEDPA." The Project Director at Lilies also said, "CEDPA is strict about record keeping and also in implementation of the project...I'm auditing now. I'm better than when I started at keeping records in order."

The C-CAT was used to assess perceived organizational capacity for the four local implementing partners only. The C-CAT report can be found in its entirety in the appendix. Among the four areas assessed, the largest gains were seen in M&E and financial management. Improvements in capacity scores for M&E ranged from 62 to 91 percent. Financial management training also appeared to make a substantial impact on the partner organizations, with improvements in scores ranging from 45 to 90 percent across all organizations. Overall, each implementing partner organization improved its capacity score by more than 15 percent in the four areas examined. Esop Mbaba showed an average of 40 percent increase in capacity across the four areas of capacity listed above. Lilies organization had showed a spectacular 68 percent

increase in capacity while, PresbyAids and Eket Women Development Organization (EWDA) exhibited 44 and 60 percent increase in capacity, respectively. Overall, implementing partners experienced an average of 50 percent increase in capacity scores over the duration of the program.

Objective 2. Linking Youth with Life Skills, Formal and Vocational schools – Survey findings

Target population demographics

Table I below shows the key demographic composition of the sample of beneficiaries who responded to the surveys in March 2009 and March 2010. Although the same cohort of girls and boys was interviewed for both surveys, differences exist between baseline and endline as a result of attrition. For the final survey, 174 (71 percent) of the original respondents were available the day the survey was administered, showing approximately 29 percent attrition from the pilot program survey administration. Many of the young girls and boys either moved out of the area, were working or in school, and therefore did not participate in the survey. Age categories understandably changed, as the youth aged over time, which is shown in Table I.

In total, 187 girls at baseline and 140 girls at endline participated in the survey. A smaller number of boys took part in the survey as they comprised just 25-30 percent of the target group of beneficiaries. Therefore, just 57 boys at baseline and 44 boys at endline participated in the survey. The mean age of for both girls and boys was 16, with the majority in the age range of 15-19 at both baseline and endline. Overall, the respondents come from households where the main source of income is from trades/sales/services (42.2 percent at endline) and agriculture - farming and fishing (34.1 percent at endline). The majority of the beneficiaries came from two ethnic groups, and identified themselves as Eki or Ibibio, while another 21.8 percent identified themselves as Ibeno. Differences in ethnic group are seen by LGA, showing strong regional trends for ethnic identification. Income levels for beneficiaries' households were estimated based on asset ownership; overall, more than half of the respondents (55.7 percent) lived in poor or middle income homes. In Onna, more than 40 percent of the beneficiaries fell in the lowest income category, showing the highest proportion among the four LGAs. Ibeno tended to have a wealthier sample of beneficiaries, with the majority of Ibeno's respondents (63.4 percent at endline) in the highest wealth category.

Table 1. Demographics of respondents in baseline survey (as percentages)

Variables	Local Government Areas									
	Onna		Eket		Ibenu		Esit Eket		Total	
	Baseline n=81	Endline n=57	Baseline n=69	Endline n=48	Baseline n=53	Endline n=41	Baseline n=40	Endline n=28	Baseline N=243	Endline N=174
Sex										
<i>Female</i>	80.2	78.9	76.8	81.3	66	63.4	82.5	75	76.5	75.3
<i>Male</i>	19.8	21.1	23.2	18.7	34	36.6	17.5	25	23.5	24.7
Major Ethnic Group										
<i>Ibibio</i>	95.1	87.7	23.2	22.9	9.4	2.4	2.5	17.9	40.7	38.5
<i>Eki</i>	4.9	10.5	73.9	77.1	0	0	97.5	75	39.0	36.8
<i>Ibenu</i>	0	0	0	0	83	92.7	0	0	18.1	21.8
<i>Other^a</i>	0	1.8	2.9	0	7.6	4.9	0	7.1	2.2	2.9
Main Source of Income										
<i>Agricultural(farming/fishing)</i>	48.1	38.6	30.9	27.7	32.1	31.7	35	39.3	37.4	34.1
<i>Trade/sales/services</i>	29.6	43.9	45.6	51.1	47.2	36.6	42.5	32.1	40.0	42.2
<i>Clerical (secretarial)</i>	3.7	0	1.5	2.1	1.9	4.9	0	3.6	2.1	2.3
<i>Skill manual (Mechanic, Mason, Artisan)</i>	11.1	8.8	7.4	6.4	7.5	7.3	10	10.7	9.0	8.1
<i>Professional/Technical/Manager</i>	4.9	3.5	5.9	8.5	5.7	12.2	0	10.7	4.5	8.1
<i>Other income sources/don't know</i>	2.4	5.3	8.8	4.3	5.7	7.3	12.5	3.6	7.0	5.2
Age category										
<i>10-14 years</i>	40.7	28.1	44.9	25	41.5	31.7	50	35.7	43.9	29.3
<i>15-19 years</i>	50.6	59.6	55.1	41.7	56.6	58.5	50	28.6	52.9	49.4
<i>above 19 years</i>	2.5	7	0	8.3	1.9	9.8	0	17.9	1.2	9.8
<i>missing or don't know</i>	6.2	5.3	0	25	0	0	0	17.9	2.0	11.5
Income levels										
<i>Poor</i>	43.2	40.4	29.4	35.4	28.3	19.5	20	32.1	32.1	32.7
<i>Middle income</i>	29.6	29.8	26.5	16.7	18.9	17.1	40	28.6	28.4	23.0
<i>Wealthy</i>	27.2	29.8	44.1	47.9	52.8	63.4	40	39.3	39.5	44.3

a. Other major ethnic groups include Annang and Efik

Low income levels were a key role in reasons why youth dropped out of school. On average, respondents dropped out of school between 12 and 13 years of age primarily because of a lack of funding (85 percent at endline). Several youth claimed to have dropped out because their families did not want them to attend, (3.6 percent at endline) or because they were pregnant (2.1 percent at endline). Table 2 below shows the reasons why the respondents dropped out of school, based on multiple choice answers.

Table 2. School dropout reasons and ages

Reasons for dropping out	Local Government Areas									
	Onna		Eket		Ibenu		Esit Eket		Total	
	Baseline (56)	Endline (43)	Baseline (48)	Endline (35)	Baseline (38)	Endline (38)	Baseline (27)	Endline (24)	Baseline (169)	Endline (140)
<i>Couldn't afford school fees</i>	94.6%	88.4%	77.1%	80.0%	76.3%	84.2%	48.1%	87.5%	78.1%	85.0%
<i>Family didn't want me to go</i>		2.3%	2.1%			5.3%	3.7%	8.3%	1.2%	3.6%
<i>Was pregnant</i>		4.7%				5.3%	2.6%	3.7%	1.8%	2.1%
<i>Didn't want to go anymore</i>				5.7%			3.7%	4.2%	0.6%	2.1%
<i>Other/don't know</i>	5.4%	2.3%	18.8%	11.4%	18.4%	5.3%	40.7%		17.8%	5.0%
<i>Ill/disabled</i>			2.1%	2.9%		2.6%			0.6%	1.4%
Average age at dropout ^a	12	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Most often age at dropout									12	12
									(135)	(101)

a. Determined by participant response to "Can you estimate how old you were at the time you stopped going to school?"; rounded up to nearest whole number.

Re-enrollment

A critical objective of the BLO program is to inspire school re-enrollment in formal school or vocational training programs among targeted adolescents in the four project LGAs. Results from the first follow-on survey show a high rate of re-enrollment (35 percent) in the sample population (n=244) in formal school, while the second survey showed a higher rate of 66 percent re-enrollment. This increase in re-enrollment suggests that over time, girls and boys who complete the BLO program are likely to re-enroll in formal or vocational school, even if it is not immediately after or during program implementation.

Monitoring data from the follow-on phase provides additional evidence on re-enrollment based on actual figures. Table 3 shows that more than 50 percent of graduates from the follow-on phase re-enrolled in formal and vocational schools. Data suggests that boys are more likely to enroll in both formal and vocational school. Eket LGA was highly successful at encouraging beneficiaries to re-enroll in school, showing 70 and 65 percent of girls and boys respectively re-enrolled in formal schools. This is because all 15 members of the Eket PSC distributed the beneficiaries in their LGAs among themselves for one-one mentoring and coaching. They made the highest number of visits to CAF! classes, schools where beneficiaries are studying and also met more than once a month to discuss progress of their mentees.

Table 3. Re-enrollments among beneficiaries who completed CAF

LGA	Girls (n=969)				Boys (n=241)				Total (N=1210)	
	Type of school				Type of school					
	Formal	Vocational	Formal	Vocational	Formal	Vocational	Formal	Vocational		
Onna	79	32%	11	4%	31	28%	5	5%	126	39%
Eket	214	70%	4	10%	47	65%	3	33%	268	71%
Ibeno	79	33%	3	1%	23	36%	2	3%	107	35%
Esit Eket	87	51%	5	3%	26	76%	3	9%	121	59%
Total	459	47%	23	2%	127	53%	13	5%	622	51%

Note. Percentages for re-enrollment by state based on the number of girls or boys who completed the program in each state, respectively.

The high rates of re-enrollment suggest that the BLO project is achieving its objectives to a very large extent. By adding a work-study scholarship component to the program in the follow-on phase, CEDPA effectively addressed the reason why youth dropped out of school (unable to pay fees) but also gave them the confidence and attitude to pursue studies to improve their future through the life skills curriculum, *Choose a Future!*

“I am very grateful to the BLO project, for giving us these textbooks and school materials. Other youth in schools are jealous of us. It is a rare privilege because my parents could not buy me books. I will make good use of them...Guess what, I will not drop out of school again. I will study to university level.”— 15 year old female from Eket LGA.

“I keep thanking God everyday for making me join this program. I have told my friends all about a work plan....I have never heard that word before I joined the work-study program. Now I am a full time office worker. There are many things I can do in an office and I am not ashamed to work into any office anymore.”— 16-year old girl from Ibeno.

Knowledge and Attitudes

Survey questions aimed at assessing the respondents' attitudes toward education were included in both follow-on surveys. Questions were combined into scales of knowledge and attitudes, usually ranging from 0 to 1.0, to show an average score for each individual in each key area. Attitudinal scales were tested for reliability and included only if the Cronbach's alpha score was .650 or higher. Knowledge scales were based on correct responses to questions on reproductive health (puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, etc), STIs and HIV/AIDS. Knowledge scales are a proportion of correct responses out of the total number of questions; therefore, knowledge scales can be translated into a percentage score (ie. .520 is the same as a respondent getting 52 percent of the answers correct). The complete table of scores for survey respondents is found in Appendix A, Table I.

Education Attitudes

In general, beneficiaries believed that it was important to stay in school, in many cases to a tertiary level. The education attitude questions sought to examine beneficiaries' attitudes towards primary, secondary and university education. CEDPA's *CAF!* modules on education attitudes inspires participants positively. The education attitude scale ranged from 0 to 1, and the overall average for the respondents was .917 at baseline and endline. Reliability analysis of the education attitude scale showed the value for Cronbach's alpha to be 0.785. One and two years after completing the BLO program, the participants maintained enthusiasm for education. No significant changes were seen over time, and scores remained very high at baseline and endline, showing that youth do find education important in their lives. At the endline, Ibeno had the highest score (.940) and Onna had the lowest (.896), though the range is small. T-Test analysis between boys and girls shows that there is no significant difference between the educational attitudes of boys and girls across the project area ($t=0.064$, sig. (2 tailed) = 0.949).

Reproductive Health and HIV Knowledge

The reproductive health and HIV/AIDS knowledge scales included questions that ranged from understanding reproductive health knowledge and means of prevention and transmission of HIV/AIDS respectively. Possible scores ranged from 0 to 1, and at endline scores ranged from .411 in Esit Eket to .560 in Eket for reproductive health knowledge and from .540 in Esit Eket to .598 in Onna for HIV/AIDS knowledge. The sample for the HIV/AIDS knowledge scale is lower than the sample because of substantial missing data, which was excluded during scale creation. Therefore, it must be taken into consideration that the scores reflect just a portion of the respondents' knowledge.

Two years after completing the BLO program, program beneficiaries showed no significant loss of knowledge in the reproductive health and HIV/AIDS knowledge scales. In the entire sample, the reproductive health score was .522 at baseline and .496 at endline, while the HIV/AIDS scale was .518 at baseline and .563 at endline. In two LGAs, reproductive health scores stayed about the same, and in two states the scores tended to decrease, but not significantly. HIV/AIDS knowledge seemed to increase slightly across all LGAs and in the overall average. Changes were not significant probably due to small sample sizes during the final survey (28

respondents in Esit Eket, for example). According to a T-Test analysis, there was no significant variance in reproductive health knowledge across gender.

Community Involvement among Youth

Community involvement questions were designed to evaluate the beneficiaries' participation in community activities after the implementation of the program. Participants were assessed based on their attendance, planning and implementation of activities including environmental clean-up, choir, sports and others. A higher number of points are awarded for organizing or volunteering at events, while fewer points are awarded for attending events. The scale ranges from 0 to 13; the average community involvement score was about 3.9 at baseline and 2.9 at endline. During the BLO program, beneficiaries were encouraged to participate and organize community activities, yet it seems as time passes after the program, the youth are less engaged in community activities. Average community involvement scores decreased significantly overall, and in Ibeno and Esit Eket. In Onna, the community involvement scale increased from 3.6 to 4.1, which was not a significant increase, but is higher than the overall average, showing that the youth in Onna are more active than the other LGAs.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a psychological construct that reflects people's belief about their ability to influence specific events that affect their life. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave in a specific context. The *CAF!* is designed to increase self-confidence and, in effect, self-efficacy among the young beneficiaries. Survey results show that the self-efficacy index positively correlates with re-enrollment. Average scores at baseline and endline were .71 and .76 respectively, with no significant change; all LGAs showed scores between .7 and .8 at endline. In Onna, however, self efficacy scores actually increased significantly, suggesting that the lessons transmitted during the BLO program have longer term impacts on self-efficacy. Results from T-Test analysis across gender show that there is no significant variance in self-efficacy between girls and boys. At endline, Ibeno shows the highest average scores. More than half of Ibeno's sample is considered "wealthy" according to the asset-based income scale, and there is a fairly strong correlation between income and self efficacy (.252), which may be one reason for high self-efficacy scores among Ibeno's beneficiaries.

Gender Attitude/Gender Based Violence

CEDPA seeks to influence positive shifts in attitudes in male-female interaction and reduce gender-based violence. The survey includes two scales related to gender attitudes and gender-based-violence (GBV). When combined, the questions from both scales create one gender attitudes scale with strong reliability (.770), which is why the aggregated scale was used for the analysis, rather than two separate gender scales. The scale ranges from 0 to 1.0, with 1.0 representing more gender equitable views (i.e.,



Figure 4. Female mechanic showing BLO beneficiaries that girls can be mechanics too.

boys and girls should share household responsibilities, equal chances for school, etc). Overall, the gender attitudes score was .71 at baseline and endline. Variations across LGAs exist, with Onna showing the highest score (.745) and Esit Eket the lowest (.651) at endline. Although there were no significant changes over time, survey respondents maintained relatively high gender equitable views one and two years after completing the BLO program.

Conclusions about Survey and Monitoring Data

Overall, survey data suggests that beneficiaries are re-enrolling in formal and vocational schools at relatively high rates and the majority of youth are returning to formal school. Monitoring data show that girls still lag behind boys in re-enrollment (47 percent vs. 53 percent for formal school), and more boys are going to vocational school than girls, as well (5 percent vs. 2 percent). The addition of the work study scholarships is perhaps one reason why enrollment increased between the pilot and follow-on phases (12 percent vs. 51 percent). Support from community members through the PSCs may have also contributed to increases in re-enrollment.

