"Give aid to... the sisters, who devote their love

and life's work for the good of mankind, for

they appeal especially to me as deserving help

from the Foundation.... It is my wish... to have

the largest part of your benefactions dedicated

to the sisters in all parts of the world."

— Last will and testament of Conrad N. Hilton

Catholic Sisters in Nigeria

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's
Catholic Sisters Initiative

Contents

I.

Introduction

Unique Role of Sisters

This case study seeks to illuminate the unique role that Catholic sisters play in Nigerian society and the communities they serve. It also highlights why it is so critical for the Sisters Initiative to support them. When CRCC researchers asked sisters in Nigeria what differentiated them from others who provide health, education or other social services, they responded that:

> **"Sisters empower people to be good leaders."**

> **"Sisters are special because of their commitment, coupled with the standards they keep."**

> **"When you educate a sister to get a degree, education improves her as a woman and empowers other sisters, who are able to apply themselves in their apostolates with confidence "**

> **"Sisters have a lot of power! We can be the voice of the people and bring awareness to their needs."**

> **"Sisters want to advocate for an end to violence against women and children."**

Nigerian sisters see themselves as spiritual workers embracing the poorest and most vulnerable members of Nigerian society. Sisters shelter and nurture women who have been victims of human trafficking, work with people who have been displaced by violence between the Nigerian military and Boko Haram in the country's northeast, engage in conflict resolution to ease Nigeria's inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions, partner with NGOs to prevent communicable disease, and advocate for community services in areas that Nigeria's often ineffectual government has neglected. Nigerian sisters often go where others refuse to serve and provide strong spiritual witness through their work. They have a uniquely embedded perspective on the complex needs of Nigerian communities and vulnerable populations because they live side-by-side with people and intimately

understand the challenges that they face on a daily basis. Nigerian sisters have suffered alongside their communities. In turn, members of their communities—along with Catholic and non-Catholic stakeholders interviewed in Nigeria—trust sisters and see them as honest interlocutors with local, state and national governments as well as private institutions. Nigerian sisters truly represent Conrad N. Hilton's vision of sisters as those who "devote their love and life's work for the good of mankind."

Methodology

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's Catholic Sisters Initiative launched its first five-year strategy in 2013. As the measurement, evaluation and learning (MEL) partner of the Sisters Initiative, the Center for Religion and Civic Culture (CRCC) at the University of Southern California has been documenting and analyzing the Sisters Initiative's grant-making strategy since 2014.

At the request of the Sisters Initiative, CRCC is conducting research to support the development of the second iteration of its strategy for 2018-2022. In order to understand the needs of Catholic sisters and their missions in Sub-Saharan Africa, CRCC was tasked with developing country case studies for Zambia, Uganda and Nigeria.

CRCC's methodology is based on the country assessment model used by development organizations. Such assessments can provide a landscape analysis in a particular field (e.g., education), a risk analysis, a list of key partners, and/or the identification of particular regions with the most need. They are typically based on a literature review and at least 2-3 weeks in country with time to interview a wide variety of stakeholders. They can provide field-level, real-time information to make decisions on whether to invest time and resources into tackling an issue in a country, as well as to develop an initial country strategy so that an intervention has the highest chance of success.

Rather than focus on a particular field, this case study is unique in that it seeks to understand the ability of one set of actors—Catholic sisters—to meet the needs within the country. It responds directly to the Sisters Initiative's request for information on five sectors that it is considering funding through its second strategic phase: food security, education, maternal and child health, human trafficking, and entrepreneurship and microfinance. In each of these areas, which align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the report documents the scope of needs, the role of sisters, key players, challenges and opportunities.

The case study of Nigeria builds on the previously published Zambia and Uganda case studies; indeed, many of the challenges and recommendations for sisters as well as the country priorities are similar in all three countries. This report refers back to the Zambia and Uganda case studies for both similarities and differences. In particular, food security emerged as a clear sector priority from the Zambia case study. Uganda, however, complicated the narrative of five sectors. Key informants repeatedly told CRCC that poverty eradication, a key element of all five sectors prioritized by the Sisters Initiative, was Uganda's priority. And while food security and poverty eradication are also urgent concerns in Nigeria, almost all of our Nigerian informants said that poor governance is the root of most development challenges in a country that is rich in natural resources and human capital.

This report should be considered the beginning of a conversation on how the Sisters Initiative's next strategy can be implemented at a country level, and not a full-fledged country assessment. CRCC's relatively brief time in Nigeria (one week) and limited access to stakeholders constrain the conclusions that can be drawn from this report. If the Sisters Initiative decides to invest more deeply in Nigeria, it could employ a consultant who is an expert in a particular sector to broaden and deepen the analysis available here and to provide more specific recommendations on how to have the greatest impact on a given sector or set of sectors. Nonetheless, this report concludes with an initial assessment of Nigeria's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, along with recommendations for the Sisters Initiative to consider as it crafts the second iteration of its strategy.

II.

Country Background

Nigeria is a country of roughly 185 million people, making it the most populous nation in Africa and the 7th most populous country in the world.[1] Located on the southern Atlantic coast of West Africa, Nigeria borders Benin, Niger, Chad and Cameroon. The country is divided into 36 states, plus the Federal Capital Territory. According to the most recent World Bank data, roughly half of Nigeria's population lives in urban areas, including the Lagos region, home to more than 20 million people.[2]

Economics

Nigeria is considered a lower middle-income country by the World Bank, with a gross national income per capita of US $2,450 in 2016.[3] About 50 percent of the population works in the service sector,[4] 30 percent in the agricultural sector and 20 percent in the industrial sector. Nigeria has an abundance of natural resources, but with the exception of the petroleum industry, most extractive industries are underdeveloped. Oil production in Nigeria, Africa's largest petroleum producer, accounts for a third of the country's GDP and 90 percent of its export revenue.[5] In its most recent national development plan, titled "Nigeria Vision 2020," the Nigerian government set the goal of becoming one of the top 20 global economies by 2020.[6] A drop in the price of oil in 2016 triggered a recession from which the country is just beginning to recover. Nigeria currently ranks 27th in the World Bank's list of global economies. On the most recent human development index, however, Nigeria currently ranks 152nd out of the 188 countries.[7]

Politics

The challenges of governance and political unity that confront Nigeria today are deeply rooted in West Africa's place in the history of European slave trading and colonization. Great Britain, the dominant maritime power of the colonial era, outlawed the slave trade in 1807 and established a fleet of ships, the West Africa Squadron, to suppress slaving activities in the region.[8] In 1851, British forces intervened in a struggle for power in the Kingdom of Lagos, deposing a ruler

who was profiting from the slave trade and installing a new ruler who was more compliant with Britain's interests. Britain annexed Lagos as a crown colony in 1861.[9]

By the late 19th century, an increasing number of European imperial states were vying for territory, including a recently unified Germany. At the Berlin Conference of 1885, Britain was granted a sphere of influence in West Africa, including territories that would eventually compose modern Nigeria. In 1914, Britain formally united Muslim-majority portions of the Sokoto Caliphate under its control with rapidly Christianizing coastal areas that stretched from the Lagos region to the border of French-controlled Cameroon. The newly created Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria encompassed roughly 400 different ethnic groups, representing an immensely diverse range of cultural practices and political interests.[10]

Uniting these groups under a common national identity remains the country's single greatest challenge, bedeviling efforts to address other problems like poverty and food security. "The British created Nigeria," one informant said, "but we have yet to figure out how to create Nigerians."

Nigeria gained its independence from Britain in 1960, at the crest of a great wave of African decolonization movements that began after the Second World War. A brief period of democratic realignment among Nigeria's ethnic and religious factions ended in 1966, with a military coup and counter-coup. The restive southeastern region, known as Biafra, declared its independence in 1967, sparking the Nigerian Civil War. The conflict ended in 1970 with the defeat of the sepa-ratist Republic of Biafra, leaving at least one million people dead from war, starvation and disease.[11]

There was never a formal process of reconciliation following the civil war; in consequence, Biafrans (as Igbos and other indigenous ethnic groups in the southeast are still collective-ly known) and indigenes of other regions of the country are often suspicious of one another. In the federal government, there is insufficient political will to remedy this festering problem. Indeed, President Muhammadu Buhari has labeled the Indigenous People of Biafra movement (IPOB) a terrorist organization, though IPOB's six-year campaign for a referen-dum on Biafran secession has been nonviolent.[12] Amnesty International recently accused federal security forces of torture and extrajudicial killing in their suppression of Biafran separatist movements.[13]

From 1970 to 1999, as revenues from the rapidly developing oil sector increased, a series of military juntas and corrupt civilian regimes plundered the government and hobbled the development of Nigeria's civil society. This period of instabil-ity ended in May 1999, when General Abdulsalami Abubakar, the country's last military ruler, ratified a new democratic constitution and transferred power to Olusegun Obasanjo, a former army general and military ruler who stood for election as a civilian leader.[14]

Though the 1999 constitution lay the groundwork for a multi-party democracy, candidates from the center-right People's Democratic Party prevailed in each of Nigeria's quadrennial presidential elections until 2015. In reaction to widely perceived corruption and abuses of power in the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan, voters in that year's presidential contest elected Muhammadu Buhari, a former military ruler and anti-corruption crusader from the newly formed All Progressives Congress. Buhari's running mate—Yemi Osinbajo, a law professor at the University of Lagos and a Pentecostal pastor—was also seen as an antidote to widespread corruption.[15]

The historical precedent of the 2015 presidential election brought with it a widespread sense of optimism. But the new government's inability to address obdurate problems like the Boko Haram insurgency, which displaced 2 million people and ravaged civic infrastructure in the northeast, has since dimmed hopes for substantive change in Nigeria's governing culture. Many Nigerians are especially dismayed at President Buhari's inaction on the "herdsman crisis"—the ongoing, violent seizure of land by herders from the Fulani ethnic group—because Buhari is also Fulani.