The survey results are encouraging for non-formal life skills education. One and two years after completing the curriculum, relative levels of knowledge and attitudes remain about the same. There are few instances of any significant decreases in scores over time. Indicators for attitudes toward education, self-efficacy, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS knowledge and gender equality all remained the same for both surveys. Knowledge scores hovered around .500-.600, suggesting the beneficiaries retained at least 50 percent of the knowledge they were taught during the *CAF!* classes. Attitudinal scales remained high (.700 and higher) for education, self-efficacy and gender equity. In one case — self-efficacy in Onna — scores actually increased among youth without taking part in any specific program activities or classes. However, there was a significant decrease in engagement in community activities overall in two of the four project sites.

Scores for HIV/AIDS knowledge was consistently higher in each project site than reproductive health knowledge scores, showing that the girls have a greater understanding of HIV/AIDS issues than reproductive health issues. This suggests the reproductive health knowledge module may need to be revised in future *CAF!* sessions in order to improve reproductive health knowledge among beneficiaries. According to interviews and focus group discussions, the reproductive health modules often made the biggest impression on the beneficiaries, so it is important to ensure the youth are fully understanding the lessons.

Differences also existed between project sites, indicating that capacity for carrying out program activities varied across implementing partner organizations. Eket and Esit Eket showed higher rates of re-enrollment among graduates and in some cases higher scores for indicators like self-efficacy, educational attitudes and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS knowledge. Onna and Ibeno, on the other hand, had relatively lower rates for re-enrollment and in some instances the beneficiaries from those areas had lower scores on key indicators.

Objective 3. Documentation and other Results

In order to meet the final program objective, CEDPA staff and partners publicized the program to the community through rallies, talks and inviting media to document the achievements.

Quotations from program participants and case stories were collected to further document individual and community level effects of the BLO program. The final dissemination meeting also showcased the various stakeholders involved in the project, including youth beneficiaries, PSC members, facilitators and partner staff to demonstrate the broad reach of effects achieved resulting from CEDPA's holistic community-based approach.

Partners were held accountable for conducting public outreach events to sensitize and publicize the BLO program. During the period of the project each of the four partners held at least one road show and several household visits, for a total of 13 community events promoting BLO activities. All project partners embarked on community rallies and road shows (community showcases) in their different local government areas. The aim was to create awareness about the BLO Project, and mobilize community support. Messages centered on encouraging girls and boys to go back to school and remain in school, on promoting girls' education, and requesting government and stakeholders' support. One of the rally songs chanted in the local language (Ibibio) translated into English "CEDPA-BLO you have done well, no one can do better than this...thank you." Another common chant –in English "I know I can be what I want to be. If I work hard in it, I will be what I want to be."

Approximately 1,973 people attended CEDPA's 13 community events held during the BLO project, which surpasses its target. The majority of the participants attended community rallies and road shows (community showcases) held in each LGA. During the second year, EWDA organized an additional rally after BLO classes ended in September 2010 to showcase the project. The rally in Eket was attended by 232 people including PSC members, facilitators, family life education teachers, parents and other community members.

Each of the partners had a publication on BLO in the local newspapers in Akwa-Ibom state as well as radio programs. They also produced information, education and communication materials (small posters during the course of the project). Articles were written for two local newspapers, *Pioneer* and *Insight* newspapers of Akwa Ibom state, after the execution of two work study scholarship awards. Final publications for the dissemination event included case stories of key stakeholders and images from the duration of the program, which were professionally laid out in a brochure/poster and were widely distributed in Akwa Ibom, as well as through the CEDPA Calabar, Abuja and Washington, D.C. offices. CEDPA also held a successful dissemination meeting, which was written about in local newspapers and posted on the CEDPA website with photos and video from the meeting.

One positive unanticipated outcome from the BLO program was the development of a financial literacy module that can be added to the *Choose a Future!* curriculum. CEDPA staff and stakeholders identified the need for financial skills among the beneficiaries because many of the youth in the four target LGAs who had dropped out of school did so because of a lack of funding for school fees. Facilitators noted that many out of school youth were found selling goods, like fish and other food by the waterside, but did not fully understand how to manage and make the best use of the money they earned. The financial literacy module has been developed as an e-learning module, divided into three sessions covering earning money, budgeting, saving, loans and microfinance. The module will be available for use in future youth programs in the Niger Delta region, and can be adapted for other contexts, both local and international.

Another positive outcome was the interest in the BLO program expressed by USAID and their health program located in the northern Nigerian states of Bauchi and Sokoto. After hearing about the success of CEDPA's life skills program in the south, program staff from the comprehensive health program, Targeted States High Impact Project (TSHIP), in the north traveled to Calabar and Eket to visit the BLO program and identify ways to use a similar project design for their adolescent health education component. Discussions between CEDPA staff from the BLO project and USAID TSHIP staff are underway.

Conclusions and Lessons Learned

The BLO program generated numerous positive results in Onna, Eket, Ibeno and Esit Eket among both community members and youth beneficiaries. By effectively working with community organizations, community leaders, teachers and at-risk youth, the BLO program has been able to foster a supportive environment for youth to return to school. The main outcome from the project can be seen in the more than 600 graduates who re-enrolled in formal and vocational schools. The life skills curriculum alone is not responsible for generating such high rates of re-enrollment, but CEDPA's community-based, holistic approach to supporting at risk youth is essential to successful programs.

Engaging local NGOs as implementation partners and building their capacity through training has improved their abilities in areas like financial management, monitoring and evaluation and program management, which benefited the BLO program, but will also benefit the organizations' future programming. In addition to the partner organizations, engaging the community leaders and stakeholders from program inception ensured their buy-in. By establishing PSCs and giving them specific roles and responsibilities, combined with capacity building so they have the skills to accomplish those tasks, was essential for securing their support throughout the program lifespan. Encouraging PSC members to continue to support re-enrollees by visiting them in and out of class, and providing support to facilitators who are also teachers are some ways to encourage girls and boys to re-enroll or stay in school.

Finally, through outreach and documentation, the program has infiltrated communities in each of the four project areas. PSC members, facilitators and partner staff reached out to both you and their parents to encourage their participation in the program. Through outreach activities, like rallies and group discussions, support was gained from teachers and community leaders who later on went on to join PSCs or become *CAF!* facilitators.

Testimony from the dissemination meeting suggests that the holistic approach was the key to success for the BLO project. According to one community leader from Onna, "Not only did the program directly affect the lives of these beneficiaries positively, but it extended services to community members as project support committees and parents alike. Personally this project encourages me more and more to enlighten our community."



Figure 5. Scholarship recipients

APPENDICIES

Variables	Local Government Areas														
	Omna			Eket			Ibena			Esit Eket			Total		
	Baseline (57)	Endline (57)	sig	Baseline (48)	Endline (48)	sig	Baseline (41)	Endline (41)	sig	Baseline (28)	Endline (28)	sig	Baseline (174)	Endline (174)	sig
Education attitudes scale (0 to 1.0)	0.882 (51)	0.896 (51)		0.945 (44)	0.902 (44)		0.920 (38)	0.940 (38)		0.924 (26)	0.929 (26)		0.917 (159)	0.917 (159)	
Self efficacy scale (0 to 1.0)	0.689 (51)	0.749 (51)	*	0.688 (41)	0.707 (41)		0.763 (39)	0.792 (39)		0.683 (27)	0.743 (27)		0.706 (158)	0.748 (158)	
Community involvement scale (0 to 13)	3.588 (55)	4.120 (55)		3.611 (47)	2.757 (47)		3.523 (40)	1.587 (40)	**	4.912 (28)	3.241 (28)	*	3.908 (170)	2.926 (170)	*
Reproductive health knowledge scale (0 to 1.0)	0.476 (48)	0.502 (48)		0.556 (41)	0.560 (41)		0.564 (39)	0.511 (39)		0.491 (25)	0.411 (25)		0.522 (153)	0.496 (153)	
HIV/AIDS knowledge scale (0 to 1.0)	0.542 (45)	0.598 (45)		0.544 (30)	0.560 (30)		0.533 (26)	0.554 (26)		0.452 (18)	0.540 (18)		0.518 (119)	0.563 (119)	
Gender attitudes scale (0 to 1.0)	0.701 (52)	0.746 (52)		0.717 (43)	0.720 (43)		0.759 (40)	0.734 (40)		0.657 (25)	0.651 (25)		0.708 (160)	0.713 (160)	

Note. Scores calculated for each state with the sample size for each state by variable beneath the score.

**CEDPA/NIGERIA BETTER LIFE
OPTIONS (BLO)**

**CEDPA CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL
(C-CAT) - ENDLINE REPORT**

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March, 2011

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Acronyms

BLO	Better Life Options
CBO	Community Based Organization
C-CAT	CEDPA Capacity Assessment Tool
CEDPA	The Centre for Development and Population Activities
EWDA	Eket Women Development Association
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information Systems
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ExxonMobil awarded CEDPA a two-year, follow-on grant (July 2008 - June 2010) to strengthen the Better Life Options (BLO) Project in Nigeria. The goal of the project was to create a sustainable BLO program in Akwa Ibom State that continued to reach girls and boys at educational risk. This project was a follow-on to the three-year ExxonMobil Foundation grant to implement the pilot phase of the BLO Program.

A lesson learned early during the initial phase of the BLO project was that implementing partners required significant capacity strengthening and continuous support to be able to successfully implement the program. Therefore, CEDPA undertook capacity building as a primary objective for the BLO follow-on phase. This set the pace for a systematic capacity development plan tailored to meet specific weaknesses of each implementing partner (IP) through group and individual capacity training, as well as on-going mentoring.

The BLO project adapted the CEDPA-Capacity Assessment Tool (C-CAT) for the assessment to determine if there was an increase in capacity in four key areas. The tool was administered by the BLO M&E manager to all the directors, project coordinators, project accountants and field coordinators from Presby-AIDS, Eket Women Development Association (EWDA), Lilies Organization and Esop Mbaba organizations respectively. The tool examined the perceptions of staff and the C-CAT facilitator in four core areas of organizational capacity: financial management, program management, management systems, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

The initial assessment (C-CAT baseline) was done in July 2009 to ascertain the areas the partners needed a lot of attention. A capacity building plan was done in collaboration with the partners after the baseline to address the gaps in performance and capacity. Several trainings and mentoring activities in various areas including financial management, leadership, advocacy, program management, M&E etc took place after the initial assessment.

According to the self-assessment questionnaire results from the endline assessment, which was carried out in January 2011, all four organizations showed “promising to strong” capacity at endline. The agreement level was also very high in all instances, re-enforcing the fact that the partners’ capacity has truly improved as a result of the series of trainings and mentoring programs organized for the organizations. Specifically, over fifteen organizational trainings were held across all capacity areas, including leadership development.

Partner staff stated that standardized accounting system with effective codes were put in place. A formalized supervisory was established to replace the somewhat ad hoc system in place. Program staff also learnt how to use project templates and improve both report writing and proposal development skills. Partner staff were also trained to use analytical software packages such as SPSS and MS Excel during the period of the project. More so, a culture of annual audits, multi-year strategic plans, advocacy strategies/plans and many other improvements were recorded.

Figure I. Capacity scores by implementing partner (Baseline)

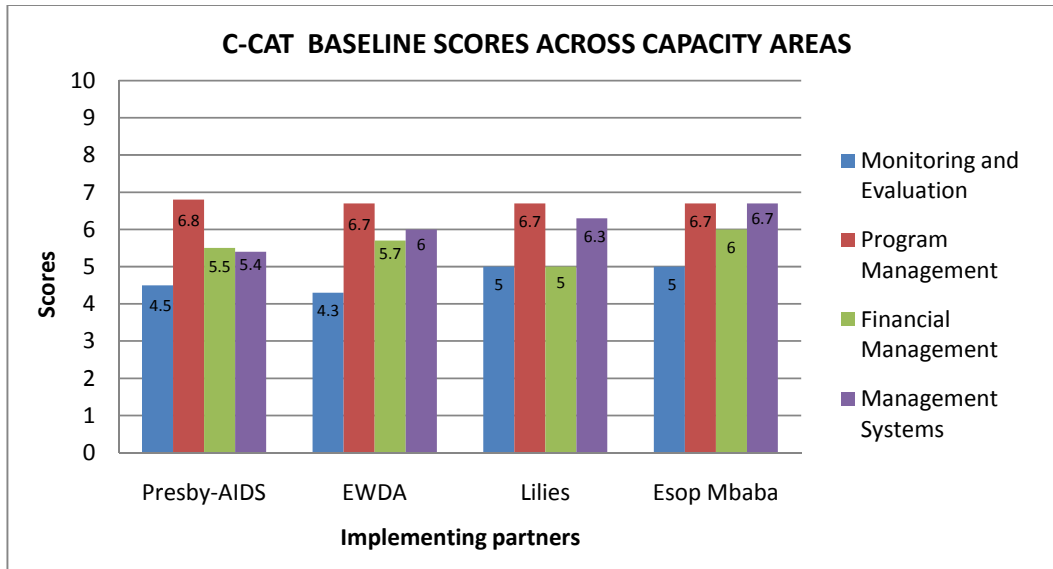
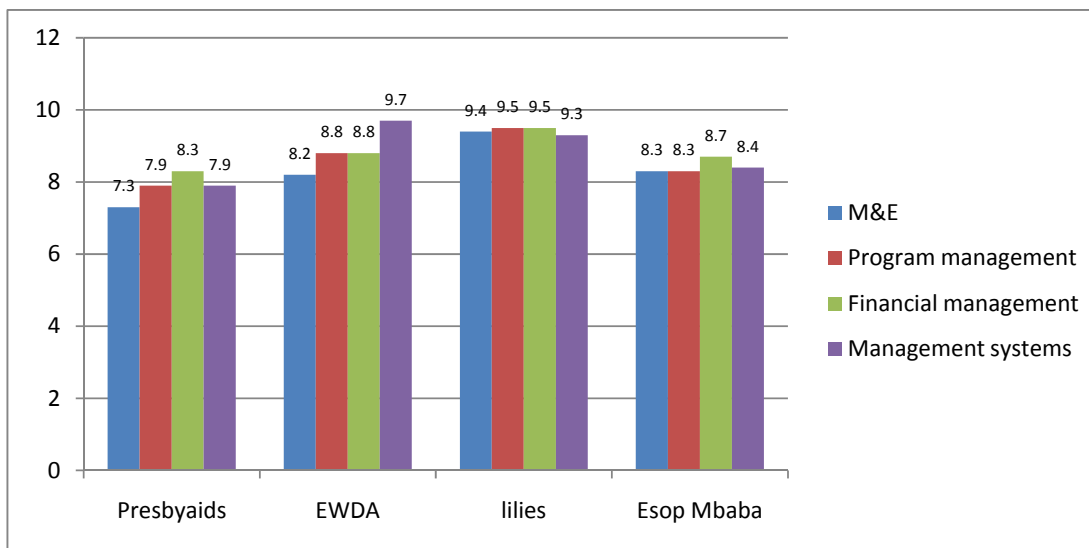


Figure 2. Capacity scores by implementing partner (Endline)



At endline, Presby-AIDS' scores ranged between 7.3 and 8.3, but reviewing both the self-assessment scores and facilitator scores, PresbyAids appears to be quite strong in overall organizational capacity. Eket Women Development Association (EWDA) had capacity scores ranging from 8.2 to 9.7, also demonstrating “promising to strong” capacity in all areas assessed. Lilies Organization in Ibeno showed the highest and most consistent capacity scores ranging from 9.3 to 9.5 signifying a consensus on high capacity in all of the four areas assessed. Esop Mbaba Esit Eket also yielded “promising to strong capacity” in all capacity areas including M&E (8.3), Program Management (8.3), Financial Management (8.7) and Management Systems (8.4). This reflects a drastic improvement from baseline.

II: Introduction

One of the strategies that CEDPA has adopted to ensure effective implementation and sustainability of the goal “A sustainable *Better Life Options program in Akwa Ibom State to continue to reach girls and boys at educational risk,*” is to build capacity of four local implementing organizations that will deliver the programs in the communities.

CEDPA understands the importance of leadership skills and capacity building for individuals and institutions within a development context. Since 1975, CEDPA has trained women, men, and young people to become change agents for effective international development. CEDPA believes working through local partners and increasing their capacity to effectively implement programs create sustainable programs that can respond better to community needs over time. In the follow-on project, CEDPA will provide training in organizational management and on-site technical assistance to implementing partners to effectively build their capacity.

CEDPA’s approach to working with local partners fosters a culture of collaboration through joint planning and skill-building workshops on project design and proposal writing, strategic planning, grant management, financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and advocacy and network formation. Through participation in CEDPA-supported networks and coalitions, partner organizations move from the traditional model of working in isolation and competition to a model that recognizes and leverages respective resources and skill sets.

The above objective informed the adaptation and administration of the CEDPA Capacity Assessment Tool (C-CAT) on all implementing partners with the sole aim of ascertaining their level of capacity in four areas: management systems, program management, monitoring and evaluation, and financial management. These organizations include Presby-AIDS organization (Onna), Eket Women Development Association (EWDA), Lilies Organization (Ibeno) and Esop Mbaba (Esit Eket). The assessment was facilitated by the M&E manager for the CEDPA BLO project, while the Project Directors of the host organizations worked as the assessment leaders.

There were no major contextual factors or challenges that affected the baseline and endline assessment; however, there are several limitations to the assessment. One limitation is the upward among bias staff members who fill out the questionnaires while their supervisor is present; this happened during the assessment. All self-administered questionnaires have some bias when assessing one’s own organization, their place of employment, which is their source of livelihood. Second, the tool is designed for a variety of sizes of organizations; however, the ideal number of respondents is ten, and all organizations completing this assessment had just four or five respondents. Therefore, one outlier will drastically change average scores.

The mission of the various partner organizations are stated in their organizational Profile below and the findings of the assessment are in the following section.

III. Organisational Profile

Eket Women Development Association (EWDA):

EWDA is a non-profit, community based organization (CBO) established in 1981 and registered with the State Ministry of Women Affairs, Akwa Ibom State and Social Welfare (registration number 472 as a CBO). It is an umbrella organization for all women from Eket Local Government and for all others within the country and abroad. In some rare occasions, women are co-opted into the organization by virtue of their contributions to the community. The association has three executive members, five Board of Trustee members, four staff, and thirty volunteers. The organization's mission is to encourage and promote educational awareness for children living in Eket, especially the girl-child. EWDA is a champion of girl-child education and is the founder of Girls' High School, Ikot Ibiok, the only girls' educational institution in the whole of Eket Local Government Area. In addition to monitoring the growth and performance of the Girls' High School, EWDA awarded scholarships to five underprivileged youth in secondary and tertiary institutions.

The association has developed a working relationship with Mobil Producing Nigeria, Unlimited. It has received assistance in building the girls' dormitory, refectory, and kitchen and also received 300,000 naira for its scholarship fund. EWDA is also affiliated with the National Council of Women Societies, Akwa Ibom State.

EWDA BLO Project staff includes;

Mrs. Edemanwan Ukpong – Project Director
Lady Jane Akpan – Project Coordinator
Mrs. Idongesit Essien – Field Coordinator
Miss. Mfoniso Inyang – Project Accountant

Esop Mbaba Esit Eket:

Esop Mbaba is a women-focused CBO operating in the LGA of Esit Eket. Founded in 2002 by local women leaders, the organization is committed to improving the living conditions of rural women and girls in Esit Eket. Esop Mbaba Esit Eket is registered with the Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Women Affairs and is in the process of being registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC).

Esop Mbaba has 150 members actively involved in the organization's activities. The organization has collaborated with Women United for Economic Development (WUEE) to provide microcredit services to twenty women and has worked with the defunct Local Action Committee on AIDS (LACA) to facilitate HIV/AIDS awareness workshops for mothers and young girls. To promote education, Esop Mbaba Esit Eket provided a parcel of land and labour to Stepping Stones Nigeria, a UK-based child-focused charity for the building of a model school

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that provides scholarship opportunities to orphans and less-privileged children in 2005. The head teacher of the school is a frontline member of Esop Mbaba Esit Eket.

In partnership with Esit Eket Lady Teachers Association, Esop Mbaba has organized vacation classes for students and conducted career counseling services to students in Esit Eket. The organization implemented the pilot phase of the CEDPA BLO Project from September 2006 to March 2008, recording laudable landmarks that have been applauded by parents and traditional rulers. Esop Mbaba has also partnered with the Lilies Organization, National Council of Women Societies (NCWS), Community Service International (CSI), Child Rights and Rehabilitation Network (CRARN), Handmaids of Infant Jesus, Esit Eket Community Development Foundation (EECDF), among others, in several community development activities.

Esop Mbaba BLO Project staff:

Chief (Mrs.) Grace Dan Ikot - Project Director
Utibe Etudo Ikot – Project Coordinator
Patience Sampson Essentia – Field Coordinator
Rose Monday Bassey – Project Accountant

C. Lilies Organization (Ibena)

Lilies organization is a non-governmental organization whose focus is to create a harmonious environment for humanity through well-planned programs for women and children. The organization works on gender and governance issues, democracy and governance, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS and community development initiatives. With a strong gender focus, Lilies Organization works to empower women and youth in Eket Federal Constituency. It has over fifteen years experience working with local communities and organizations in the area to facilitate and coordinate economic empowerment, youth and community development, primary health and democracy activities, partnering with many credible NGOs and government agencies.

Lilies BLO Project staff includes;

Princess Ini Adiakpan – Project Director
Diana-abasi Urua – Project Coordinator
Elizabeth Ibok – Field Coordinator
Anthony Ihianle – Project Accountant

D. Presby-AIDS Organisation (Onna)

Presbyterian AIDS Action Committee (Presby-AIDS) is a faith-based organization of the Community Service and Development Department of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria. Presby-AIDS areas of focus are reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, peer education, care and support, including treatment, orphans and vulnerable Children (OVC) and women's empowerment.

Presby-AIDS BLO Project Staff includes;

Mr. Emmanuel Ekanem – Project Director
Mrs. Ekuseme Ekong – Project Coordinator

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Miss Itoro Ndobbo – Field Coordinator
Miss Emem Johnson – Project Accountant

V. METHODOLOGY

The C-CAT endline administration exercise was conducted over the course of two days (January 18-19, 2011) at the offices of partners in four Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom state (Onna, Eket, Ibeno, Esit Eket). One additional day (January 2011) was used to share results with the self-assessment participants and discuss the findings of the report.

The findings on organizational capacity were based on data from a range of sources including;

- Self-assessment questionnaires: each participant provided scores between 0.0 and 10.0 for a set of ten questions to assess each of the four areas of capacity.
- Facilitator questions: the facilitator provided scores between 0.0 and 10.0 for a set of three questions to assess each area of capacity. The provision of these scores was largely influenced by personal observation and discussions with individual participants.
- Facilitator observations: the facilitator made notes recording participant comments during discussions and his own observations during interactions with staff members.
- Background documents: the facilitator reviewed background documents such as proposals, reports and other internal documents to which he was provided access.

Prior to the administration of the C-CAT endline, an orientation was conducted for the staff of all partner organizations in their offices enumerating the objectives of the assessment. Discussions were also held on each domain providing a platform to define and attend to questions on each area of capacity. Participants were grouped thereafter according to organizations to brainstorm on their organizational strengths and weakness vis-a-vis the different areas of capacity. This also produced a bias toward consistency, which may not have existed otherwise.

To have a representative sample of all levels of the organization, all staff members (including the Project Directors) from Presby-AIDS, EWDA, Lilies Organization and Esop Mbaba participated in the assessment meetings.

Assessment Meeting

The endline capacity assessment took place in the offices of the partners. After the introductory discussion, participants were asked to respond to the appropriate section of the self-assessment questionnaire individually. Follow-up discussions were done shortly after the assessment to reflect on the capacity of the organization in each area. This provided an opportunity for participants to express their views and for CEDPA to gain deeper insight into the workings of

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the organization. After the assessment exercise, the self-assessment questionnaires were retrieved and a date was set for the review and action-planning meeting.

Processing the Assessment Data

Completed questionnaires, organizational data to verify indicators and C-CAT Spreadsheets were used to process the assessment data. Data from the self-assessment questionnaires were entered into the facilitator worksheet in Excel. Participant scores ranging from 0 to 10 for each area of capacity were entered into the appropriate cells while codes DK (don't know), NA (not applicable) and NR (no response) were applied where applicable. Participants are numbered from 1 to 4 for the respective organizations.

Data gathered on verifiable indicators (evidence of audits, human resources policies, annual reports, etc) during the preparatory visit were also entered into the appropriate cells in the facilitator worksheet. Also, the facilitator's own scores for each area of capacity were entered into the facilitator's worksheet. The facilitator worksheet automatically produces a number of variables as all the data are entered.

Table 1. Variables automatically produced by the facilitator worksheet

Variable	Explanation	Comments
Capacity score (for each area)	Mean of the median scores on all questions in each area of capacity.	The capacity score is an aggregate measure to assess each area of capacity.
Higher or lower relative level of capacity (for each area)	The score for each area is categorized as either 'poor to intermediate' capacity (for scores from 0 to 6.0) or 'promising to strong' capacity (for scores between 6.1 and 10.0).	The midpoint for relative low vs. relative high is at 6.0.
Internal agreement score (for each question)	The agreement between participants for each question is measured by the spread, or range, of their answers. High internal agreement is determined by a spread of answers of less than or equal to 3.0.	The spread is preferred to other measures of distribution such as standard deviation because of the small sample size of participants.
Internal agreement score (for each area)	Score (0-10.0) based on the number of questions with "high agreement" divided by the total number of questions for the area of capacity, multiplied by a factor of 10.	If there are 4 questions with "high agreement" out of 10 questions, the score for agreement is 4.0.

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Variable	Explanation	Comments
Higher or lower relative level of internal agreement (for each area)	The score for each area is categorized as either 'relative poor' agreement (when the Internal agreement score is below 6.0) or 'relative strong' agreement (when the Internal agreement score is greater than 6.0).	The midpoint for relative low vs. relative high is set at 6.0.
Summary categories (for each area)	Based on the relationship between relative levels of capacity and relative levels of internal agreement, each area of capacity is assigned to one of four summary categories. See Table 2.	

Table 2. Summary categories for each area of capacity

		Capacity	
		Low	High
Internal Agreement	Low	<i>Responses indicate general weakness, but considerable variation</i>	<i>Responses indicate strength, but limited consensus</i>
	High	<i>Responses indicate consensus on weakness</i>	<i>Responses indicate consensus on strength</i>

The facilitator worksheet is one of six worksheets in the C-CAT Spreadsheet. The remaining worksheets produce tables and charts based on the variables generated by the facilitator worksheet, which were used for analysis and exported into this assessment report. These worksheets include:

- Individual worksheet: Changes to self-assessment questions were made on this page. These changes were automatically carried over to the Facilitator (Data Processing) Worksheet.
- Overall results table: This worksheet automatically produces a table with the capacity (self-assessment) score, the internal agreement score and the facilitator score for each area. The results are automatically exported into a series of charts.
- Capacity chart: This chart presents the capacity (self-assessment) score for each area.
- Capacity and internal agreement chart: This chart presents the capacity (self-assessment) score and internal agreement score for each area.

VI. Analysis and Findings

C-CAT is designed to identify areas of organizational practice that would benefit from capacity building interventions. Results and findings from the C-CAT analysis are disaggregated by BLO implementing partners.

PRESBY-AIDS (ONNA)

The results showed that Presby-AIDS demonstrated “promising to strong” capacity in the four assessed areas, with all capacity scores clustered between 7.3 and 8.3. Out of the four areas assessed, financial management received the highest capacity score (8.3); program management and management systems received the second highest scores (7.9), and monitoring and evaluation was next in the rank (7.3). Table 3 shows the overall scores for the baseline and endline analyses.

A comparison of the two results indicates a drastic and impressive change in partner’s capacity in all of the four areas of capacity. This has also been seen in number of re-enrollees recorded for the program recently as a result of a more effective implementation.

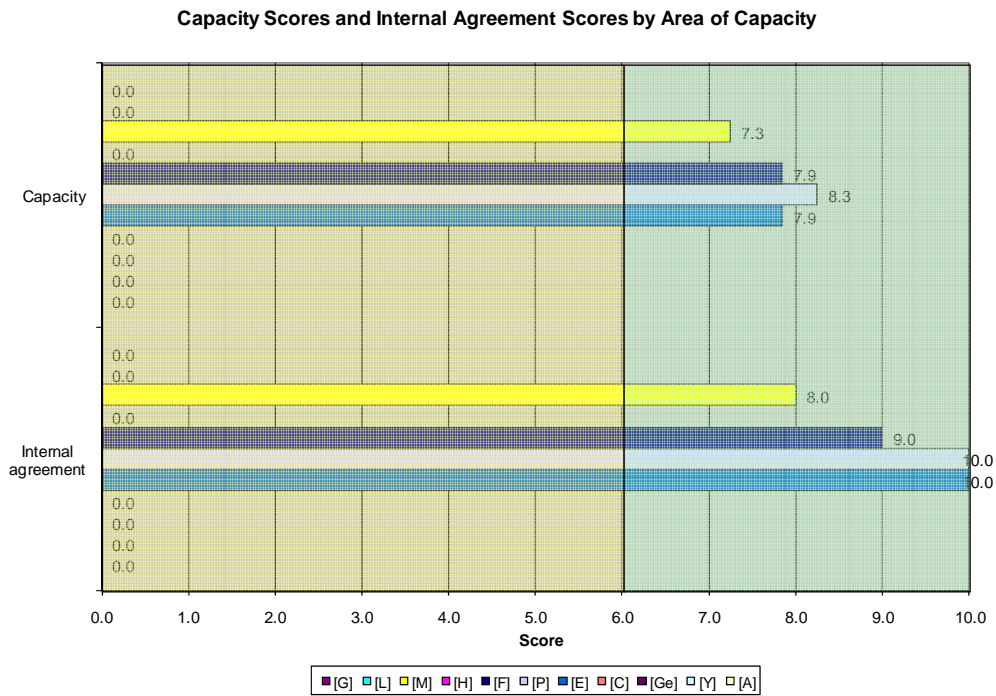
Table 3. Comparative C-CAT scores for Presby-AIDS (Baseline and Endline)

Area of Capacity	Capacity score		Internal agreement		Facilitators score	
	Baseline	Endline	Baseline	Endline	Baseline	Endline
<i>Monitoring and Evaluation</i>	4.5	7.3	6	8	4.7	6.7
<i>Program Management</i>	6.8	7.9	5	9	5	7.3
<i>Financial Management</i>	5.5	8.3	6	10	5.3	7.3
<i>Management Systems</i>	5.4	7.9	1	10	4.3	7.3

At endline, internal agreement scores ranged from between 8.0 to 10.0 indicating “relatively strong internal agreement,” and is higher than the agreement scores at baseline. This change can be partially attributed to the decision to allow staff to meet and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the organization prior to completing the individual forms.

Despite the increase in capacity shown by the scores, one of the participants still did not have enough information on the operations of the organization, as indicated by the number of ‘DKs’ (Don’t knows). Apparently, the management system is still riddled with information paralysis in that the partners did not have sufficient evidence to substantiate certain scores, which is why overall, the facilitator scores were lower than the capacity scores.

Figure 3. Self-assessed capacity scores and internal agreement for Presby-AIDS by area of capacity



Management Systems

The question on providing an ‘effective supervisory system’ and ‘effective procedure for obtaining resources for planned activities at all levels within the organization’ received the highest points (9.0) with a high internal agreement. The question “If the organization has multiple branches, or implements projects in cooperation with partners, there is regularized communication between cooperating units” and “If the organization has multiple branches, or implements projects in cooperation with partners, there is a clear division of roles and responsibilities between cooperating units” received the lowest scores.