That privileging of ethnic identity over national unity is, paradoxically, a central feature of Nigerian constitutional democracy. Several informants pointed to the "federal char-acter" provisions in Nigeria's successive post-independence constitutions as a key impediment to the forging of a national identity as well as one of the main vectors for corruption in government. Dating back to the end of British colonial rule in 1960, when states in the country's Muslim north feared domination by the Christian south, the provisions require the President to include a representative from each of Nigeria's 36 states in his or her cabinet. They also mandate that ethnic groups receive benefits related to land ownership, govern-ment employment and educational opportunity in the states where they are designated as indigenous.

"The federal character provisions are now just a part of the institution of corruption," said one source. "It makes people in the public sector unaccountable because you're just look-ing at someone's identity, not at their competence or value."

Indeed, this lack of accountability is the root cause of many of Nigeria's seemingly intractable problems, from school overcrowding and a lack of data on healthcare outcomes to erratic electrical power supplies and rural food insecurity. Still, despite its poor governance, Nigeria's wealth of natural

resources and vast reservoir of human capital endow it with immense potential. Nigerian sisters can help their society realize that potential and, in so doing, become change-agents well beyond Nigeria's borders.

"If you want to make change in Africa," said one of CRCC's sources, "You have to make change in Nigeria."

Religion

The Nigerian populace is divided roughly evenly between Islam and Christianity, with an additional minority (5 percent) adhering to traditional beliefs and practices such as Ifa, and another small segment (less than 5 percent) identifying with Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism or no religious tradition at all. (Figure 1).[16]

Nigerian Christians are predominantly Protestant, with numerous indigenous evangelical denominations such as the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Winners Chapel, Mountain of Fire and Miracles and Christ Apostolic Church. Missionary-era denominations include the Church of Nigeria, the second-largest province by membership (18 million) in the Anglican Communion, after the Church of England. Catholics compose roughly a quarter (about 20 million) of the total Christian population.[17] The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), founded in 1976, originally comprised the Catholic Church and mainline Protestant groups, but has since expanded to include indigenous evangelical denominations and independent Pentecostal churches.

While Christianity is the majority religion in the southern part of the country, there are also significant Muslim minorities in the south, and religiously mixed families are not uncommon, particularly in southwest. The Nigerian Middle Belt is religiously diverse, with some cities in the region—particularly Jos—witnessing periodic bouts of religious conflict stoked by ethnic and political rivalry.[18]

Most Nigerian Muslims are Sunni, though there are small Shia (12 percent of the total Muslim population) and Ahmadiyya (3 percent) minorities, primarily in the northwest quadrant of the country.[19] In 1999, nine northern Muslim-majority states and three Muslim-plurality states instituted Sharia courts in

fig. 1
Religion by Geography
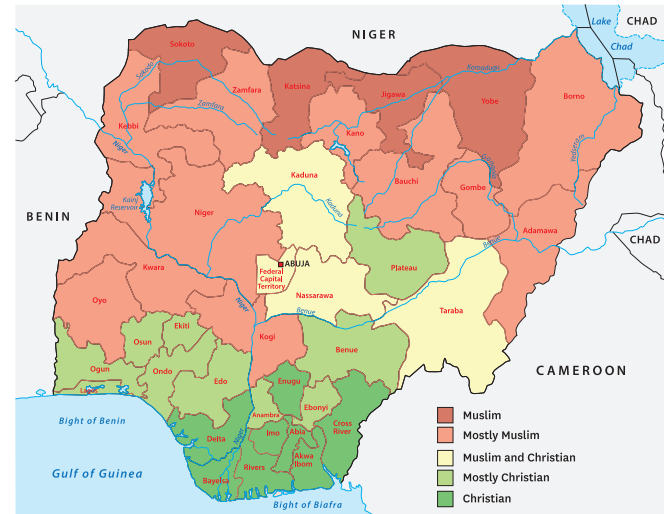
the Maliki tradition of jurisprudence, in addition to secular courts.[20] Since 2002, the Islamic militant group Boko Haram has waged violence in the northeast, killing thousands, kidnapping young women and girls, displacing at least 2 million people and destroying schools, churches, mosques and civic infrastructure. A brutal crackdown under the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan diminished the insurgency, but porous borders between Nigeria and its northeastern neighbors allow remnants of Boko Haram to continue to commit acts of violence in the region.

In contrast to the northeast region, northwestern Nigeria is relatively stable. This stability is partly a consequence of the influence of the Sokoto Sultanate Council, the administrative remnant of the Sokoto Caliphate, which was founded in 1809 and abolished by the British in 1903. The Sultan of Sokoto, a hereditary position, is the grand Sheik of the Qadriyya Sufi order and serves as the spiritual leader of Nigerian Muslims as well as the head of Jama'atu Nasril Islam, or the Society for the Support of Islam, the Muslim counterpart to CAN. Muhammadu Sa'adu Abubakar III became the 20th Sultan of Sokoto after the death of his brother in 2006.[21]

Two umbrella organizations unite key players in Nigeria's Muslim and Christian communities: the Nigeria Interfaith Action Association (NIFAA), which engages religious leaders in efforts to encourage their communities to confront economic and public health challenges, and the Nigeria Inter-religious Council (NIREC), which was established to promote dialogue between Christian and Muslim leaders as a way of diffusing religious conflict. While NIFAA has proved effective at generating inter-religious support for public health interventions, infighting within NIREC has limited the group's effectiveness at the national level. State-level efforts at dialogue and conflict-resolution continue, most notably in Lagos State, and there have been recent calls for the resuscitation of NIREC's nationwide initiatives.[22]

Catholic Church

Portuguese explorers first introduced Catholicism into the area that would become Nigeria in the 15th century, though the remnants of those early Portuguese missions had largely disappeared by the 1600s. Priests from the Society of African Missions of Lyons established the first modern Catholic missions in Lagos in 1865, and a vicariate was established in Benin City in 1870. By the 1920s, numerous missions had appeared throughout Igboland—the southeastern region also known as Biafra—eventually outnumbering Anglican Church Missionary Society missions. In 1950, the first arch-dioceses—in Kaduna, Lagos and Onitsha—were established. The world's largest Catholic seminary is Bigard Memorial in Enugu, which briefly served as the capital of the Republic of Biafra during the Nigerian Civil War (1967 to 1970).[23]

During the war, Catholic missionaries remained with their Igbo congregations as Federal forces encircled them. They provided news of the immense suffering wrought by the civil war to outside media, and helped garner support for the Biafrans from the international Christian community. In 1968 a Vatican mission visited Biafra, and Pope Paul VI (who had been the first European cardinal to visit Nigeria after its independence) personally spoke out on behalf of the Biafran Igbo. Missionaries who had supported the Igbo—roughly 500 total—were expelled following the war, and no foreign priests were permitted to work in Nigeria until the mid-1970s.

Numerous lay organizations emerged in the post-war period to supplement the Catholic Church's missionary efforts, which increasingly gave the Church in Nigeria an indigenous character. Catholics were taught to be welcoming toward followers of traditional religions, emphasizing forgiveness instead of intolerance, and the terms "pagan" and "idolatry" were dropped from discussions of traditional religious adherents.[24]

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) is the lead organization of the Church in the country, representing the Catholic hierarchy and their collective social and pastoral ministries. The Conference's activities are administered through its executive branch, the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria. The Secretariat in turn oversees Nigeria's 54 ecclesiastical jurisdictions through various departments that run the daily activities of the Church in Nigeria.

One of the key commissions under the CBCN is Caritas Nigeria, which was founded in 2010 to promote the socio-economic development work of the CBCN. Caritas focuses on several essential initiatives in Nigeria, including advocacy for the poor at all levels of Nigerian governance, emergency preparedness and relief services, HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, food security, water and hygiene, anti-human trafficking programs, and capacity-building in various Catholic organizations.

UN Sustainable Development Goals

Nigeria's sustainable development agenda began in earnest after the nation transitioned to civilian rule in 1999. Nigeria, the African continent's most populous country, has been racked by political corruption and ethnic and religious violence, and has struggled to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Nigeria was a latecomer as a participant in the United Nations' MDG initiative. According to the UN's Millennium Goals Report, published in 2015, Nigeria is one of five countries that comprise 60 percent of the world's poor.[25] Moreover, Nigeria ranked highest for the number of internally displaced persons due to conflict, and also ranked very high in new HIV infections. According to the report, "More than 75

percent of the new infections in 2013 occurred in 15 countries. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region most severely affected by the HIV epidemic, with 1.5 million new infections in 2013. Of these, almost half occurred in only three countries: Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda."