Financial Management

Presby-AIDS improved in the area of financial management. Annual audits have been instituted and the organization now has an accounting software instead of relying on manual entries. Participants expressed satisfaction with some basic financial systems, including consistent reconciliations of cashbook balances with the bank account balance (9.5). Compared to the baseline, staff now have reasonable access to written financial policies that identify personnel who can authorize expenditures (6.5), however, the question on monthly financial forecasts received a low score (5.0). Budget monitoring reports are now produced for management staff on a monthly basis (8.0).

Program Management

The highest scores in this domain were for the statement, “Resources are utilized effectively to achieve programmatic goals” (9.0), “Program managers are held accountable for project results”

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(9.0) and “program staff give timely and accurate program reports” (9.0). Participants assigned 7.0 to the organization’s steps to ensure program sustainability beyond current project funds. Good scores were awarded to other questions such as, “maintenance of up to date files and templates of program team” (8) and the statement, “programs addressed the expressed needs of the beneficiaries” (8). Increase in Presby-AIDS program management capacity can be seen in the improved number of re-enrollees from Onna in the last year (about 84 verified re-enrollees)

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation also received a “promising to strong capacity” score (7.9) indicating an improvement from the baseline score, which was 4.5. This was not a surprise since several trainings on M&E were undertaken in the past year, including a training on ‘introduction to SPSS’.

EKET WOMEN DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (EWDA)

EWDA demonstrated “promising to strong” capacity in the four assessed areas, with all capacity scores clustering between 8.2 and 9.7. Out of the four areas assessed, management systems received the highest capacity score (9.7); program management and financial management systems received the second highest scores (8.8) while monitoring and evaluation received an overall score of 8.2. Oddly, however, the highest scoring capacity area received the lowest facilitator score, indicating dissenting perceptions about the organization’s capacity in management systems. Table 4 shows the overall scores for the baseline and endline analyses while the following figure shows the capacity and internal agreement scores.

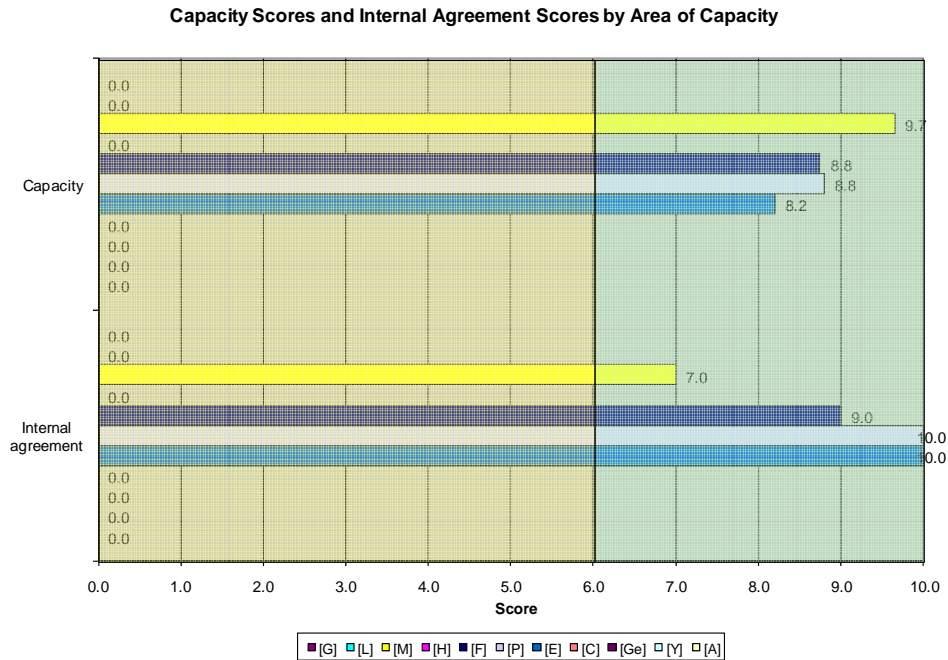
Table 4. Comparative C-CAT scores for EWDA (Baseline and Endline)

Area of Capacity	Capacity score		Internal agreement		Facilitators score	
	Baseline	Endline	Baseline	Endline	Baseline	Endline
<i>Monitoring and Evaluation</i>	4.3	8.2	4	10	5	8
<i>Program Management</i>	6.7	8.8	7	10	7.8	7.3
<i>Financial Management</i>	5.7	8.8	6	9	6.3	7.7
<i>Management Systems</i>	6	9.7	5	7	6	7

Internal agreement scores for the endline ranged from between 7.0 to 10.0 indicating “relatively strong internal agreement.

Figure 4. Self-assessed capacity scores and internal agreement for EWDA by area of capacity

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Management Systems

The question on ‘routine meetings to keep the staff and volunteers informed’ and ‘effective procedure for obtaining resources for planned activities at all levels within the organization’ received the highest scores (9.75) while the question “There is an effective supervisory system to support the work of volunteers” received the lowest score (8.5).

Financial Management

EWDA has improved significantly in the area of financial management. The organization now carries out annual audits and also makes use of accounting software for work instead of relying solely on manual methods. Participants also agreed strongly that cash flow forecast is now being carried out regularly, which was not the situation during the baseline analysis. The survey also shows that staff capacity in the area of financial management has been built tremendously over the past one year (9.75). Also, budget monitoring reports are now produced for management staff on a monthly basis (8.5).

Program Management

The following statements received the highest scores in this domain, “Resources are utilized effectively to achieve programmatic goals” (9.0), “The organization is taking steps to ensure program sustainability beyond current project funding” (9.0). “Program managers are held accountable for project results” (9.0) and “Program managers are held accountable for project results” (9.0). High scores were awarded to other questions such as “Program staff possess the essential technical skills for all areas of work, or engage consultants to supplement their skills”, “Programs addressed the expressed needs of the beneficiaries” (8.50).

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Monitoring and Evaluation

The analysis shows that monitoring and evaluation received a “promising to strong capacity” with mean scores ranging between (7.5 – 8.75). This reflects a significant improvement compared to the baseline when M&E had an overall capacity score of 4.3. Partners received several trainings on M&E during the project lifespan, which may have helped improve their capacity in this area.

Lilies Organization - (IBENO)

The C-CAT analysis reflected that Lilies Organization showed a “promising to strong” capacity in all areas of capacity assessed. In fact, Lilies organization showed the highest capacity scores as follows; financial management system (9.5), monitoring and evaluation (9.4), program management (9.5) and management systems (9.3). The disparity between these results and the facilitator scores, however, show that perhaps the organization may still require further assistance in capacity building. Table 5 shows the overall scores at baseline and endline.

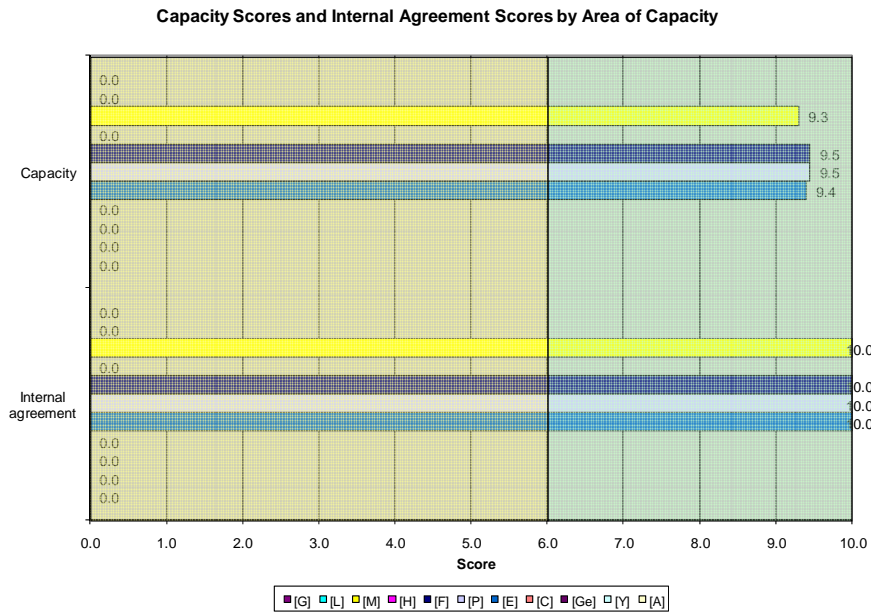
The internal agreement score was 10, indicating that all staff agreed with the assessment scores; this, however, can also be explained by the C-CAT administration process. Below is a table showing baseline scores measured in the previous year for the same capacity areas.

Comparing the two tables, it can be categorically concluded that Lilies organization experienced a drastic positive increase in each capacity area.

Table 5. Comparative C-CAT scores for Lilies Organization

Area of Capacity	Capacity score		Internal agreement		Facilitators score	
	Baseline	Endline	Baseline	Endline	Baseline	Endline
<i>Monitoring and Evaluation</i>	5	9.4	1	10	6	7.7
<i>Program Management</i>	6.7	9.5	6	10	8	8.3
<i>Financial Management</i>	5	9.5	4	10	5.1	8.3
<i>Management Systems</i>	6.3	9.3	5	10	6.5	7.7

Figure 5. Self-assessed capacity scores and internal agreement for Lilies by area of capacity



Management Systems

The Statement “There is an effective supervisory system to support the work of volunteers”, received full marks (10.0) while “managers, staff and/or volunteers participate jointly in organizational planning” also received a very high score (9.75). Following closely was the question on routine meetings with staff and volunteers (9.5) while the question “if the organization has multiple branches, or implements projects in cooperation with partners, there is a clear division of roles and responsibilities between cooperating units” got a mean score of 9.25. The remaining queries on management systems received mean scores ranging from 8.75 to 9.0 stilling pointing to “a promising to strong capacity”.

Financial Management

Lilies Organization staff members awarded a “promising to strong” score to financial management unlike the baseline where the organization scored “poor to intermediate”. During the endline, Lilies staff reported that regular budget monitoring reports were usually circulated (9); they also did very well regarding the questions on the following; yearly audit (9.5), monthly cash flow forecast (9.5). Cash books were updated with proper accounting codes (9.75) and the organization now uses effective accounting software. Participants expressed satisfaction with the budgetary system (9.25) in place and access to financial policies (10). Overall, Lilies organization measured the highest increment in financial management capacity compared to the other organizations.

Program Management

Lilies organization had the highest internal scores in program management (9.5). This is well deserved considering their assiduous work and re-enrollment results in Ibeno, the most

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challenging site with respect to demographics. The highest scores were assigned to the following statements; program activities are consistent with organization’s missions statement (9.5), program addresses the expressed needs of the beneficiaries (9.5). Other questions that received high scores include; “program staff are responsive to feedback from donor” (9.0), the organization is taking steps to ensure program sustainability (9.0), program managers are held responsible for project results (9.75).

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) received the second to highest score (9.4). This positioned Lilies as the highest amongst all the partners vis-a-vis M&E capacity. The best scores were assigned to resource allocation to monitoring activities (10) and use of management information systems (MIS) to collect and store activity data (9.5). The ability to analyze data using quantitative software also received an impressive score (9.25).

Esop Mbaba- (Esit Eket)

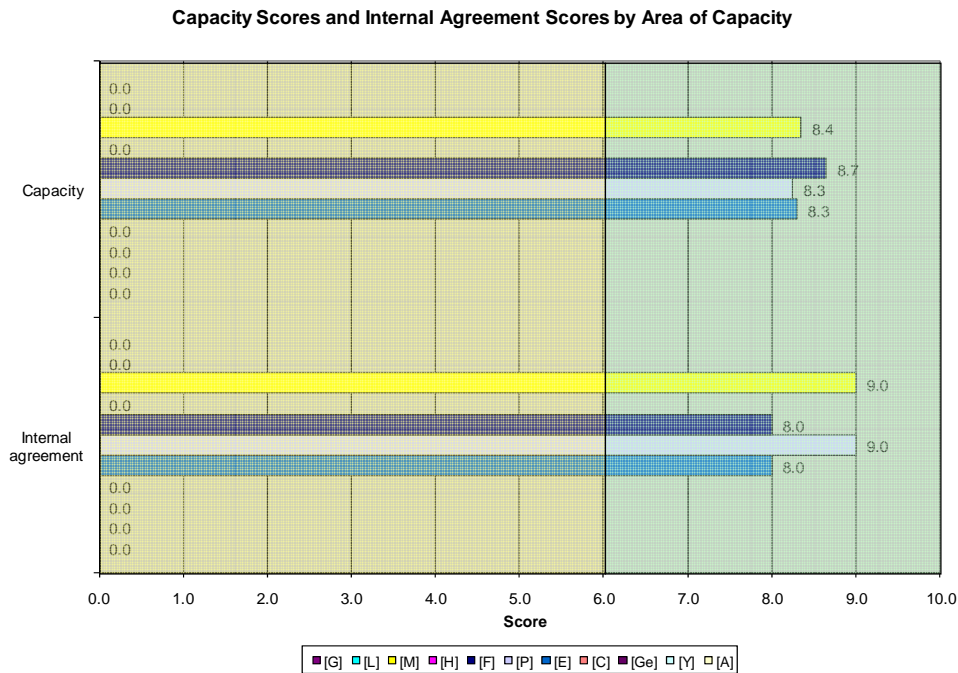
Esop Mbaba scored “promising to strong” capacity in management systems (8.4), program management (8.3), financial management (8.7), monitoring and evaluation (8.3). Out of the four domains assessed, financial management received the highest capacity score (8.7). Though financial management received the highest capacity score, the significantly lower facilitator score (7.0) indicates that this score may not be fully substantiated. Table 9 shows the overall scores.

Table 6. Comparative C-CAT scores for Esop Mbaba (Baseline and Endline)

Area of Capacity	Capacity score		Internal agreement		Facilitators score	
	Baseline	Endline	Baseline	Endline	Baseline	Endline
<i>Monitoring and Evaluation</i>	5	8.3	9	8	5.1	8
<i>Program Management</i>	6.7	8.3	3	9	7	7.7
<i>Financial Management</i>	6	8.7	3	8	6.4	7.0
<i>Management Systems</i>	6.7	8.4	4	9	7.1	7.3

Internal agreement scores ranged from 8.0 to 9.0 and were overall higher than baseline agreement scores.

Figure 6. Self-assessed capacity scores and internal agreement for Esop Mbaba by area of capacity



Management Systems

Participants from Esop Mbaba CBO assigned the highest scores to the following statements – “there is an effective supervisory system to support work of volunteers” (8.5), “there is an effectively supervisory system to support work of staff” (9.25) and “meetings are held routinely to keep staff and/or volunteers informed.” The development of a multi-year organizational plan that defines organizational goals, program objectives, key activities and financial implications also received a good score (9.0). However, the question “there is an effective procedure for obtaining resources for planned activities at all levels within the organization” received the lowest score (7.0). Overall, Esop Mbaba improved dramatically in management systems rating when compared with baseline results.

Financial Management

Participants awarded a “promising to strong capacity” score to financial management, although with limited consensus due to a low score of internal agreement. High scores were assigned to cash book keeping (9.5), reconciliation of accounts with bank statements (9.25), and an effective budgetary system (9.0). However, staff scored the organization low when asked the question “Each month a cash flow forecast is prepared for the next six month period” (5.25). Esop Mbaba received several trainings on financial management, which may explain the improved scores from baseline to endline.

Program Management

The highest scores were assigned to the statement “Program staff possess the essential technical skills for all areas of work, or engage consultants to supplement their skills” (9.0)

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“Program managers are held accountable for project results”. Esop Mbaba staff learned to maintain up to date files and templates for the program team (8.67). They also claim that there is consistency of program activities with their organizational mission statement (8.25).