According to the Nigeria 2015 Millennium Development Goal Report, Nigeria only made significant progress in two areas: reducing maternal mortality and forging global partnerships for development. It also made strong progress on eliminating gender disparity in education, in reversing the incidence of malaria, halving the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and improving the lives of slum dwellers. Nigeria has made slow progress in other areas such as education, infant and maternal mortality, hunger and gender equality.

Figure 2 provides a quick glance at Nigeria's performance in meeting Millennium Development Goals. (See Appendix for charts.)

fig. 2
Snapshot of MDG End-point
N= 36

16.7%
Target Met

13.9%
Strong
Progress

25%
Fair Progress

44.4%
Weak Progress
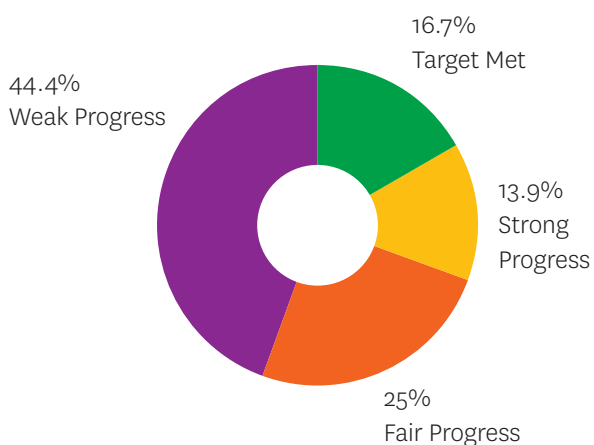
In September 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the goal to end poverty, improve health, reduce inequality and address climate change by 2030. To measure progress, 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were created, each with specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years. Each goal includes a set of indicators to track success.

According to the United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform,[26] Nigeria has engaged with the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development by conducting a voluntary national review, documented in a report published in June 2017.[27]

Nigeria's national review served to document the nation's progress and the status of implementation of SDGs. The report highlighted key areas of success, significant challenges and areas where support is needed. One positive development is the creation of a Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG) and a Donors' Forum on the SDGs, inaugurated in March 2017.[28]

PSAG is a public-private sector collaboration aimed at fostering effective partnership for the SDGs. This development comes as a direct response to some of the challenges Nigeria faced during the implementation of MDGs. The group includes 13 key partners with an interest in corporate social responsibility. They include: Growing Businesses Foundation, Lagos Business School, Sahara Group Limited, British American Tobacco Nigeria, Nigerian Economic Summit Group, PricewaterhouseCoopers Ltd., Google, Unilever Nigeria, Airtel Nigeria, GT Bank, General Electric, Dangote Group, Coca-Cola, Channels Television, Chamber of Commerce–Lagos/Kano, the National Association of Small Scale Industrialists and the Nigerian Association of Small and Medium Enterprises.

Some of the key development challenges for Nigeria align with priorities of the Sisters Initiative. Specifically, comprehensive data-gathering and analysis is a major challenge for Nigeria. The nation has requested support on technology transfer and capacity building, focusing on support for data production related to implementation of the SDG initiatives.

Funding Landscape

Aid and philanthropy in Nigeria has generally focused on a few key areas:

- Health
- Economic development
- Democracy, human rights and governance
- Humanitarian assistance and poverty reduction

Philanthropic giving in Nigeria is largely concentrated on the health sector, with a large majority of funding streams going to health-related issues such as HIV/AIDS and malaria. Following several fraud scandals and the recent destabilization of the northeast due to the Boko Haram insurgency, many European Union states significantly cut funding to Nigeria. This development, combined with changes to health funding in the Trump era in the United States, has led to further fluctuations in the giving landscape, including the emergence of non-traditional donors such as China, Japan and India, all of which now play roles in Nigeria's economic development.
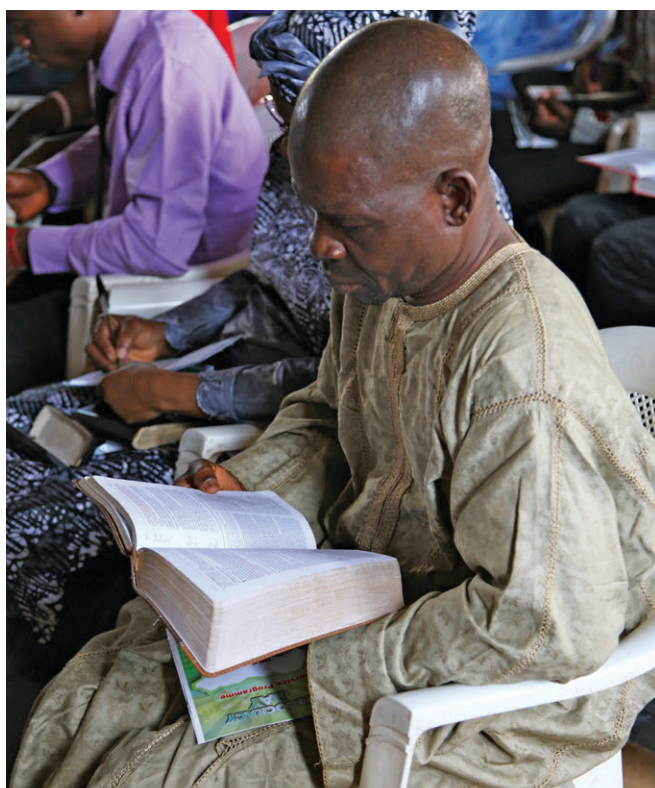
Foreign Aid

Nigeria is one of the top ten African recipients of Official Development Assistance (ODA), a widely used measure of international aid flow.[29] Like other countries in the region, Nigeria has seen a reduction in ODA dollars from traditional sources such as the United States, the IMF and European nations since 2014. Non-traditional sources and non-Western nations have begun to fill these funding gaps.

The diversification of foreign aid from non-traditional sources can be seen, for example, in the health sector (Figure 3). The United States still topped the donor list for Nigeria in 2014. It is important to note that the second largest source of investment is "Other Donors," a category that includes China and private sector partnerships. The next largest commitment comes from GAVI, a non-traditional public-private funding alliance focused on vaccines. The Global Fund, which also ranks highly on Nigeria's health sector funding list, is a partnership organization that relies on voluntary financial contributions from all funding sources—the private sector, foundations, individuals and donor governments—to focus on AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

fig. 3

Sources of Foreign Aid for Health in Nigeria (2014)

Donor	*Amount of AID in USD million*
United States	324
United Kingdom	9
Global Fund	28
GAVI	86
Canada	20
France	53
Japan	3
Other Donors	157
Total	**680**

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

Philanthropy

Since 2006, Nigeria has received a total of $1.7 billion dollars in aid from 653 funders. This sum represents roughly 3,700 grants distributed to more than 1,100 recipients (Figure 4).

Nigeria's largest areas of aid receipt (Figure 5) are health ($1.1 billion) and international relations ($835 million), followed by community and economic development ($246 million) and agriculture, fishing and forestry ($226 million). Other areas that have received significant funding include human services ($154 million) and human rights ($122 million).

fig. 4
Overall Grant-Making in Nigeria (2006-2017)

3,700	$1.7 Billion	653	1,164
Total Number of Grants	Total Dollar Value of Grants	Total Number of Funders	Total Number of Recipients
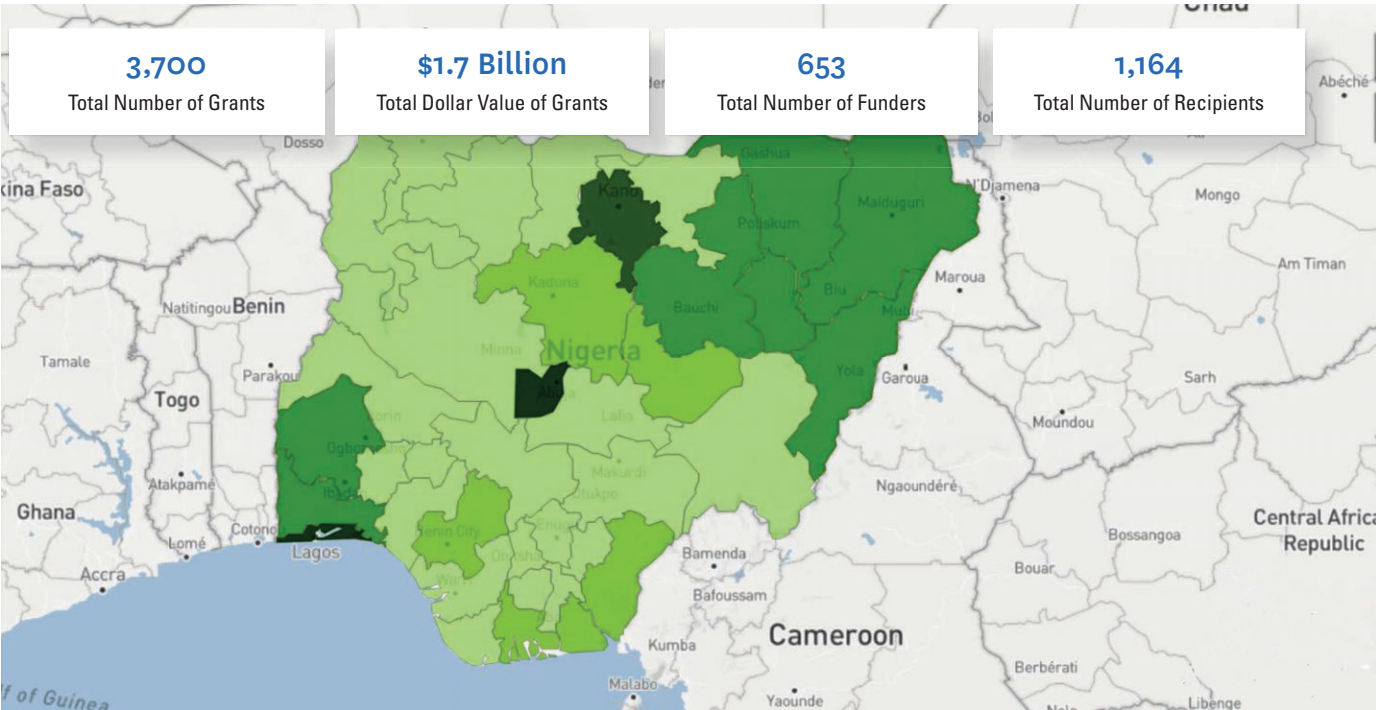
SOURCE: Foundation Center