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) received a “promising to strong” capacity score with a relatively strong agreement, indicating a consensus on strength. The highest scores were for the use of management information systems (MIS) to collect and store activity data (9.5). Partners’ skills on data analysis and evaluation using quantitative software improved after the series of trainings on MS EXCEL and SPSS. According to one of the partners (Utibe Ikot- Esop Mbaba Project director) “I am really appreciative of the BLO project for teaching us SPSS. It’s unbelievable! Now, I can carry out basic analysis with SPSS, thanks to CEDPA.”

IX: Conclusion and recommendations

The C-CAT endline assessment revealed that training and mentoring go a long way to build the capacity and performance of a group. Overall, about 15 trainings and several mentoring activities were carried out to increase the capacity of the partners in management systems, financial management, program management, and M&E so as to help them carry out future projects better.

Overall average percent changes in capacity scores were calculated for each organization across the four areas at baseline and endline. The table below shows the percent change between baseline and endline for each organization and each area.

Table 7. Percent change in capacity scores between baseline and endline

IP	M&E (%)	Program mgmt (%)	Financial mgmt (%)	Management systems (%)	Overall average (%)
Presby Aids	62	16	51	46	44
EWDA	91	31	54	62	60
Lilies	88	42	90	48	67
Esop Mbaba	66	24	45	25	40
Average	77	28	60	45	53

Note. Percent changes in scores reflect organization's self scoring only. Facilitator's scores and internal agreement scores are not included in this table.

Results from the endline assessment in January 2011 shows that Esop Mbaba showed an average of 40% increase in capacity across the four areas of capacity listed above. Lilies organization recorded a spectacular 67% increase in capacity while Presby-AIDSAids and Eket women Development Organization (EWDA) exhibited 44% and 60% increase in Capacity respectively. Over-all an average of 53% increase in capacity was recorded.

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During discussions with the partners, it was established that the series of training, especially in leadership and conflict management helped a great deal in the area of interpersonal relationship between the directors and employees. A case in point was Presby-AIDS; we had reports of exclusion in decision making from the project coordinator by the project director, but the situation changed after the series of trainings, especially on conflict management. Materials and resources for most of the trainings came from HQ. Partner skills on report writing also improved dramatically after a training on report writing was offered to all partners.

Without a doubt, the partners' capacity greatly improved, as seen in the numbers and discussions. Therefore, it is recommended that capacity building remain a key objective in order to build the partners to implement future projects better.

Better Life Options for Adolescents in Nigeria

Follow on Questionnaire for Batch two(2) Beneficiaries

INSTRUCTIONS

For interviewer: Please conduct your interviews one-on-one in a private and quiet area. First, obtain informed consent (see consent form below). Next, make sure that you fill out the interview record sheet with complete contact information for the respondent and your name and identifying (ID) number. Then, read each question to the participant and check or write in the correct responses on the questionnaire. Instructions are given in block capitals in parentheses (LIKE THIS). Do not read out the response categories unless there are written instructions to do so. The questionnaire should take approximately one hour to complete. However, there is no pressure to finish within one hour—ask the questions slowly and clearly and pause between questions. When you have finished, check through the questionnaire to make sure that it is complete. Submit completed questionnaires to your supervisor. Do not discuss respondents' answers with anyone except your supervisor. Refer any questions to your supervisor.

For supervisor/reviewer: Please review all completed questionnaires to ensure that they were correctly filled and follow-up as necessary with interviewers. Fill in the unique identifying (ID) number for each respondent. This number should be the same unique ID number that was used during the Endline survey. The ID will be a 4 digit number that will identify the site (1-4) and the individual (001). A list with respondent's names and ID numbers is kept in a locked file in the IP's Project office; refer to this list to make sure that the unique ID number listed matches with the unique ID number from baseline. A copy of the list should be sent to the BLO project director.



CONSENT FORM

(READ TO POTENTIAL RESPONDENT):

You are being asked to participate in an interview (discussion) about youth and issues that are important to them. We are interviewing all the BLO beneficiaries who graduated from the second batch of the program. These interviews are being carried out by the Centre for Development and Population Activities in collaboration with the Implementing Partners. The purpose of the interview is to learn about the views of youth participating in the Better Life Options program and to make sure that programs like this one meet the needs of participants like you.

Participation in the interview is voluntary. If you prefer not to be interviewed, you can choose not to. If you don't want to answer a particular interview question, just tell me, and we will go on to the next question.

If you choose to participate, the interview will be a chance for you to think about how you feel about yourself and others and to share your views. **It is not a test**—there are no rights or wrong answers. Whatever you tell us will be kept completely confidential (secret)—no one will know about it. The information you give us will not be used to report on you. We are just trying to learn about how to improve the program. It will take about one hour to do the interview.

Do you have any questions about the survey?

If you have any questions about the interview at a later point you can ask your class facilitator to find out the answer for you.

Are you willing to participate in the survey?

If NO, thank the potential respondent and take them back to the group.

If YES, obtain signature.

Now I'm going to ask you to sign or make a mark on this form. This confirms that I have told you about the interview and given you an opportunity to ask questions and that you are willing to participate.

Respondent's Signature or Thumbprint

Date

Printed Name of Respondent

Interviewer's Signature

Date

Printed Name of Interviewer

INTERVIEW RECORD SHEET

Site: _____

Respondent's Name: _____

Respondent ID No.: _____
(TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISOR)

Respondent's Contact Information:

Full home address: _____

Community/town: _____

LGA: (code) _____

Mobile phone number, if applicable: _____

Who does the phone belong to? _____

Name of interviewer : _____	Interviewer ID no: _____
Date of interview: _____	
Interview start time: _____	Interview end time _____
Total time taken to complete this interview _____ (in minutes)	
Questionnaire reviewed by: _____ (print name)	

PLEASE PROVIDE RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AT THE END OF THE INTERVIEW

1) What language did you use to administer this questionnaire

- 1. English
- 2. Ibibio
- 3. Both

2) What language did you use if you translated?

- 1 Ekid
- 2 Ibibio

Comments: PLEASE ADD COMMENTS BELOW. WRITE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE REVERSE SIDE IF NEED ARISES

I. Participant Background Information

1. Respondent sex (DO NOT ASK)
 1. Female
 2. Male

2. How old were you on your last birthday?
(RECORD AGE IN YEARS) _____
 88. Don't know SKIP TO Q.5

3. Can you estimate your current age?
(RECORD AGE IN YEARS) _____

4. Where do you live currently? (What is the name of the area or township)? _____

5. Is that in an urban, peri-urban, or a rural area (survey)
 1. Urban (city)
 2. Peri-urban (areas surrounding a city)
 3. Rural area (farming community)

6. With whom do you live?
 1. Mother
 2. Father
 3. Both Parents
 4. Guardian
 77. Other(s) (SPECIFY) _____

7. What is your marital status?
 1. Single
 2. Married
 3. Cohabiting, not married
 4. Divorced/widowed

8. What is your ethnic group?
 1. Ibibio
 2. Ekid
 3. Annang
 4. Efik
 5. Ibeno
 6. Oron

77. Other (SPECIFY) _____

9. What language is spoken at home?

1. English

2. Ibibio

3. Ibeno

4. Ekid

77. Other (please specify): _____

10. What religion do you practice?

1. Christian

2. Traditional

3. Muslim

4. No religion

77. Other (SPECIFY) _____

11. Has your mother ever been to school?

1. Yes

2. No **SKIP TO Q.13**

12. What is the highest level of education your **mother completed**?

1. No formal education

2. Some primary (P1-6)

3. Some junior secondary (JSS1-JSS3)

4. Some senior secondary (SS1-SS3)

88. Don't know

13. Has your father ever been to school?

1. Yes

2. No **SKIP TO Q.15**

14. What is the highest level of education your **father completed**?

1. No formal education

2. Some primary (P1-6)

3. Some junior secondary (JSS1-JSS3)

4. Some senior secondary (SS1-SS3)

88. Don't know

15. What is the **main** source of income for your family?
1. Agricultural (farming, fishing)
 2. Trade/sales/services (trader, driver, hairdresser)
 3. Clerical (secretarial)
 4. Skilled manual (mechanic, mason, artisan)
 5. Professional/technical/managerial
 77. Other (SPECIFY) _____

16. Who in the family provides the main source of income?
1. Mother
 2. Father
 3. Both Parents
 77. Other(s) (SPECIFY) _____
 88. Don't know

17. Does your household have (READ OUT OPTIONS):

Code: 1 = "Yes" and 2 = "No"

- | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Electricity? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Radio? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Television? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Video/DVD? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Cell phone? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

18. How old were you when you stopped going to school?
(RECORD AGE IN YEARS) _____

88. Don't know SKIP TO Q. 21

00. Have never attended school

19. Can you **estimate** how old you were at the time you stopped going to school?
(RECORD AGE IN YEARS) _____

20. How long has it been since you stopped going to school?
(RECORD YEARS AND MONTHS) _____ years _____ months

21. What was the **main** reason that made you stop going to school? (RECORD SPONTANEOUS RESPONSE. ONLY CHOOSE ONE)

1. Couldn't afford school fees
2. Ill/disabled
3. Had to work for my family

- 4. School was too far from home
- 5. My family didn't want me to go to school
- 6. Didn't want to go to school any more
- 7. Didn't pass the exams
- 8. Was pregnant
- 9. Got married
- 10. My friends dropped out of school
- 77. Other (SPECIFY)_____

22. What is the **main** reason that made you not attend a vocational school? (RECORD SPONTANEOUS RESPONSE. ONLY CHOOSE ONE)

- 1. Couldn't afford school fees
- 2. Ill/disabled
- 3. Had to work for my family
- 4. School was too far from home
- 5. My family didn't want me to go to school
- 6. Didn't want to go to school any more
- 7. Didn't pass the exams
- 8. Was pregnant
- 9. Got married
- 10. My friends dropped out of school
- 77. Other (SPECIFY)_____

23. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- 1. No formal education
- 2. Some primary (P1-6)
- 3. Some junior secondary (JSS1-JSS3)
- 4. Some senior secondary (SS1-SS3)
- 88. Don't know

II. Attitudes about Education

(READ THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH): Now I'm going to ask you whether you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree with some statements about education. Please answer the questions as you feel now, even if you have felt differently at some other time in your life.

Let me give you an example: Morning is when I feel best. If you do feel best in the morning you agree with that statement. Now you need to decide whether you strongly agree (you *always* feel best in the morning, i.e. "4") or you agree, but not strongly (usually morning is your best time, but not always, i.e. "3").

On the other hand, if you are not a morning person, you would say that you disagree with this statement. Now decide whether you strongly disagree (you *always* feel best in the evening or nighttime, i.e. "1") or you disagree, but not strongly (*usually* you feel best in the evening or nighttime, but not always, i.e. "2").

Now, please tell me if you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree with the following statements about education.		Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
24.	Getting an education is important for a girl's future.				
25.	Being educated allows people to be what they want to be.				
26.	Everyone should aspire to complete secondary school.				
27.	Finishing secondary school would change my future.				
28.	Boys need to be educated to have good prospects for the future.				
29.	Getting a university degree helps people find a good paying job.				
Now I'm going to ask you about the importance of education to different people. Please respond to the following questions by telling me whether education is not at all important, just a little important, fairly important or very important.		Not at all important 1	Just a little important 2	Fairly important 3	Very important 4
30.	How important is education for a boy ?				
31.	How important is education for a girl ?				
32.	How important is education for you personally ?				

33.	How important is it to your father/male guardian that you finish secondary school?				
34.	How important is it to your mother/female guardian that you finish secondary school?				

35. Who makes decisions about your education in your family?

- 1. Mother
- 2. Father
- 3. Both parents
- 4. Other relative or guardian (SPECIFY) _____
- 88. Don't know

36. What skills would you most like to learn (either formal school or vocational)

BE SPECIFIC _____

37. Do you intend to continue your education?

- 1. Yes SKIP TO Q.39
- 2. No
- 88. Don't know yet

38. Why do you have no intention of continuing your education?

Specify _____

39. How far do **you** intend to continue your education?

- 1. Primary
- 2. Secondary
- 3. University and above
- 77. Other (SPECIFY) _____

40. Will your family provide financial support for you to continue your education?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 88. Don't know

41. What is the **likelihood** that you will be able to do this (continue your education) in the near future?

- 1. Very unlikely
- 2. Not likely
- 3. Likely
- 4. Very likely

42. Have you re-enrolled in:

1. Formal school? Yes No
2. Other type of school? Yes No

If yes, specify type of school _____ (e.g Primary, Secondary, Vocational)

***Reviewer must check this is completed.**

43. To what extent did the program influence your decision to re-enroll in school?

1. Very much
2. Somewhat
3. A little
4. Not at all

III. Self-efficacy

Please tell me if you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree with the following statements about yourself.		Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
44.	I can always solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.				
45.	I know I can handle unforeseen situations well.				
46.	It is easy for me to stick to a plan and accomplish my goals.				
47.	I can deal confidently with unexpected events.				
48.	If someone opposes me, I find a way to get what I want.				
49.	I can solve most problems if I put my mind to it.				
50.	I am usually calm when facing difficulties.				
51.	If I am confronted with a problem, I can usually come up with a solution.				
52.	When I am in trouble, I can usually think of something to do.				
53.	No matter what comes my way, I will usually be able to handle it.				

V. Peer Pressure

54. Do you have a group of friends with whom you keep company?

1. Yes

2. No

SKIP TO Q.63

How much pressure do your friends put on you to do the following activities—no pressure, a little pressure, some pressure or a lot of pressure?		No pressure 1	A little pressure 2	Some pressure 3	A lot of pressure 4
55.	Skip class				
56.	Drop out of school				
57.	Smoke cigarettes				
58.	Drink alcohol				
59.	Try drugs				
60.	Date				
61.	Have sex				

VI. Community Involvement

62. Have you participated in any activities with a community group or club in the last six months?

1. Yes

2. No

SKIP TO Q.64

63. Which activities did you participate in with the group or club? WRITE IN RESPONSE IN TABLE BELOW

What was your role in the activity—did you attend, implement, plan, or plan and implement the activity?

CODE

1=Attended

2=Implemented

3=Planned/Organized

4=Planned and implemented

Activity name	Role (code 1, 2, 3, 4)
Environmental cleanup	
Singing/choir	
Sports	
Other (SPECIFY)	

VII. Reproductive Health

64. What is menstruation?

- 1. When sperm is released
- 2. The moment an egg is impregnated
- 3. Periodic shedding of blood and tissue from uterus
- 4. When sperm is produced in testes
- 77. Other (SPECIFY) _____
- 88. Don't know

65. How can a girl get pregnant?

- 1. When a girl and boy date
- 2. When a girl and boy kiss
- 3. When a girl has sex and she is fertile
- 77. Other (SPECIFY) _____
- 88. Don't know

66. When is a girl **most likely** to get pregnant from sexual intercourse?

- 1. Seven days before her period
- 2. During her period
- 3. In the middle of the month/cycle (two weeks after period)
- 4. Equally likely anytime during the month/cycle
- 77. Other (SPECIFY) _____
- 88. Don't know

67. About how many of your friends do you think have had sex?

- 1. None
- 2. A few
- 3. About half
- 4. Most
- 5. All
- 88. Don't know

68. Have you ever had sex?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No **SKIP TO Q.72**
- 99. No response **SKIP TO Q.72**

69. Did you or your partner use a condom the first time you had sex?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 88. Don't know/remember
- 99. No response

70. Have you/your partner ever been pregnant?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No **SKIP TO Q. 72**
- 99. No response **SKIP TO Q. 72**

71. How old were you/your partner when you/she first got pregnant?

(RECORD AGE IN YEARS) _____

- 88. Don't know

72. What can you do to avoid getting pregnant? DO NOT READ ALOUD (RECORD ALL SPONTANEOUS RESPONSES)

- 1. Abstain from sex
- 2. Use condoms
- 3. Use pills
- 4. Use withdrawal
- 77. Other (SPECIFY) _____
- 88. Don't know

73. Where can you obtain condoms, pills or other methods to prevent pregnancy? (DO NOT READ ALOUD. MARK ALL RESPONSES MENTIONED SPONTANEOUSLY)

- 1. Health clinic
- 2. Pharmacy/'chemist'
- 3. Market
- 4. Friends
- 5. NGOs
- 6. Hotel
- 77. Other (SPECIFY) _____
- 88. Don't know

VIII. HIV/AIDS

74. What are two ways a person can get (become infected with) HIV?
(WRITE IN SPONTANEOUS RESPONSES AND CODE FOR CORRECT/INCORRECT)

1. _____ Correct Incorrect

Code: 1= "correct"; 0= "incorrect"

2. _____ Correct Incorrect

Code: 1= "correct"; 0= "incorrect"

	Question	Response	Yes	No	Don't know
75.	Which of the following are risk factors for HIV transmission? (READ EACH OF THE ITEMS IN THE RESPONSE LIST. PLEASE CIRCLE THE CODE THAT CORRESPONDS WITH THE RESPONSE GIVEN)	1. Unprotected sex with an infected person	1	0	88
		2. An infected mother to infant in pregnancy/childbirth	1	0	88
		3. Kissing a person who is infected	1	0	88
		4. Mosquito bites	1	0	88
		5. Getting a blood transfusion	1	0	88
		6. Sharing food with an infected person	1	0	88
		7. Using unsterilized needles or equipment	1	0	88
		8. Witchcraft	1	0	88
		77. Other (SPECIFY) _____	1	0	88

76. Do you consider yourself to be at risk for HIV/AIDS?

1. Yes

2. No

88. Don't know

77. What makes you think you are NOT at risk for HIV/AIDS?

(WRITE IN RESPONSE)

IX. Gender roles

Please tell me whether you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree with the following statements.		Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
78.	Boys should help their mothers and sisters with household chores.				
79.	The only way a girl can be fulfilled in life is by being a wife and mother.				
80.	Boys should be sent to school before girls when money is scarce.				
81.	Girls should have responsibility for all household chores.				
82.	Girls and boys should have equal opportunities to attend school.				
83.	(FOR GIRLS) When I grow up, I should be able to earn as much money as my brother can. (FOR BOYS) When she grows up, my sister should be able to earn as much money as me.				
84.	Girls are as mentally capable as boys.				
Please tell me whether you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree with the following statements. In my family, it is alright for my father to hit my mother if she...		Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly agree 4
85.	Talks to strange men.				
86.	Does not do what he asks her to do.				
87.	Goes out of the house without his permission.				
88.	Answers him back.				
89.	Neglects her chores.				

Indicator Report

Indicator Progress Report

Grantee: Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA)

Program Officer: Danielle Grant

Program Officer Phone: (202) 667-1142

Project Title: *Better Life Options II: Empowering Girls and Boys for Future Leadership*

Reference Number: 4024

Project Duration: Two years

Project Amount: \$1,550,000.00

Project Start Date: December 2008

Project End Date: February 28, 2011

Description: To raise the education and health status and quality of life of young girls and boys aged 10 - 19 years in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. CEDPA's project aims to increase opportunities for adolescent girls and boys to enhance their choices with regard to education, reproductive health, employment, and civic participation.

Reporting Period: December 2008 - January 2011

Long-term Outcome: *To sustain the Better Life Options program in Akwa Ibom State and to continue to reach girls and boys at educational risk.*

Short-term Outcome 1: *Increase the capacity of existing IPs to implement the Better Life Options program.*

Indicator 1.1: *Number of youth who complete the Choose a Future course*

Target: 1,000

Progress on this Indicator:	<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Progress during period</u>	<u>Cumulative Progress</u>
	December 2008-December 2009	548	548
	January 2010 -January 2011	662	1,210

Comment: Between December 2008 and August 2010, 1,210 youth completed the Life skills courses out of the 1,440 who enrolled across the four LGAs. Based on program design, 78 percent of enrollees were girls and 22 percent were boys. The program primarily targeted younger adolescents ; 81 percent were between 10 and 15 years old, while just 19 percent were between 16 and 19.

Program completion is based on attendance. The youth who attend at least 75 percent of the classes were counted as having completed the program. Among the 1,440 enrollees, approximately 84 percent, or 1,210 girls and boys, completed the program. This surpassed CEDPA's target of graduating 1,000 youth, and shows a considerable increase in completion rates from phase I (2006-2008).

Indicator 1.1a. Number of youth enrolled

Site	<u>Female</u>		<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>		<u>Total</u>	TOTAL
	10-15	16-19	Female	10-15	16-19	Male	
Eket	300	51	351	76	10	86	437
Esit Eket	162	34	196	44	10	54	250
Ibeno	158	76	234	55	12	67	301
Onna	290	51	341	87	24	111	452
Total	910	212	1122	262	56	318	1440

Indiciator 1.1b. Number of youth completed (attended at least 75 percent of classes)

Site	<u>Female</u>		<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>		<u>Total</u>	TOTAL
	10-15	16-19	Female	10-15	16-19	Male	
Eket	259	48	307	63	9	72	379
Esit Eket	146	26	172	27	7	34	206
Ibeno	193	48	241	52	12	64	305
Onna	205	44	249	55	16	71	320
Total	803	166	969	197	44	241	1210
Completion rate	88.2%	78.3%	86.4%	75.2%	78.6%	75.8%	84.0%

Indicator 1.2: *Number of after school programs established offering BLO programs*

Target: 10

Progress on this Indicator:	<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Progress during period</u>	<u>Cumulative Progress</u>
	December 2008-December 2009	10	10
	January 2010 -January 2011	0	10

Comment: Between May and July 2009, CEDPA established ten after school programs, and maintained the programs until the last batch completed classes in August 2010. There were three programs in each LGA, Eket and Onna, and two programs in both Esit Eket and Ibeno.

Indicator 1.3: *Percent of participants who enroll or re-enroll in formal school or vocational training*

Target: 20%

Progress on this Indicator:	<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Progress during period</u>	<u>Cumulative Progress</u>
	December 2008-December 2009	30.1% (213)	30.1% (213)
	January 2010 -January 2011	55.8% (409)	51.4% (622)

Comment: More than half of all beneficiaries who completed the CAF ! training enrolled or re-enrolled in formal school over the course of the program; as such, CEDPA surpassed its target. A slightly larger proportion of boys who completed the program re-enrolled in both formal and vocational schools versus the girl graduates (53 vs 47% in formal school, and 5 vs 2% in vocational training). Stark differences among the four sites emerged, with Eket and Esit Eket showing the greatest proportion of enrolled/re-enrolled graduates for both girls and boys. Over 77 percent of those who did not yet re-enroll in school made plans to return to school.

A 15-years old school drop-out while attending CAF classes in Ibeno said the following:

"I used to go to school. At a point I stayed back because I did not feel like going again, I think I just felt that it was all a waste but now I am happy to know that education is the first thing I need in my life and I value it better".

Indicator 1.3. Enrollment and re-enrollment, by sex

LGA	Girls (n=969)				Boys (n=241)				Total (N=1210)	
	Type of school				Type of school					
	Formal	Vocational		Formal	Vocational		Formal	Vocational		
Onna	79	32%	11	4%	31	28%	5	5%	126	39%
Eket	214	70%	4	10%	47	65%	3	33%	268	71%
Ibeno	79	33%	3	1%	23	36%	2	3%	107	35%
Esit Eket	87	51%	5	3%	26	76%	3	9%	121	59%
Total	459	47%	23	2%	127	53%	13	5%	622	51%

Note. Percentages for re-enrollment by state based on the number of girls or boys who completed the program in each state, respectively.

Indicator 1.4: Percent increase in two areas of capacity over baseline as measured by an adapted version of the CCAT

Target: 15%

Progress on this Indicator:

Time Period	Baseline	Endline
December 2008-January 2011	N/A	100% of IPs increased capacity scores by more than 15% in at least two areas (see table).

Comment: CEDPA staff conducted a baseline survey to assess Partner's Capacity using the CEDPA Capacity Assessment Tool (C-CAT). A capacity building plan was drawn based on the baseline assessment of different areas including management systems, monitoring & evaluation, financial management and program management. About 15 trainings and several mentoring activities were carried out to increase the capacity of the partners in order to help them carry out future projects better.

Indicator 1.4. Percent change in C-CAT scores, by area

IP	M&E (%)	Program mgmt (%)	Financial mgmt (%)	Management systems (%)	Overall average (%)
Presby	62	16	51	46	44
Aids					
EWDA	91	31	54	62	60
Lilies	88	42	90	48	67
Esop	66	24	45	25	40
Mbaba					
Average	77	28	60	45	53

Note. Percent changes in scores reflect organization's self scoring only. Facilitator's scores and internal agreement scores are not included in this table.

Results from the endline assessment done in January 2011 show that implementing partner organizations benefitted most, on average, from monitoring and evaluation training. Improvements in capacity scores for monitoring and evaluation ranged from 62 to 91 percent. Financial management training also appeared to make a substantial impact on the partner organizations, with improvements in scores ranging from 45 to 90 percent across all organizations. Overall, each implementing partner organization improved its capacity score by more than 15% in the four areas examined. Esop Mbaba showed an average of 40% increase in capacity across the four areas of capacity listed

above. Lilies organisation had showed a spectacular 68% increase in capacity while, PresbyAids and Eket Women Development Organisation (EWDA) exhibited 44% and 60% increase in capacity, respectively. Overall, implementing partners experienced an average of 50% increase in capacity scores over the duration of the program.

Indicator 1.5: *Number of organizational development trainings and/or orientations provided to IPs*

Target: 8

Progress on this Indicator:	<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Progress during period</u>	<u>Cumulative Progress</u>
	December 2008-December 2009	5	5
	January 2010 -January 2011	10	15

Comment: CEDPA staff and consultants conducted 15 trainings and orientations for implementing partner staff and community stakeholders to strengthen community organizations and engage support from leaders in the community. Staff received a series of trainings in Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation, computer software skills, conflict management and financial reporting. Community members received an overall orientation on the program, training in mobilizing support and fundraising. Community members (PSC members, specifically) together with project directors received training in advocacy to improve program sustainability.

According to Diana Abasi, former staff member from Lilies Organization in Eket, "the capacity building process is the greatest thing about working with CEDPA." The Project Director at Lilies said, "CEDPA is strict about record keeping and also in implementation of the project," she said, and continued to say, "I'm auditing now. I'm better than when I started at keeping records in order."

Indicator 1.6: *Number of spot checks made by IP supervisors to provide feedback to facilitators conducting CAF! classes*

Target: 120

Progress on this Indicator:	<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Progress during period</u>	<u>Cumulative Progress</u>
	December 2008-December 2009	132	132
	January 2010 -January 2011	125	257

Comment: Observations by supervisors were conducted to provide constructive feedback to the facilitators on their performance. The supervisor focused on five areas: knowledge of content, accepting attitude, facilitation skills, effective planning and relationship with participants. Each facilitator was to be observed at least twice during each year of the program, for a total of 257 observations. The following table outlines the number of facilitators and observations completed for each site.

Indicator 1.6. Spot checks on facilitators, by LGA			
	Year 1	Year 2	TOTAL
Eket	35	38	73
Esit Eket	32	24	56
Ibeno	25	22	47
Onna	40	41	81
Total	132	125	257

Short-term Outcome 2: *Ensure more effective linkages with the Formal School System in the Project Sites (Eket, Esit Eket, Onna, Ibeno)*

Indicator 2.1: *Number of Project Support Committees (PSCs) supported to mobilize resources and for project-related activities*

Target: 4

Progress on this Indicator:	<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Progress during period</u>	<u>Cumulative Progress</u>
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December 2008-December 2009	4	4
January 2010 -January 2011	4 (same PSCs)	4

Comment: CEDPA staff and implementing partners reached out to various community leaders, such as Chiefs, Paramount Rulers, educators and political appointees to gain their support for the Better Life Options program. Meetings were held with approximately eight to ten community leaders in each LGA to orient and facilitate the Project Support Committees (PSCs) role in the program. Building on feedback from community members engaged in phase 1, CEDPA was able to assign specific activities, roles and responsibilities to the PSCs. CEDPA strengthened the effectiveness of the PSCs through training in project monitoring, endowment funding, developing a workplan, community mobilization and advocacy. By the second year of the project, PSCs were actively engaged in conducting co-mentoring meetings with schools heads and teachers, identifying criteria for work study scholarship recipients, monitoring re-enrollees, community awareness raising, advocacy and raising funds to support youth in their educational endeavors and visiting families to encourage youth enrollment in schools

Indicator 2.2: *Number of education stakeholders trained on the CAF! curriculum and BLO program model*

Target: 68

Progress on this Indicator:	<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Progress during period</u>	<u>Cumulative Progress</u>
	December 2008-December 2009	80	80
	January 2010 -January 2011	0	80

Comment: CEDPA surpassed its goal of training 68 individuals on the CAF curriculum and BLO program model. In the first year of the Follow-on project, 80 individuals that includes Teachers, School Administrators and Family Life Education Teachers were trained on the CAF manual for fourteen days and the same 80 individuals were provided a nine-days refresher training during the second year before teaching a second batch of youth. Out of the 80 trained, 65 were women and 15 were men. Throughout the program, trained individuals often oriented other community members and/or teachers on the CAF manual and BLO project, which expands the reach of the program beyond the 80 who were given the full fourteen day training.

Indicator 2.3: *Number of school staff and BLO staff that are co-mentors for the program*

Target: 80

Progress on this Indicator:	<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Progress during period</u>	<u>Cumulative Progress</u>
	December 2008-December 2009	84	84
	January 2010 -January 2011	28	112

Comment: A total of 112 school staff and CEDPA staff/facilitators were paired as co-mentors during the project, surpassing the program target of 80. CEDPA staff and facilitators were paired with Family Life Education¹ teachers as co-mentors in schools, as well as other teachers teaching social studies. They discussed and share ideas on topics common to FLE and the *Choose a Future!* curriculum. CEDPA monitored the Family Life Education (FLE) lessons in some schools. After the mentoring discussions, CEDPA staff and FLEs brainstormed ideas on how to use important lessons from CAF! in the schools, such as "goal setting," "having a baby before 20," and "safe motherhood." In addition to topics explored in regular school, mentored school teachers report on using facilitation techniques for teaching reproductive health topics and HIV/AIDS learned during mentoring sessions; teachers have noted that girls and boys in FLE schools now talk freely about abstinence and keeping friendship free from sexual relationships.

Having a co-mentorship component in schools was useful to the program because the teachers liaised with partner organizations to collate names of CAF graduates who were not yet enrolled in schools (but willing to return to school), and helped to register these youth in formal schools for the new school session.

¹ Family Life Education is the name given to sexuality education offered in Nigerian secondary schools curriculum

Indicator 2.4: *Number of BLO graduates receiving work-study internships or scholarships to enroll/re-enroll in formal or vocational school*

Target: 70

Progress on this Indicator:	<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Progress during period</u>	<u>Cumulative Progress</u>
	December 2008-December 2009	47	47
	January 2010 -January 2011	121	168

Comment: CEDPA had an overwhelmingly positive community response to the new scholarship component initiated in the follow-on phase and easily surpassed its target for work-study scholarships by giving 168 scholarships to qualified graduates. With support from PSCs, Facilitators and partner staff, CEDPA outlined criteria for selection and held three ceremonies with participation from various community stakeholders to distribute scholarships in the form of text books, uniforms and shoes for their return to formal school. In return for receiving the scholarships, students work as interns on a part-time basis for their respective partner organizations. All scholarships were given to youth returning to formal school, as scholarships were given in the form of books and school materials, rather than cash.

Indicator 2.4. Work study scholarship recipients

Site	<u>2008-2009</u>			<u>2009-2010</u>			<u>Total</u>		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Eket	12	3	15	27	4	31	39	7	46
Esit Eket	7	1	8	20	5	25	27	6	33
Ibeno	13	1	14	24	5	29	37	6	43
Onna	8	2	10	25	11	36	33	13	46
Sub-total	40	7	47	96	25	121	136	32	168

Participation in the work-study program has improved participant self-confidence and helped them learn new skills in computer literacy, office management, filing systems, and photography. For some beneficiaries, the experience afforded them their first opportunity of using a computer, thus leaving them with a lasting impression.