fig. 5

Aid by sector

Chart labels (clockwise): Arts and culture, Education, Environment, Philanthropy, Health, Science, Social sciences, Information and Communications, Public safety, Public affairs, Agriculture, fishing and forestry, Community and economic development, Religion, Sports and recreation, Human rights, Human services, International relations, Unknown or not classified

Values shown: $835m, $1.1 b

SOURCE: Foundation Center

* Government grants have been excluded.

fig. 6
Top 10 Grant-Makers in Nigeria

| Funder	Country	Value of Grants	Number of Grants
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	United States	$ 1,058,309,706	181
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation	United States	$ 127,732,599	284
United States Department of Health and Human Services	United States	$ 78,622,288	69
Ford Foundation	United States	$ 78,431,574	243
The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust	United Kingdom	$ 62,259,140	1
Bloomberg Philanthropies	United States	$ 38,000,000	6
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation	United States	$ 37,711,183	59
NDPI Foundation Inc.	United States	$ 35,827,779	3
Chevron Corporation Contributions Program	United States	$ 25,000,000	1
GAVI Alliance	Switzerland	$ 21,000,000	1

SOURCE: Foundation Center

Public and private funders based in the United States dominate the list of the top ten grant-makers funding projects in Nigeria. The data in Figure 6 indicate total funding for each grant-maker in the period from 2006–2017.

The cluster map in Figure 7 illustrates the linkages between major grant-makers. All grant-makers that appear in the top-ten list are identified, along with other notable funding network hubs. Blue circles indicate funders, while orange circles indicate recipients. The size of the circle is relative to the number of grant dollars expended, thus indicating the organization's importance to the network.

The cluster map illustrates that there are many single-funded grantees in the philanthropic landscape in Nigeria. There are many isolated organizations and funders scattered throughout the landscape. Aside from a trio of connected funders (the MacArthur, Gates and Ford foundations), most grant-makers are isolated from the network. The trio of connected funders focuses most keenly on the health sector, and each member of the trio is connected through a number of recipients where there may be potential for collaboration, including Mercy Corps, John Hopkins University and the University of Jos.

fig. 7
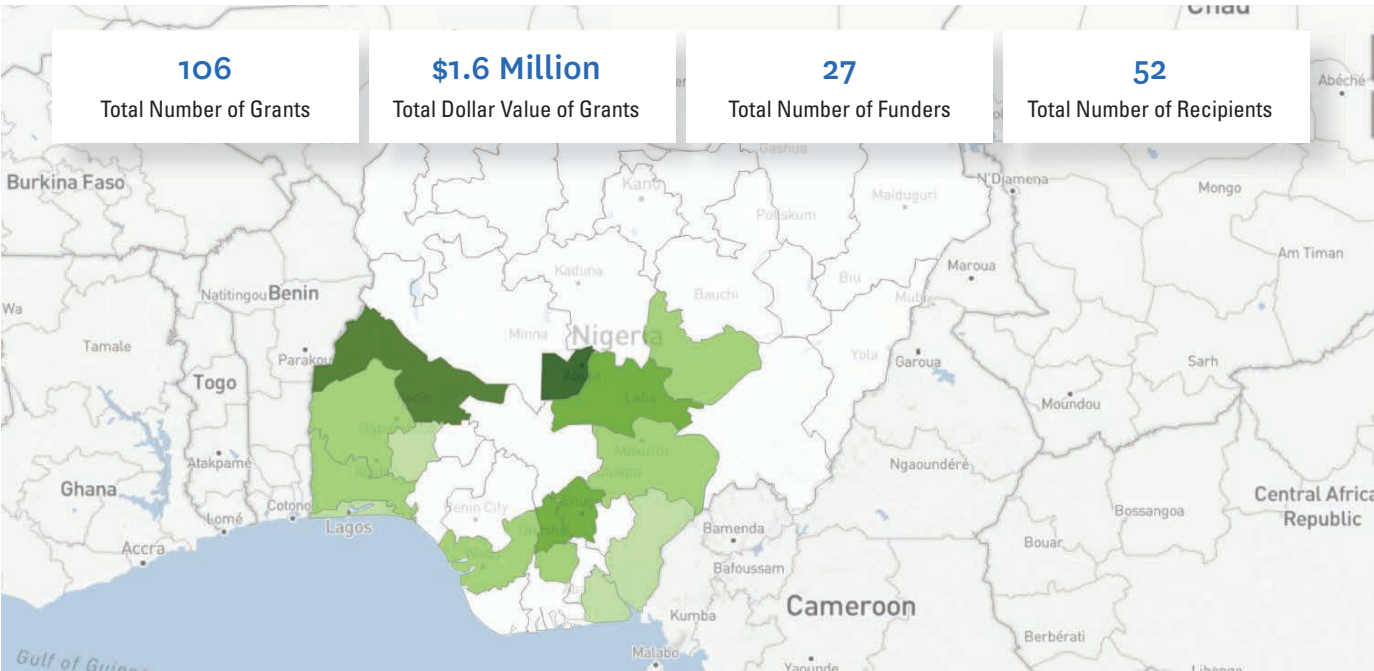# Network of Top 10 Grantmakers in Nigeria
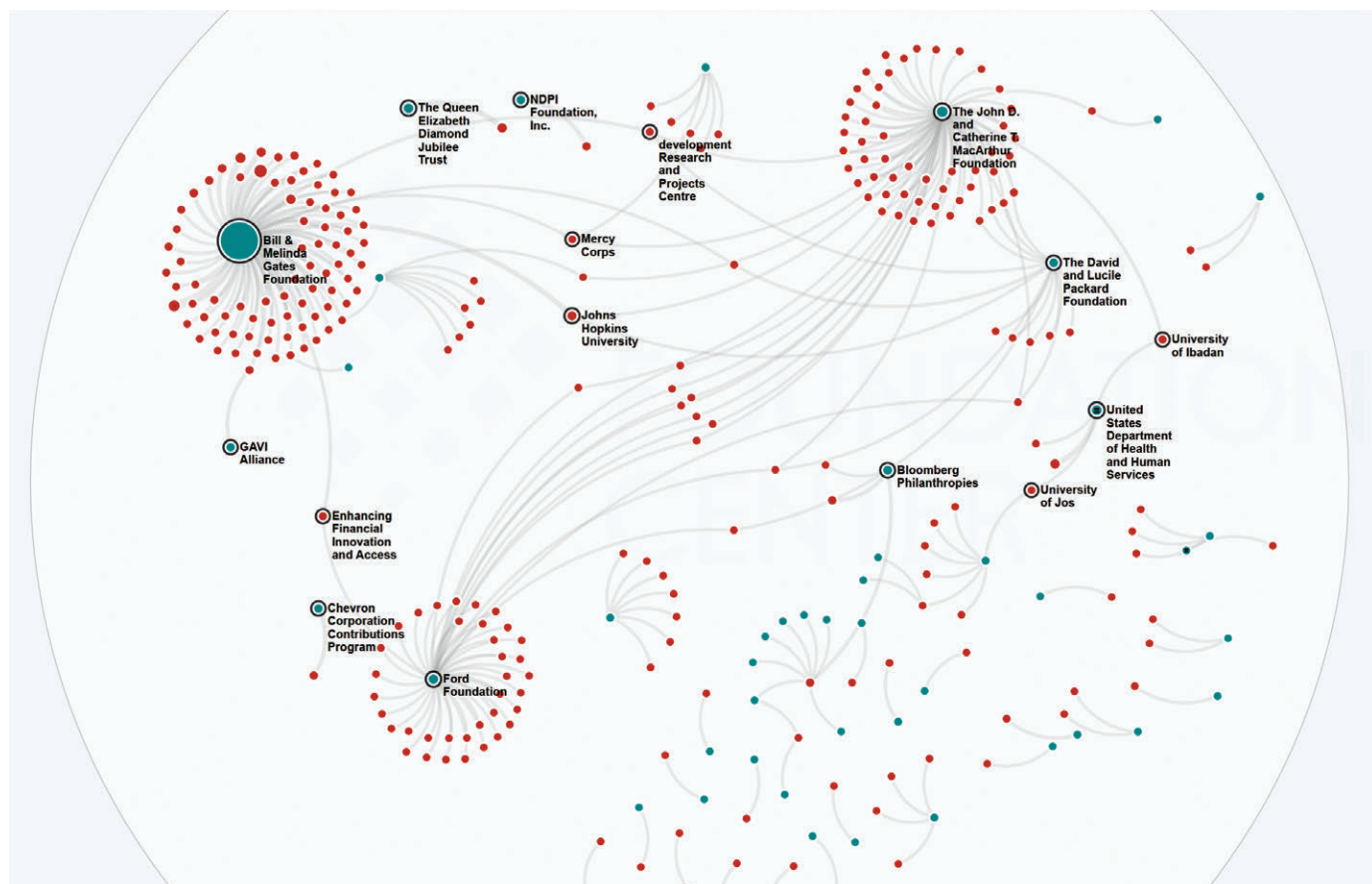
Catholic Funders