A 17-year old female in junior secondary class in Ibeno said the following:

"I am glad I never missed this opportunity because I will tell my friends about my new skill. I can now turn on and off the computer system and even a laptop. I never thought that this BLO will lead to all these so quickly and someday I will also work in my own office..."

Another 16- year old female intern in Onna had this to say:

"I keep thanking God everyday for making me join this program. I have told my friends all about a work plan...I have never heard that word before I joined the work study program. Now I am a full time office worker. There are many things I can do in an office and I am not ashamed to work into any office anymore"

Short-term Outcome 3: Document and communicate the contributions of the Better Life Options program in Akwa Ibom State

Indicator 3.1: *Number of events reporting on BLO Activities*

Target: 5

Progress on this Indicator:	<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Progress during period</u>	<u>Cumulative Progress</u>
	December 2008-December 2009	8	8
	January 2010 -January 2011	5	13

Comment: During the period of the project each of the four partners held at least one road show and several household visits, for a total of 13 community events promoting BLO activities. All project partners embarked on community rallies and road shows in their different local government areas. The aim was to create awareness about the BLO Project, and mobilize community support. Messages centered on encouraging girls and boys to go back to school and remain in school, on promoting girls' education, and requesting government and stakeholders' support.

One of the rally songs chanted in the local language (Ibibio) translated into English “CEDPA-BLO you have done well, no one can do better than this... thank you.” Another common chant –in English “I know I can, be what I want to be, if I work hard in it, I will be what I want to be.”

In the second year, partners focused on making household visits to check on beneficiaries and follow up with community stakeholder. Visits were also carried out to talk parents who still did see the need for the kids to go back to school in order to provide peer support between program staff and parents to discuss the importance of education. It also provided a means for mentorship because some facilitators were given specific beneficiaries to mentor. For example, between July and September of 2010, two hundred and fifty-nine household visits were made by project staff (67 in Onna, 69 in Ibeno, 60 in Eket and 63 in Esit Eket).

Indicator 3.2: *Number of people participating in events reported under 3.1*

Target: 1,000

Progress on this Indicator:	<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Progress during period</u>	<u>Cumulative Progress</u>
	December 2008-December 2009	1093	1093
	January 2010 -January 2011	880	1973

Comment: Approximately 1,973 people attended CEDPA’s 13 community events held during the the BLO project, which surpasses its target. The majority of the participants attended community rallies and road shows held in each LGA. One thousand ninety-three people (1,093), comprised of batch 3 CAF! graduates, project facilitators, partner staff, local government representatives, PSC members, and other youth yet to benefit from the project, participated in the events held during the first year. During the second year, EWDA organised an additional rally after BLO classes ended in September 2010 to showcase the project. The rally in Eket was attended by 232 people including PSC members, facilitators, FLE teachers, parents and other community members. Partners organized sessions to discuss BLO at group/community talks in Esit Eket and Onna, which gathered 216 and 435 people respectively.

Indicator 3.2. Participants at community events

LGA	No of participants at events (Year 1)	No of participants at events (Year 2)	Total no of participants
Eket	333	232	565
Esit Eket	170	213	383
Ibeno	190		190
Onna	400	435	835
Total	1093	880	1973

Interviews and case studies with Project Support Committee members suggest that community events were instrumental for gaining support from community members who eventually became active in PSCs. Overall, the community events helped to create awareness and showcase the impact of the program. Events outlined above also provided an opportunity to create a sense of ownership within the community circle. High level of re-enrolment can also be attributed in part to community involvement sense parents now saw the need to encourage their youth to go back to school after the program.

Indicator 3.3: *Number of IEC materials reporting on the BLO Activities*

Target: 6

Progress on this Indicator:	<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Progress during period</u>	<u>Cumulative Progress</u>
	December 2008-December 2009	4	4
	January 2010 -January 2011	6	10

Comment: Each of the partners had a publication on BLO in the local newspapers in Akwa-Ibom state as well as radio programs. They also produced IEC materials (small posters during the course of the project). Articles were written for two local newspapers, ‘Pioneer’ and ‘Insight’ newspapers of Akwa Ibom state, after the execution of two

work study scholarship awards. Final publications for the dissemination event included case stories of key stakeholders and images from the duration of the program, which were professionally laid out in a brochure/poster and were widely distributed in Akwa Ibom, as well as through the CEDPA Calabar, Abuja and HQ offices.

Read and agreed to by Centre for Development and Population Activities

Signature or typed initials: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Title: _____

This was Published on 30th of December, 2009 in the Pioneer newspaper. Pioneer Newspaper is the Akwa Ibom state owned Newspaper and has wide circulation in all the local governments of Akwa Ibom state, Cross River and other parts of Nigeria including Abuja.

State News

Unoma Treats Kids To Xmas Party

By Imaobong Aniekani

UYO

The Governor's Lodge Grounds last week Wednesday was decorated with various colours of ribbons and Christmas trees as it was a day the wife of the state governor, Mrs Ekaette Unoma Akpabio, played host to children in the state to this year's Christmas party.

The Christmas party which is a yearly event organized for children in the state to show love and care associated with the season and it usually features various performances, presentation of songs, dances and poems by the children.

The event also featured dance competition by the children where the winners went home with gifts and prizes.

Advising the children who came out in large numbers, the governor's wife who danced and celebrated the occasion with the children, accompanied by the wife of the deputy governor, Mrs Mbosowo Ekpotu, urged the children to take advantage of the free and compulsory education programme that has been initiated by the present administration to secure a bright future for themselves.

Mrs Akpabio who dressed in a brown flowing gown, also charged the children to be respectful and obedient to their parents and elders, as well as to be dedicated to their studies and to continue to pray for their parents and the present administration for it to record more achievements for the benefits of the people.

The governor's wife who was all smile and visibly happy noted that Christmas was a season to share love and care, saying that the party was organized for the children as expression of her love and that of the government to them and to make them to have a sense of belonging during the season.

Mrs Akpabio who attended the party in company

of her children, Iniobong, Enobong, Ekombong and Idara, thanked the children and others who attended the party and assured them of sustenance of the session.

Children who attended were given assorted souvenirs by their host, Mrs Akpabio.

Expressing her joy, a parent, Mrs Mfonobong Etuk, thanked the governor's wife for always remembering the children by organizing Christmas party for the children since she became the state's first lady and the gifts she always showers on them at the occasion.

She also lauded Mrs Akpabio for giving hope to the people through the numerous projects she has executed through her pet project, the Family Life Enhancement Initiative (FLEI) which she said has touched lives of the beneficiaries positively.

Mrs Etuk also thanked the present administration for initiating the free and compulsory education programme in the state which she said has gone a long way in lifting burdens off parents who can now send their children to school without fears.

Also, Little Miss Uduakobong Essien of Monck Kiddies School, Uyo, thanked the governor's wife for the Christmas party and the gifts and souvenirs presented to them and prayed God to give her long life to continue to show love to children and the less-privileged people of the state.

Also present at the event were the wife of the secretary to the state government, Mrs Florence Umama; the commissioner for women affairs, Mrs Enuice Thomas; wife of the state commissioner on the board of Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Mrs Christine Abia; wives of local government chairmen, wives of commissioners and parents who escorted their children.

CEDPA Organises Training Programmes For Youths

IBENO

An organizational development trainings to build capacity of implementing partners, facilitators and education stakeholders on the Better Life Options (BLO), is currently in progress.

The training programme which enrolment is open to both in-school and out-of-school youths in equal numbers, is provided by CEDPA, and is a follow-on phase to the BLO project, supported by ExxonMobil for three years.

A release made available to *Midweek Pioneer* showed that the "Better Life Options: Empowering Girls and Boys for Future Leadership", BLO project, seeks to improve education attainment, health awareness and the quality of life for young boys and girls of ages between 10 and 19 in Akwa Ibom State by providing them specific training interventions and community

engagement opportunities. The programme as stated in the release currently, in a follow-on phase (December 2008-November 2010) is part of Exxon Mobil's 2008 "Educating Women and Girls Initiative."

The release indicated that the programme has been particularly successful in encouraging youths to return to school as over 300 of its beneficiaries have returned to school since its commencement.

The impact assessments also recorded significant increases in reproductive health knowledge in selected local government areas.

The release further stated that the second phase of the programme seeks to solidify and enhance the gains based on learning from programme assessments and field experience gained from similar programme adaptation in South Africa, Nepal and India.

According to the release,



Former drop-outs (now in school) receive work-study scholarship ranging from text-books, school materials, uniform and sandals from Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) at Impact Hotel, Eket, AKS.

AK Govt Plays Host To 9,300 Carol Singers

By Usiere Akpan

UYO

Preparatory to the celebration of the Christmas D-Day, the leadership of Akwa Ibom government hosted the 2009 carol night.

The gathering described as the largest group of carol singers in the world attracted about 9300 male and female singers drawn from the 31 local government areas of Akwa Ibom at Uyo Township Stadium Thursday night.

Addressing the gathering, the state governor, Chief Godswill Akpabio, called for collective prayers in praise workshops and carol for the

collapse of eras of empty political promises and government of deceit to the electorate of the state.

"As we sing, let the walls of petition writing fall, let the walls of avarice and jealousy collapse, let the walls of ethnicity crumble, let us rewrite our story and let us make our ancestors' dream come true, and let our posterity look back to today with pride", Chief Akpabio said.

He stated that in deciding to gather in unity and lit the skies through carols of praises, "Akwa Ibom people have taken the right path" of preparing for the grand combat of challenges and launch the state into the

nation's political orbit.

Chief Akpabio appealed for acceptance of lessons in the simple choice of lowly people for greatest influence in the world as exemplified in the birth of Jesus Christ in the "humblest of places".

In his contribution the state chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) Bishop Cletus Bassey, commended the leadership of the state for redefining the concept of Christmas from the parade of masquerades to singing of praises.

Bishop Bassey stated that the night of festival of lesson and carols was a hope for the hopeless and strength for the weak, noting, "The entire Christian churches would continue to identify with the strides of the present government."

"No government has ever identified itself and people with God as done by the present administration," adding, "there shall be a new song in Akwa Ibom as a des-

tinuation".

Similarly, the national president, Lutheran Church of Nigeria, the Most Rev Christian Ekong, drawing his sermon from Luke 2-14, solicited for comfort, strength and pure of heart from people in the Christmas period.

The Most Rev Ekong used the occasion of the Christmas carols and associated celebrations and called on the people to dedicate talents and skills in serving and sharing with others to manifest the spirit the season symbolized.

In addition to congregational hymns, the carol night featured praise renditions by an acc singer, Aity Dennis Inyang and the Amemuso Choir, Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Top government officials who attended the session included the wife of the governor, Mrs Ekaette Unoma Akpabio, the SSG, commissioners and advisers.

Eket NCWS Ends Activities

EKET

The Eket chapter of National Council of Women Societies (NCWS) has rounded off its week-long activities which featured seminars for women and students, visit to prisons, a novelty football match and thanksgiving service at Qua Iboe Church, Atabong Eket.

The event marked the second anniversary and inauguration of the Lady Aniedi Usoro-led executive even as some notable achievements were recorded during her administration.

In her speech to declare the

event open, the wife of the chairman, Eket Local Government Council, Mrs Emem Emmanuel Udo, advised the women to support the present administration in the state and local government for them to do more for the people.

Mrs Udo who was represented by the special adviser, Women and Youth Affairs, Ebere Etukudé, reminded students of the need to be diligent in their studies and to shun cultism and other vices.

The chapter president, Lady Aniedi Usoro in her speech said the National Council of Women Societies, was the umbrella organiza-

tion for all women activities as it was established to promote women emancipation, create awareness on the rights of women, youths, develop and accommodate the physically-challenged in the society.

In her contribution, Obonganwan Comfort Enodien, wife of the paramount ruler of Eket, appreciated the chapter leadership of (NCWS) for the progress so far recorded and urged the women to imbibe the message of the resource person during the seminar to improve upon their relationship with their children, especially the girl child.

Building Healthy Futures for Nigeria's Youth

CEDPA's Better Life Options Program

Nigeria is the tenth largest country in the world and the most populous country in Africa. However, according to the 2007/2008 Human Development Report, only 68 percent of children who are primary-school age attend school. In secondary school, enrollment drops even further, to 27 percent. Although the percentage of literate female youth has greatly increased in the last decade, there is still a significant disparity between literacy rates for men and women (60 percent of women vs. 78 percent of men). This is largely due to the fact that over four million Nigerian girls of primary school age do not attend school. Of the girls who do attend primary school, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics has estimated that 32 percent drop out before they finish the fifth grade.

With support from the ExxonMobil Foundation, the Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) is improving the lives of Nigerian girls and boys ages 10–19 in Akwa Ibom State through the Better Life Options (BLO) project. This program provides girls and boys who are out of school with participatory life skills training and encourages participants to enroll or re-enroll in the formal school system. In partnership with local organizations including the Eket Women's Development Association, Esob Mbaba Esit Eket, Lilies Organization and Presby AIDS, the program initially has reached over 2600 youth in four Local Government Areas: Eket, Esit Eket, Ibeno and Onna.

Better Life Options

The BLO program is designed to improve the knowledge, life skills and gender awareness of youth in Akwa Ibom State to better prepare them to make healthy and productive choices regarding their education, reproductive health and civic participation.

The program includes high-quality, participatory life skills training for youth. It builds on CEDPA's more than 20 years of experience in youth programming, which recognizes that progress for girls and boys not only requires building a knowledge base through formal education, but also requires providing them with the skills to build their self-confidence and decision-making abilities.

The project has trained 17 master trainers who, in turn, have trained 80 members of community-based organizations, including older youth, as facilitators to conduct the BLO classes in 30 centers across the four Local Government Areas. Facilitators lead sessions in teams, and classes typically are held two-to-three days per week for a period of three months, with no more than 20 youth per class to allow for active involvement of each participant.

CEDPA has adapted the program curriculum from its *Choose a Future!* training manual using input from girls, boys, parents, stakeholders, and community and traditional leaders from Akwa Ibom State. The adapted curriculum consists of 15 modules and runs for 133 hours. The sessions focus on setting goals, interpersonal relationships, communication skills, puberty, health, legal rights and the environment.



Beneficiaries at Ekpene Obo Centre receive life skills training that will build their self-confidence and decision-making skills.



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The BLO program builds the capacity of partner organizations around program implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The implementing partners sensitize their communities on the BLO project and the importance of participation and education through efforts including home visits, parent's meetings, religious sermons and community events. The program also builds sustained support through the creation of local Project Support Committees (PSCs), which implement support activities in various communities.

Results

The program began in 2006 with an enrolment of 1209 youth, 86 percent (804 girls and 237 boys) of those enrolled completed the program during the first phase (attended at least 75% of classes). The youth who completed the sessions asserted that participating in the project has positively affected their lives and caused them to better focus their approach to life. Twelve percent (122 participants) of those who completed the program returned to school. In the second phase, 2008-10, the program results improved. Out of the 1440 youth enrolled, 84 percent completed the program (969 girls and 241 boys), and at least 51 percent of those who completed returned to formal or vocational schools.

Results from a pre and post survey conducted before and after completing the life skills courses showed that participants' reproductive health knowledge improved 53 percent, their HIV knowledge improved by 21 percent and their overall family communication increased by 18 percent. Participants' involvement in community improvement activities also increased from 40 percent at the inception of the project to 63 percent at project end. In phase two, additional follow-on surveys of the first batch of beneficiaries showed that they maintained their knowledge of reproductive health and HIV knowledge two years after completing the classes.

Implementing partners benefitted from trainings in financial management, monitoring and evaluation and strategic planning, which enhanced their technical capacity to run youth-focused programs for the community. By working closely with PSCs, local NGOs have found support from community members who came together to devise action plans for continued engagement in education initiatives such as the BLO program. The PSC members make periodic visits to schools where participants have re-enrolled over the lifespan of the BLO program. In addition to their roles as monitors and mentors for the girls and boys, PSCs are now convening regularly to plan future activities and raise funds for similar programs in each of the four Local Government Authorities.

About CEDPA

Internationally recognized for improving the lives of women and girls in developing countries for over 35 years, CEDPA works through local partnerships to increase educational opportunities for girls and youth, ensure access to lifesaving reproductive health and HIV/AIDS information and services, and strengthen women's leadership in their nations.

CEDPA's Better Life Options program in Nigeria is made possible through the generous support of the ExxonMobil Foundation's Educating Women and Girls Initiative.

"I am assertive in my actions. Now I stop, think, act and review every action before and after taking them."

— 16 year-old female, Onna

"I thought it was an insult to try equating a woman with a man, it is not really so after all. It is not the sex that matters, but the person doing the job."

—12 year-old male, Ibeno

"If I was fortunate to have such opportunity like the BLO Project, I would not stop at Primary 2B. I thank BLO/CEDPA Project because I have seen a great change in my child."

—Mother of a female beneficiary, Esit Eket

SUPPORTING OUR YOUTH

Profiles of Community Members Choosing a Better Future

While more children in **NIGERIA** have enrolled in primary school recently, many are dropping out before completing their education. According to UNICEF, just **54 percent** of students in primary school continue on to secondary school. This holds true for Akwa Ibom State in the delta region, where **CEDPA** and four local partners teamed up to **empower** more than 1,400 adolescent girls and boys to make better life choices. The **Better Life Options** Program, funded by the **ExxonMobil Foundation**, engaged community members, parents, school officials and village leaders to support these adolescents, who improved their knowledge about reproductive health, gender, civic participation and goal-setting through the program's life skills classes. Of those who completed in the program, **50 percent enrolled or re-enrolled** in formal school and others went on to obtain vocational training. Meet some of the program beneficiaries, supporters, facilitators and implementing partners.



ESTHER WAS LIKE MANY OF THE GIRLS in her village. She dropped out of secondary school at 19 when she was just one year shy of graduating. Her life consisted of taking care of her mother and five younger sisters, cleaning the house and preparing meals.

She was unhappy and did not see many prospects or opportunities in her future. Two of her sisters were already teenage mothers before they were married, a common situation for many girls she knew. Esther did not want that life, but did not know how to avoid it.

In 2007, she was approached by a BLO facilitator who asked if she wanted to attend a class for girls and boys who had dropped out of school. Esther saw an opportunity to do something different and asked permission to join the program. With her mother's approval, she began attending this two-hour class three days a week with 20 of her peers.

"It was a lot of fun," Esther said. "What really encouraged me was learning how to reject early marriage and how to improve my communication."

She loved the classes on puberty, sexual health and HIV, and she remembers the sessions on goal-setting quite well. Esther began to notice a transformation in her character during the program. There was a change in the way she approached people and in the kinds of people she associated with. She gained confidence and began to share her opinions no matter the setting.

"[BLO] taught me how to be bold enough to express myself in public," Esther explained. "In school, you have to speak to lecturers...you have to be bold enough."

With support from the facilitators and knowledge derived from the program, Esther has proven to herself that she does not have to get pregnant or married before she is ready. After the program, Esther not only graduated from secondary school, but also was admitted to Akwa Ibom Polytechnic University. She completed her first year in secretarial studies at the university with financial support from her previously estranged father.

"The BLO program encouraged me to return to education," she said. "Completing my education was my biggest accomplishment."

Now, Esther is back in her village. She has become a role model in her community by proving to other young women that it is possible to overcome peer pressure and avoid early marriage and pregnancy with the right information, knowledge and capacity to make well-informed, thoughtful decisions.

ESTHER

Program Graduate

Program Graduate

BLESSING

LIKE ESTHER, BLESSING WAS LIVING in a single-parent household when she dropped out of secondary school because her family could no longer afford the fees. She wanted to stay in school, but the untimely death of her father in 2005 strained the family's finances.

"I really loved going to school so that I could become a medical doctor" she explained. "All I could think about was that without going to school, I could not achieve that."

Instead, Blessing was responsible for making sure her brother completed school and helping her mother with their stall at the market to meet the family's basic financial needs.

In 2007, Blessing enrolled in the program after speaking with a trained facilitator. Every week, she attended class for a total of six hours.

"I liked everything about the class," she said. "The facilitators were very good, and I liked the way they would speak."

Blessing was thrilled by what she learned, having gained important skills such as setting and achieving goals, making decisions and dealing with sexual harassment.

Because of the program, Blessing realized that she had opportunities to go back to school.

"Before, I never thought I would go to school anymore because of my father's death. I thought I would help my mother at the market. At the end of the day, maybe my brother would go to school. But now, I go first," she said.

In 2008, Blessing completed secondary school and saved enough money to enroll in Obafemi Owulowo University.

"I used the goal-setting model [from the program]," she explained. "I was able to save money, thinking that I wanted to go back to school. With the money [I saved]

from my mother's shop, I did some other things, like going to the waterside to collect fish and selling it myself."

Within seven months, she had earned enough to pay for her tuition. Today, Blessing is studying medical sciences and is well on her way to becoming a doctor.

She has not forgotten the lessons from the program, which she now shares with her classmates.

"In my school, I organized a program, and I called it BLO. I help my friends to understand about sex education and HIV transmission," Blessing said. "I tell them about how to avoid HIV and abstain from sex. I have about eight girls that I talk to."

The lessons Blessing learned in the program were invaluable in determining her future, and now she is helping to guide those around her to achieve a brighter future as well.



GIVO & SUE

Project Support Committee Members

Program beneficiaries, like Esther and Blessing, found support from community leaders who encouraged them to stay in school. Givo was trained to be a facilitator for the Better Life Options program in 2006, and by 2009, she transitioned into the role of a Project Support Committee (PSC) member.

PSC members provided input on selecting program candidates, raised funds for scholarships and school supplies, defined selection criteria for work-study scholarships, and monitored student and facilitator progress. In essence, these community members provided financial and moral support to the program participants during the classes and after their completion.

Givo, a civil servant with the local government of Ibeno in Akwa Ibom State and a member of a women's development group in a nearby village, dedicated much of her life to education and women's development.

"The BLO program complemented what I love, so I cherished the program," she said.

Coming from a financially constrained background, Givo knew the difficulties girls and boys face in finishing their education in her area. Her own mother struggled financially, but she insisted that her children complete school. Because of her mother's persistence, Givo holds a bachelor's degree in management, and her own children are on their way toward completing their education.

During the program, Givo met once a month with nine other like-minded community members, including champions from local government offices and village chiefs. They discussed ways to support the program beneficiaries, such as identifying criteria for future participants and scholarship recipients, and monitoring graduates by visiting them at their schools and households.

As a result of joining the PSC, Givo is well known in the community. "I know the parents and the chiefs; they stop me to ask about the program," she said. Givo had never met with chiefs

before taking part in the program, but that has changed.

"Because of BLO, I meet with the chiefs; they are happy to have [the program] and enjoy hearing about it," she said.

Being a PSC member was not always so easy, however. In the beginning, the chiefs and the parents resisted the program because of its sensitive topics, such as sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention.

"At first, our chiefs felt children shouldn't know these things; we did a lot of work," Givo said. "We explained that the children already know these things, but no one wants to talk about it."

Givo and her fellow PSC members convened the chiefs, parents and youth and went through the manual to explain the value of the sessions. Eventually, the parents and the chiefs changed their minds. They understood why the youth needed programs like this to help keep them in school and increase their opportunities.

"These children are trained for three months, and they are better equipped to stay in school," said Givo. "I would love to see every child in school."

In nearby Eket, the PSC was also composed of several high-profile community members — including Sue, a trained nurse — dedicated to making a difference in the lives of the youth. A PSC member for one and a half years, Sue understood the benefit the program provided the community, most directly the out-of-school youth.

"You see them without interest in going to school. They have a withdrawn attitude because

they've dropped out," said Sue. "Sometimes the parents also perpetuate this, because they ask 'Was I trained? Did I go to school?' and then ask us to leave them alone."

But for Sue, being a PSC member "was like a calling." She had a natural ability to mobilize people regardless of their status in society. She recruited the wife of the paramount ruler and the wife of a local chief to come to the monthly meetings of the Eket PSC.

Through their collective effort, Eket's PSC members screened 28 program graduates to receive scholarships funded by the project and have been to visit three schools to check in on those who re-enrolled.

"I want to support the beneficiaries," Sue explained. "I [enjoy] finding out how the beneficiaries are doing during their classes."

In addition to the monitoring, Sue was inspired by the advocacy training she received as a PSC member from CEDPA and the local partners. The advocacy workshop motivated her to become more involved — to reach out to other community leaders and engage them in the program.

"I [was] really impressed by the other trainings," she said. "Right now I am going to go back [to Eket], and I'm going to put my head into [the advocacy plan]. I will go and meet people ... and look for support, so that we can achieve our goal."

Thanks to their involvement in the program, Givo, Sue and their fellow PSC members are dedicated to supporting the progress of the youth in their areas and the future of their communities.

"We are able to check on our children, on their activities," explained Sue. "No one will come and do it for us. It is our duty to help these people and also to invite others to help us."

INI & DIANA

Lilies Organization, Implementing Partners

Establishing PSCs, with dedicated members such as Givo and Sue, was possible thanks to local partners, including Lilies Organization, Eket Women Development Association, Esop Mbaba Esit Eket and Presby-AIDS Organization. They worked as liaisons with the communities, recruited facilitators and coordinated program activities.

Ini Adiakpan has been the executive director of Lilies since 2003. The NGO was selected as a partner on the project primarily for its work with women and children, including democracy and governance work, supporting orphans and vulnerable children, and mentoring adolescent girls.

Ini, a teacher who has worked with youth for more than 25 years, was eager to become a partner on the program.

"I have a passion for children," she said. "If there is anything that will impact children, then I will go and work there."

Although it had a passionate staff, Lilies was a bare-bones operation before partnering with CEDPA. It did not have formal systems in place for record-keeping and monitoring, and Ini admits that she did not follow a standard protocol for keeping records. She was enthusiastic about the partnership partly because she knew that the capacity of her organization would be strengthened.

"I worked with CEDPA before I started my organization," Ini explained. "In the nineties, when we were working on democracy and governance for women in Akwa Ibom, they held the same standard: train before implementation."

The Better Life Options program was no different. CEDPA conducted training in spreadsheet software, financial reporting, record-keeping and advocacy, among other skills.

The workshop gave Ini the confidence to call on local chiefs and government officials for support, and they were happy to be a part of the program. Ini herself was asked to join the local government after her work with the program. She was thrilled when she was appointed the electoral commissioner for her local government area.

"I have more responsibility. I'm more visible and people look up to me," she said.

All of Ini's staff was involved in the capacity building that CEDPA offered to everyone from the accountants to the program coordinators, including Diana, who worked for Lilies for two years.

"The capacity building process is the greatest thing about working with CEDPA," Diana said. "CEDPA gives a holistic training. It opens you up and makes you a complete person."

Diana was lucky enough to also be selected for CEDPA's well-known leadership training, Global Women in Management, which took place in Abuja in 2008. The additional capacity building allowed Diana to become much more focused on her work. She immediately began to apply what she learned to her work with Lilies and share those lessons with her colleagues.

"Before I didn't do action plans," she explained. "Now, I do monthly, quarterly, weekly ... everybody who has worked with me has had at least one training in doing work plans."

Two years later, because of her strong work on the Better Life Options program, Diana was hired directly by CEDPA as a field coordinator for the program. She earned additional responsibilities, including tracking all the re-enrollees, coordinating with the four partners and writing reports. She was encouraged by the results she saw from her hard work on the project.

"Young people who thought they could never go back to school are going back," Diana said.

"The communities are more aware about sending girls back to school."

She observed that the graduates of the program were more aware of the opportunities around them, less likely to become pregnant in their teens and better at communicating with their families. She also noticed a change in the teachers who were trained as facilitators for the project.

"Their teaching is different," she said. "They now know what to do."

Lilies Organization, like the other implementing partners, was essential to the success of the Better Life Options program. The partner organizations served as connecting links to the communities, contributing to community ownership and buy-in of the program. The partnership strengthened the core capabilities of the organizations for the future of their communities.

"We had quite a lot of training working with CEDPA," stated Ini. "Our capacity has improved to run projects."

SARAH & STONE

Facilitators

The cornerstone of the Better Life Option program was its facilitators. CEDPA trained them to deliver the *Choose a Future!* curriculum in an interactive, participatory manner that would keep the youth interested. The facilitators saw changes not only in the participants but also in themselves.

"As a teacher, [the program] helped give me strategies to affect the lives of young people," said Sarah, a high school biology teacher from Ibeno.

When Sarah was approached by CEDPA staff in 2009 to become a facilitator for the program, she already knew the issues affecting her state.

"In Ibeno, around the river area, the population [of dropouts] is really high; mostly for girls," she explained. "They prefer going to the waterside, where they can make a little money for themselves."

According to Sarah, girls in the area did not see the value of staying in school. She saw the program as an opportunity to change the youth's attitudes, so she signed up to become a program facilitator, along with 60 other women and men.

"We were taught how to communicate, how to respect the students and how to applaud their achievements," she recalled. "Before the BLO project, when I wanted to communicate with someone, I wouldn't really think about their feelings or what they might think about what I was saying."

The training taught her how to listen and respect other opinions and gave her skills that allowed her to impart these lessons to the program beneficiaries. Sarah transferred these, along with many other skills she learned, not only to the youth in the program but also directly to the school where she taught 100 students in one classroom.

"I started teaching in 2007, and back then I saw students as students," Sarah said, referring to the methods for lecturing students rather than engaging them. "Now I am facilitating, not just teaching, and knowing that difference has really helped in my career."

Sarah now creates an environment where students are welcome to participate and talk in class, ensuring that she and classmates alike respect and encourage all students to speak. Using these skills, she has been able to reach out to students, earn their trust and build better relationships with them.

Like Sarah, Stone was also teaching in secondary school in Akwa Ibom State when he decided to become a facilitator for the program. He noticed the general lack of enthusiasm in many of his students and realized that these were the ones who could easily become part of the growing population of dropouts.

"I'd like to see these life skills worked into the curriculum for all schools," he said. "If they have these skills, they won't drop out again for [any] reason. If they know about themselves biologically, they will be able to make decisions and to say no to sex if they don't want it. It's not just a way back to school, but a way to stay in school."

Stone was so sure about the program's effectiveness that he started the Happy Smiles Foundation to continue working with program graduates.

"The reason why I came up with the foundation is to really monitor them," Stone explained. "I give them some services, and I do a lot of counseling. I tell them that any time they have a problem, issues or challenges, they can come inform me. And, I constantly refer back to the [*Choose a Future!*] manual to help solve these problems."

Stone, like his students, also was impacted by the program's lessons. He became more involved in helping others in his community solve problems. He began to notice that he was respected more by other community members, and his advice is sought out.

"We had a meeting with a local government chairman, and they wanted to come up with a monitoring system to look at voter registration. Because of [the] experience I've had, I was nominated to be a member of the civil society organization of the commission. It was because of the BLO project that they saw I was able to do it."

Stone was happy to be more involved with his community, but he is most proud of supporting the program beneficiaries to make sure they complete their education.

"I enjoy working with kids who have gone through the BLO program because they know how to communicate. They know how to talk, share their feelings, set goals for themselves. They know themselves," he said.

Sarah also gave testimony to the change in her students.

"The training has become a part of them," said Sarah. "They will even go into their own homes and practice what they learned. This will give us a better society tomorrow."





The Better Life Options program was made possible through the generous support of the ExxonMobil Foundation. Learn more about CEDPA's work in Youth Development at www.cedpa.org.

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