Since 2006, 27 Catholic funders have made more than 100 grants to roughly 50 recipients, totaling $1.6 million dollars. This funding is concentrated in the southern part of the country, where the majority of Catholics live (Figure 8). Figure 9 is a list of the top ten Catholic grant-makers in Nigeria since 2006.

The Foundation Center does not list the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation as a funder focused on Catholic giving in Nigeria, although the Sisters Initiative's grant of $360,000 to the Africa Faith and Justice Network in 2017 would make it the second largest donor to Catholic causes.

The Koch Foundation is by far the major source of Catholic giving in Nigeria, with nearly $1 million in grants since 2006 focused on religion, followed by education. GHR Foundation is the second largest source of Catholic giving in Nigeria. Both foundations have existing connections to the Sisters Initiative and are potential partners for entry.

A cluster map of Catholic grant-makers (Figure 10) illustrates the existing network in this funding cohort. As the map shows, the landscape of Catholic funders is sparse. The Koch Foundation and other Catholic funders in Nigeria have a fairly diversified portfolio focused on supporting both dioceses and orders of sisters, without many redundancies in funding among the recipients. The map also shows that several religious orders have robust and diversified funding streams, including the Dominican Sisters, Holy Parish Family, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, and the Society of Jesus, North-West Africa Province.

*fig. 8*

Network of Top 10 Grantmakers in Nigeria

106	$1.6 Million	27	52
Total Number of Grants	Total Dollar Value of Grants	Total Number of Funders	Total Number of Recipients

SOURCE: Foundation Center

fig. 9

Top Ten Catholic Grant-Makers in Nigeria (2006 – 2017)

Funder	Country	Value of Grants	Number Of Grants
Koch Foundation Inc.	United States	$ 901,747	60
GHR Foundation	United States	$ 180,000	2
Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities Inc.	United States	$ 99,000	5
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation	United States	$ 92,000	1
Schwab Charitable Fund	United States	$ 85,000	2
Wakerly Family Foundation	United States	$ 61,000	2
TY Danjuma Foundation	Nigeria	$ 60,113	1
De Molina Family Foundation	United States	$ 50,000	1
The Norcliffe Foundation	United States	$ 20,000	1
Alice Josephine Hamilton Charitable Trust	United States	$ 18,207	2

fig. 10

Grant-Making by Catholic Funders in Nigeria
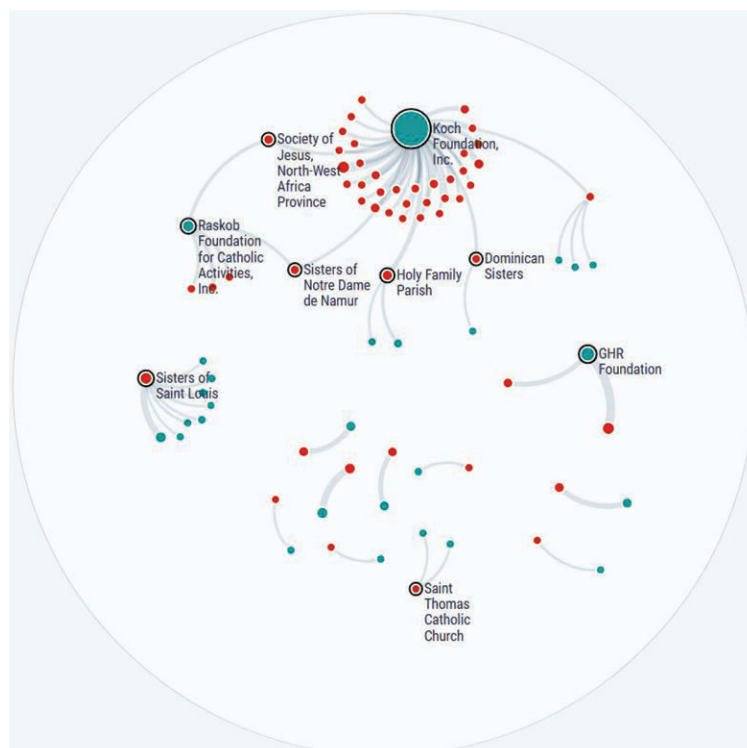
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation in Nigeria

The Hilton Foundation is a relatively small player among other Catholic philanthropies in Nigeria, initiating small grants every few years in a variety of sectors. Figure 11 provides a breakdown of Foundation grants in the country. Since 2007, several grants also have been awarded to Marywood University and the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC) to support sisters' capacity building and higher education in Nigeria and nine other African countries.

This diverse set of grants, while inconsistent, has connected the Foundation to other major players in the field, such as the Bloomberg Philanthropies, who have also funded Women for Women International.

Given the Foundation's sporadic foray into the Nigerian funding landscape and relatively low profile, there are significant opportunities to gain influence and build capacity in the country. The Sisters Initiative, if the grant to AFJN is included, is the second-largest funder working with Catholic communities in Nigeria and is poised to use its experience working with sisters to affect the UN SDGs, particularly those related to gender equality, human rights and social justice.

fig. 11

Hilton Foundation Grants in Nigeria

Recipient Name	Year	Dollar Value of Grant	Sector
Harvard University	2013	$ 400,000	Disaster Relief
Africa Faith and Justice Network	2017	$ 360,000	Human Rights/Catholic Sisters
Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy	2008	$ 25,000	Clean Water
Women for Women International	2016	$ 10,000	International Development
Women for Women International	2006	$ 600	International Development

SOURCE: Foundation Center

III.

Catholic Sisters

There are more than 8,500 sisters in 75 congregations across Nigeria today.[30] The highest concentration of sisters is in the southeast, which is home to roughly 70 percent Nigeria's Catholics. Like much of East and Central Africa, the number of sisters in Nigeria and other countries in West Africa has dramatically increased since 2005.[31] This growth in the number of women religious in Nigeria and other parts of Africa is largely a consequence of three key factors: rapid population growth across sub-Saharan Africa, the high rate of religiosity among all Africans, and the increasing openness of Catholic families to young girls' discernment of a vocation to religious life.

Among the earliest congregations of women religious to arrive in Nigeria were the French Sisters of St. Joseph Cluny, who served the Apostolate of Onitsha, founded in 1885. Sister Mary Charles Walker, an Irish sister of Charity, established the first indigenous religious congregation, the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus, in 1931. A few years later, in 1937, Archbishop Charles Heerey, a Holy Ghost priest, started the second indigenous religious congregation for women, the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mother of Christ. The middle of the 20th Century saw the growth of many Catholic religious institutions in Nigeria, both for men and women, including both indigenous and international congregations.[32]

Sisters are the frontline spiritual witnesses of the Catholic Church in Nigeria, providing essential pastoral and social services to their communities and delivering hope in areas where the country is afflicted by poverty, conflict and violence. They work in a wide range of ministries, from education and healthcare to anti-human trafficking programs and small business enterprises. Sisters collectively represent themselves in Nigeria through the Nigerian Conference of Women Religious (NCWR), a national religious conference founded in 1964.

NCWR sisters have recently received widespread news media attention in Nigeria for their public advocacy of legislation and other forms of government action to address Nigeria's widespread regional crises, including kidnappings and human trafficking in the southeast, violence associated with the "herdsmen crisis" in the Middle Belt and continuing

instability in areas ravaged by Boko Haram. This venture into the public square is partly the result of NCWR's partnership with the Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN), a Sisters Initiative grantee, which has trained sisters in community organizing and civic engagement.[33]

Sisters and the Catholic Church

The reputational capital of the Church, as well as Catholic sisters, has risen dramatically since the end of the Nigerian civil war in 1970. Unlike many Muslim and evangelical Christian actors on the highly factionalized political scene in Nigeria, Catholics are generally regarded as fair-minded and even-handed in their advocacy for the broader communities they serve. For example, several of our informants remarked that Catholic parishes had opened their doors to successive waves of internally displaced people from the northeast, regardless of the religion or ethnicity of the people who were seeking shelter. This unconditional support for people in need upends the usual dynamics of Nigeria's fractious culture and has earned Catholics a degree of respect that can be strategically leveraged in sisters' efforts to forge partnerships to address some of the root causes of the country's dysfunction.

That said, some of these dysfunctions also afflict the Catholic Church in Nigeria. During a focus group, several sisters remarked that rigid male hierarchies and gender inequality pose problems for sisters at many points in their ministries. Specifically, some sisters remarked that any project they propose has to go through their overseeing bishop, and when the money for the project comes, the bishop often retains the funds for his own purposes. Helping sisters advocate for themselves within the Catholic hierarchy, as well as enabling them to deal directly with funders and collaborators, would serve to bypass these pockets of corruption and inefficiency.

Sisters in Society

According to informants in Abuja's NGO community, because the Catholic Church in Nigeria is perceived as an honest, unbiased actor in the field of human development, sisters in Nigerian society are trusted interlocutors between community, government and Catholic institutions. The African Faith and Justice Network (AFJN), a Sisters Initiative grantee, has developed capacity-building programs to help sisters enter the public square as advocates for some of the most marginalized members of their communities. This training has helped sisters to realize their prophetic potential in several instances. In a community near Enugu, where NCWR is based, the electrical power authority failed to address problems in its transmission system, which had left the community without power for six months. Sisters organized a march to the power authority's headquarters that was billed as a "Prayerful Peaceful Protest." News media covered the march, and that night electricity was restored.

Perhaps the most dramatic example of sisters' finding their prophetic voices is their advocacy on behalf of poor rural communities where young people, particularly young women, are especially vulnerable to human trafficking. Through the Committee for the Support of the Dignity of Women (COSUDOW), founded in 1999, Nigerian sisters have established two facilities to care for young women who have escaped trafficking networks and to train them in skills that lead to gainful employment. COSUDOW has also engaged in communications campaigns to raise awareness of trafficking in communities that often lack functioning schools and other civic infrastructure. As a result of their training through AFJN, sisters have also learned to use their reputational capital and advocacy skills to press local, state and national officials to be more responsive to the underlying factors—a lack of functioning schools, civic infrastructure and economic opportunity—that make young women in poor rural communities vulnerable to trafficking.

The networks, capacities and partnerships that Nigerian sisters have established through COSUDOW could serve as a template for pilot projects that would allow sisters to develop the foundational skills—strategic data gathering and community organizing—that will be essential for initiatives that seek to address other human development challenges in Nigeria. Ideas for potential partnerships and several pilot projects are in the assessment section of this report.

Partnerships Involving Sisters

Regarding the importance of collaborations among all stakeholders in Nigerian society, one informant said, "The functioning of a good society depends on all the elements uniting. When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion!" Echoing this belief, NCWR and congregational leaders discussed the need to develop their social capital and engage in broader networks to help sisters become more effective in their ministries and to position them to serve as change agents in their communities.

Within the Catholic world, Nigerian sisters have partnered with the Africa Faith and Justice Network (as mentioned above), Caritas Nigeria and Catholic Relief Services, as well as with Catholic philanthropies listed in the funding section of this report. Beyond the Catholic world, sisters have worked with NGOs in a number of human development sectors, including the U.S. Agency for International Development and AIDS Prevention Initiative Nigeria, which have partnered with sisters on programs related to HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. COSUDOW's work on human trafficking has led to vital partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders, including Girls' Power Initiative, Idia Renaissance / End Slavery Now, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, Edo State Women Association, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, and Society for the Empowerment of Young Persons.

The two education projects run by the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC)—Higher Education for Sisters in Africa (HESA) and Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI)—have yet to have a widespread impact on sisters' capacity in Nigeria. Only about 500 Nigerian sisters out of a total population of 8,500 sisters have participated in ASEC-sponsored training programs (Figure 12).

According to the 2017 survey of Nigerian ASEC alumnae (Figure 13), about half received a promotion, saw their income increase, and developed a strategic plan for their congregation, ministry or other organization. Three-quarters have mentored others, including staff and other laypeople. The percentage of sisters who have written grants increased from 11 to 55 percent (Figure 15). Nigerian ASEC alumnae have raised $1.5 million, only behind Zambian and Kenyan ASEC alumnae. No sisters, however, report having engaged with non-Catholic NGOs to create the kinds of cross-sectoral partnerships that will be essential for sisters' efforts to effect real change in Nigerian society (Figure 14).

fig. 12

Number of SLDI and HESA alumnae and currently enrolled sisters from Nigeria

239 unique alumnae who participated in Nigeria workshops during Phase I, II, & III (2007-15)

91 unique participants in Nigeria technology workshops in first year of Phase IV (2016)

74 Superiors from Nigeria participated in the Superior workshops held in 2016

93 unique sisters who are serving in Nigeria are in HESA, 1 of whom has graduated

fig. 13

2017 ASEC Alumnae Survey–Nigeria

52% of alumnae said they received a promotion (N=27)

42% saw their income increase after SLDI (N=24)

44% developed a strategic plan for their congregation or ministry, or other organization (N=27)

36% implemented a financial plan for their congregation or ministry, or other organization (N=28)

52% implemented audits (N=29)

76% have mentored others, including staff and non-staff laypeople (N=38)

7 alumnae report acting as a resource person for their congregation regarding grant-writing

78% said SLDI improved their ability to raise funds (N=23)

100% said SLDI improved their ability to ensure the sustainability of a program/project (N=23)

fig. 14

Collaborative Partnerships After SLDI Training

Collaborative Partners	# of alumnae who engaged in collaboration	
Fellow Sisters	20	(54%)
Government	6	(16%)
NGOs	0	
Foundations	10	(27%)
Local Groups	14	(38%)
Diocese	16	(43%)

fig. 15

Grant-Writing Before and After SLDI Training

Before
11% (N=28)
SLDI alumnae said they
wrote grants before SLDI.

After
55% (N=29)
said they wrote grants
after SLDI.
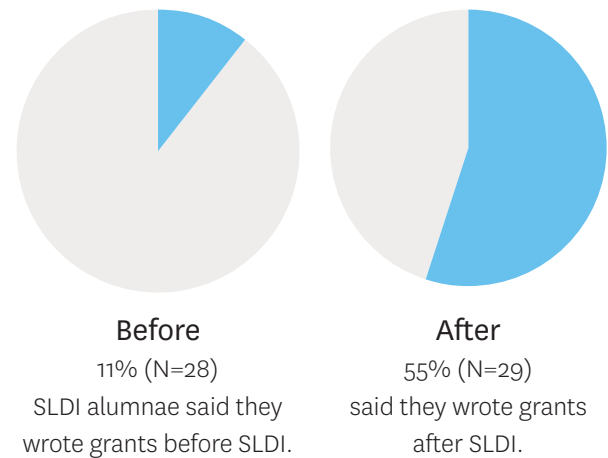
Challenges faced by Sisters

Interviews and focus group discussions with NCWR executive staff and other members identified key challenges that the organization and sisters in Nigeria face: financial sustainability, routine and reliable data-gathering on sisters and the communities they serve, formation and networking. These challenges mirror those faced by sisters in Zambia and Uganda, though the ways that they affect congregations in each country are also shaped by the cultural and political forces at play in particular locations. Specifically, Nigerian sisters and congregations face an additional challenges related to security compared to their sisters in Uganda and Zambia.

Financial Sustainability

Long-term financial sustainability is a major challenge facing NCWR and Nigerian congregations. As the spiritual and educational needs of sisters and their congregations have increased, NCWR must keep up with demands for ongoing formation and leadership development for sisters at the national level. These concerns are echoed at the congregational level, with increasing requests from dioceses and local communities for assistance.

The need to diversify income streams came across in interviews and discussions with NCWR leadership from a broad range of congregations. Sisters remarked that the biggest challenge for them involves "thinking outside the box" to develop long-term financial plans, create new revenue streams and leverage their current assets to fund congregational projects and mission work. Current examples of sisters' income-generating activities include fisheries, organic farms and raising chickens.

Financial sustainability and planning go hand-in-hand with prioritizing mission work and strategically responding to requests from local communities and church leaders. This also entails managing the expectations of large projects from the people whom sisters serve. "How do we help the minds of our people?" wondered one sister. "You don't need to wait until big money comes. Start small." Sisters said that the upside of this often unrealistic entrepreneurial spirit is the potential in their communities to solve obdurate problems

and to enlist local organizers as partners in addressing governance and human development issues.

Human Resources

The capacities and development of human resources are additional major challenges cited by Nigerian sisters. Congregational leaders stated that they do not have enough trained personnel, and that sisters, especially those in rural areas, do not have enough knowledge about new technologies or familiarity with human resource management best practices. This lack of knowledge hinders their mission work.

There is also an intergenerational difference in perspectives around congregational human resources, a concern echoed by younger sisters in Zambia and Uganda. Younger sisters in a focus group identified human resource management as a major issue. Specifically, they pointed to the importance of matching skill sets with assignments as an overlooked key to increasing efficiency and maximizing the impact of sisters' ministries. Some of these intergenerational differences around training and human resource management spotlight a new generation, some of them trained through ASEC's SLDI and HESA programs, who are often more technically savvy and better educated than their superiors.

Formation

Formation and education of sisters were also identified by sisters in a focus group as two critical elements that need to be supported to build the capacity of Nigerian sisters and their congregations. These two elements are interrelated and essential to sisters' spiritual, mental and physical well-being. Formation in this context should be seen as a lifelong journey that sisters go through in their relationship with Christ and the Catholic Church. There are critical milestones on this journey, with initial formation taking place when a young woman enters a congregation and progressing to her final profession of vows. Formation encompasses spiritual guidance and education, learning about what it means to live in community, and how to live and express the charism of the congregation through daily words and action. Formation also includes education in the area(s) that the sister might be assigned to over the course of her life.

When Nigerian sisters were queried in our interviews on what they meant by asking the Sisters Initiative to support formation, they talked about ongoing formation in their congregations; building intergenerational relationships; and creating space and time for sabbatical, renewal and wellness. They would like formation to be tailored to meet the needs of a sister at particular points in her life, whether at the beginning of her journey as a sister, in midlife or in her older years. "Across the board, many people don't even know themselves," one sister said. She suggested that personality and skills discernment tools such as enneagram mapping and the Myers-Briggs personality test should be part of ongoing formation. "Make sure you discern properly," she said. "New things come to you about yourself, especially during ongoing training and formation."

ASEC's programs were praised for their relevance in training sisters to meet the needs of their congregations and the communities they serve. Sisters from the SLDI and HESA programs expressed the need for the programs to continue and to train additional sisters, especially those in rural areas. Sisters in both programs cited examples of how they were applying their education in practical ways to build capacity in local communities and their own congregations. Still, sisters in the focus group said there was great need to help sisters from poorer congregations find the financial support they need to participate in programs at NCWR's National Renewal Center in Enugu. Creating the opportunity for expanded inter-congregational programs would instill in sisters a greater appreciation for the potential fruits of collaboration, especially in the context of Nigeria, where intercultural competency is vital for supporting inter-ethnic and inter-religious dialogue and conflict resolution.

Data and Research
The lack of data on the health of congregations and their ministries, as well as the inability to analyze that data, are major challenges for NCWR and potential partners. It is difficult to find information at either the congregational or national level on the numbers of postulants in process, fully professed sisters, former sisters or retirement liabilities. Information on ministries is only found in anecdotal reports from Global Sisters Report, ASEC monitoring and evaluation data, and the websites of NGOs collaborating with sisters in Nigeria.

Sisters, NCWR and other Catholic partners such as Veritas University in Abuja expressed a deep interest in developing a data system in Nigeria that could track sisters' congregational and ministerial activities and needs. If collected and strategically used, these data could allow NCWR and congregations to tackle challenges in a more forward-looking way. For instance, data on why and when sisters leave congregations could help inform how those congregations respond or when they need to channel more emotional, spiritual and educational support to sisters. Such data would also help the Sisters Initiative team and other partners understand the impact of interventions. Partnering with in-country Catholic organizations to develop a centralized data system for all congregations would also help NCWR understand where missions are located and whether there are redundancies (sisters from different congregations doing the same mission activity in the same district) that could be transformed into collaborations.

Networking

NCWR has a rich history of partnering with major Catholic organizations and funders that it could build on, and COSUDOW has had success partnering with organizations, both Catholic and non-Catholic, to address both the consequences and upstream causes of Nigeria's human trafficking problem. Yet, sisters said that they are generally not confident about building partnerships and spearheading major programs. Toward this end, NCWR members cited the need to sensitize and train sisters about partnering with government and secular organizations. Sisters also expressed the need for professional mentorship, particularly in technical and governmental advocacy areas.

Apart from COSUDOW's partnerships around human trafficking, CRCC found fewer partnerships between sisters and non-Catholic entities in Nigeria and Zambia than in Uganda. In Zambia and Nigeria, the restraints on partnership included sisters' lack of organizational and personal capacities as well as misperceptions that NGOs and sisters have of each other. This mutual incomprehension is partly a result of communications deficits on the part of sisters. Several NGO personnel said that, although they were eager to partner

with Nigeria sisters, sisters' communities seemed much less well networked through social media, and thus more difficult to connect with, than other NGOs and even many evangelical groups, which tend to be very active on Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms.

This gap in sisters' networking savvy is a serious impediment to collaboration, but it is also easily remedied. Creating stronger networks through social media could allow Nigerian sisters to have a greater influence on policy development and implementation for the betterment of the communities that they serve. Many potential partners for Catholic sisters may come from beyond the Catholic world of NGOs, the church and funders. These include secular NGOs, government ministries and private-sector businesses (e.g., banks, petroleum companies, investment and financial service firms, etc.). One challenge is that sisters, congregations and the Catholic Church are unknown cultures to many NGOs. Sisters also are often perceived to be downstream service deliverers rather than the developers or leaders of service-delivery projects. Sisters could be supported in ways that elevate their leadership, and such partnerships could be encouraged through targeted funding.

Security

Physical insecurity and corrupt, ineffectual policing figured prominently in discussions with Nigerian sisters, who have been targeted for kidnapping by militias in the Niger Delta Region and elsewhere. Boko Haram also overran parishes in some northeastern communities, forcing sisters to leave those communities. "We're really vulnerable," said one sister. "For us, insecurity is a bigger problem than the government."

Nigeria's borders, both international and internal, are not well secured, which has abetted both the Boko Haram insurgency and the herdsman crisis. Sisters' physical safety as they work in the northeast and Delta Region will thus be an ongoing concern.

IV.

Country Priorities

The Catholic Sisters Initiative is committed to supporting sisters in their work to advance human development. The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation has taken a leading philanthropic role in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) globally.

With the second iteration of its strategy, the Sisters Initiative is considering supporting sisters in specific sector areas that align with the SDGs, including food security, education, maternal and child health, human trafficking, and entrepreneurship and microfinance. In CRCC's first country case study on Zambia, food security rose to the top of the list of pressing issues, with wide agreement from people who worked in a variety of sectors. Uganda presented a much more complex assessment process, as it faces an array of significant challenges. Poverty emerged as the top issue in Uganda from the literature review and through in-country interviews and focus groups.

In some respects, Nigeria presents an array of challenges similar to those we encountered in Zambia and Uganda. But the consensus among our informants was that poor governance is the key push-factor behind persistent problems like food insecurity, the lack of data to support health policy and the absence of civil authority in the country's northeast. The assessment section that follows the analysis of SDG sectors includes ways that sisters, in collaboration with other stakeholders, can begin to address the issues that follow from Nigeria's challenges in governance, as well as some of the root causes of the country's governing crisis. Building sisters' organizational, technical and leadership capacities is a prerequisite for such collaborations. A cross-sector approach to human development—rather than a focus on individual sectors as discrete areas of concern—will have a greater chance of success in Nigeria, where the problems of economic opportunity and rural education, for example, can't be separated from the issue of human trafficking.

The following section provides insights into the spectrum of needs, the role of sisters, key players, challenges and opportunities related to these five sectors in Nigeria. These insights may be useful in developing the Sisters Initiative's overall strategy, but should not be considered definitive. CRCC did not consider other sectors in which there might be great needs. It is noted where there are gaps in CRCC's knowledge of these sectors or in the information that was available for this report. A more thorough analysis by sector experts could help the Sisters Initiative craft a more sharply focused in-country strategy and implementation plan.

Food Security and the Environment

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) scores countries based on four key indicators—undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting and child mortality—on a 100-point scale with zero being the best. In the 2017 GHI, Nigeria scored 25.5, indicating "serious hunger," a significant improvement over its performance in 2000, when it scored 41. The most populous country and largest economy in Africa, Nigeria faces severe food insecurity. Famine and malnutrition have reached humanitarian crisis proportions in northeastern Nigeria—particularly in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states. Nearly 5 million Nigerians in the region urgently need food assistance, 1.4 million face a food-supply "emergency" and 38,000 are experiencing "famine-like conditions."[34] According to the 2013 Demographic and Health Survey, undernourishment has left some 37 percent of children under age five stunted, 18 percent wasted and 29 percent underweight, with the highest rates concentrated in the states of the northeast and northwest.[35]

Role of Sisters

As is the case in other sectors, the lack of data on sisters' ministries gives us little quantitative information about how many sisters work in the area of food security or how many people they reach through their work. It is clear, however, that sisters are actively engaged in food security, nutrition and environmental missions. It is likely too that sister's ministries are most significant in the southern regions of the country, where most communities of women religious are located. The capacity of sisters to meet the overwhelming food insecurity problems in the north and northeast are unclear.

Projects gleaned from online research illuminate several general areas that Nigerian sisters are involved in: organic sustainable farming, job creation in farming facilities operated by sisters, training communities in efficient harvesting and storage techniques, education and awareness of GMO farming and its implications.

For example, the Holy Child Integrated Agricultural Center (HCIAC) in Ogun State in the southwest, founded in 2002, sustains the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus as well as people who live in nearby villages. In addition to reducing waste and increasing productivity by recycling all organic matter back into the farm, the project also trains people in income-generating skills and eco-friendly sustainable farming practices. HCIAC rents tools and farm equipment, and sinks boreholes to provide water for farms and villages.[36] The project also contributes to communal harmony, with lay workers at the farm including Catholics, non-Catholic Christians and Muslims, who all integrate prayer into their shared farming life. The Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters has supported the project by providing finances for a laptop computer, printer and accounting software to aid in managing HCIAC's finances.[37] Insight into how the Sisters of the Holy Child were able to acquire expertise in integrated agriculture and leverage their existing knowledge for the formation of the center could help the Sisters Initiative understand how to support such projects in other parts of the country.

There also appears to be growing activism among sisters against genetically modified crops. Some segments of the Nigerian government, along with local and international NGOs, have promoted GMO farming as a potential safety net against dwindling crop yields and a defense against diseases currently affecting crops that are essential to meeting the demands of a rapidly growing population.

In one example of sisters' opposition to this development, Sr. Theresa Anyabuike of Notre Dame de Namur congregation held an awareness workshop for farmers and civil servants in 2016 on the problems posed by genetically modified crops. Additionally, the former Superior General of the Sacred Heart Sisters, Sr. Florence Nwaonuma, asked her sisters not to plant cotton seedlings suspected to be genetically modified until further notice. The Bishops' Conference of Nigeria and the Association of Catholic Medical Practitioners of Nigeria[38] also have recently voiced concern about the potential negative implications of introducing commercialized GMO crops into the nation, citing health side effects, the potential to damage the environment and the loss of biodiversity.[39]

Key Players

In addition to the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the World Bank and World Food Programme (WFP) are heavily involved in Nigeria's food security and are among the largest sources of foreign aid to the country. Responding to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in northeastern Nigeria entails emergency food assistance for hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people. Much of WFP's funding has concentrated on relief efforts in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states.[40]

China is also significantly involved in agriculture programs in Nigeria. The Chinese government has primarily funded agriculture capacity-building through the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Chinese experts and technicians worked in the country through a South-South Cooperation (SSC) arrangement launched by FAO. The program concluded in 2015. According to FAO impact assessments, farmer testimonies show that hundreds of thousands of family farmers across Nigeria have benefited from hands-on training, and have adopted and adapted technologies and know-how from Chinese experts. One example of the success of this initiative is the poultry industry, which has seen a 60 percent increase in egg production, as well as lower mortality rates and increased growth rates in the commercial poultry population. A total 190 experts and technicians from China have been involved in the broader program for improving Nigeria's agricultural production capacity, including farming, farm management and the processing of farm products.[41]

Nigerian Bishops established Caritas Nigeria, also known as Catholic Caritas Foundation of Nigeria (CCFN), in 2010. As a national charity of the Bishops Conference, it supports diocesan groups such as St. Vincent de Paul, Justice Development and Peace Commissions, Catholic health facilities and other Catholic organizations. One of its key priority areas includes food security through agriculture and livelihoods support to vulnerable households.

In response to the ongoing state of emergency in the northeast, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) provides food, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene resources and services for IDPs and conflict-affected host communities. In other regions, CRS has received funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for programs to improve farming revenues and food supplies, along with farmers' access to markets and the availability of planting supplies.[42]

MISEREOR, the German Catholic Bishops' organization for development cooperation, has funded a large-scale water project in the Maiduguri Diocese of Borno State, where IDPs from the Boko Haram conflict have settled. The project provides clean water for both drinking and for high-yield farming, and also sends out teams from the dioceses of Yola and Maiduguri to educate farmers on how they can increase agricultural yields and protect the soil from erosion.[43] Diocesan Development Services (DDS), the development arm of the Catholic Diocese of Idah, is a local NGO based in Kogi state that has been working with the communities in this central Nigerian diocese for 25 years. The NGO has a long history with women religious and has sponsored several programs under sisters' leadership. Under the stewardship of the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary, DDS has endeavored to provide technology, expertise and equipment to support traditional agriculture and protect endangered species in local communities.[44] DDS trains communities in more efficient harvesting and storage techniques as well as other practices, such as integrated agriculture, animal husbandry and crop diversification. They have developed agricultural techniques such as Minisett that are specifically geared to produce high yields from yam crops, Nigeria's most cherished food.[45] It is hoped that with this assistance, local farmers throughout the diocese will be able to increase agricultural production and expand the nutritional base of their diets. DDS has been a core Nigerian partner of Trócaire, the Irish Catholic Bishops' development fund, since the mid 1990's, and over the years has received assistance from both the Irish government and the general public. DDS hopes to grow and mature as an agency and to extend their work to include more farmers and communities.[46]

Challenges

Nigeria was one of the world's most promising agricultural producers during its first decade of independence, thriving in global markets as the world's largest producer of groundnuts and palm oil and as a significant producer of cotton and cocoa. Agriculture was at the center of the country's post-independence economic growth, accounting for more than 50 percent of GDP during the 1960s. Yet, as oil exploration and production in Nigeria's southern Niger Delta region accelerated in the mid 1960s, successive governments turned away from the long-term potential of the agricultural sector.[47] Soaring oil revenues raised exchange rates, making exports from other sectors—including agriculture and the up-and-coming textile and manufacturing sectors—less competitive, further decreasing investment.[48] In 2016, the proportion of the federal budget allocated to agriculture was only 1.25 percent.[49] Even though agriculture still remains the largest sector of the Nigerian domestic economy and employs two-thirds of the labor force, production and distribution hurdles have significantly stifled the performance of this sector.[50] The consequences of this decline in Nigeria's agricultural sector has been most dramatically felt in the north of the country, where agriculture is the economic lifeblood. By contrast, the southern half of the country faces minimal food-security concerns.[51]

The food crisis experienced today in northeast Nigeria is rooted in the conflict with Boko Haram, which began in 2010. Over the last seven years, violence associated with war has caused the deaths of more than 20,000 people and displaced roughly 2 million, with another 200,000 fleeing to neighboring countries.[52] As farmers, herders and fishermen fled or were forcefully uprooted from their communities, agriculture and livestock production became a major casualty of the violence. The situation was aggravated as thousands of young and able-bodied men, crucial for farm labor, were either killed by Boko Haram or fled both the insurgents and the brutal reprisals of the Nigerian military.[53] In Borno state, the insurgency's epicenter, staple cereal production plummeted between 2010 and 2015—sorghum by 82 percent, rice by 67 percent and millet by 55 percent. Today, the state, which used to produce about a quarter of Nigeria's wheat, grows none. The Al-Hayah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria reported that as of February 2016, more than 1,500 members of the association were killed, and roughly 200,000 cattle, sheep and goats lost—along with nearly 400,000 sacks of produce—as a consequence of insurgent

attacks and government reprisals in Borno state.[54] Beginning in December 2014, the fishing industry suffered a similar fate as Boko Haram stepped up attacks on communities around Lake Chad.

Compounding and contributing to this crisis are issues associated with climate change. Nigeria has struggled with rising temperatures, desertification, rising sea levels and frequent drought. Changing temperatures and erratic rainfall have reduced yields and disrupted long-held crop rotation practices and traditions. These conditions have intensified competition for resources and fueled some of Nigeria's current security challenges, particularly in the northeast and the Middle Belt, where farmers and herdsmen have clashed over access to land.[55]

Opportunities

The role that conflict plays in food security issues in northeast Nigeria presents a unique opportunity for sisters on the ground—sisters in several regions of Nigeria are already conducting work on local food security, livelihoods and conflict resolution. While sisters in northeastern Nigeria have faced displacement and eviction from the region, they do have the capacity to assist internally displaced persons (IDPs), particularly communities in the northeast that have taken shape around traditions related to agricultural production. Sisters can also help IDPs resettle and rebuild in the central Nigerian areas to which they have been relocated. Foundations—along with the Ministry of Agriculture, local governments, Catholic NGO partners like DDS, and Muslim organizations like the Al-Hayah Cattle Breeders Association—might form a working group around sister-driven efforts to alleviate the conditions of the IDPs who are most severely affected by food insecurity. These near-term efforts could be coupled with initiatives like livelihoods training and economic development that focus on the needs of northeastern communities over the longer term.

Sisters could be supported in ways that would allow them to build sustainable farming projects like those described previously (e.g., projects undertaken by Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary, Sacred Heart Sisters, and Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus). The notion would be to create measurable indicators of progress that are also scalable, which would then empower communities in adjacent areas to begin to feed themselves again. A multi-sector, capacity-building and partnership program that connects sisters with professionals in both the private and public sectors could increase sisters' skills while engaging them in meaningful leadership roles—not just as service providers.

Another key role that sisters can play in improving food security is helping to empower women in the agriculture sector. According to the aid group OXFAM, closing inequality gaps between male and female entrepreneurs in agriculture could lead to a 20 to 30 percent increase in food production. Yet women farmers continue to face multiple discriminations rooted in local socio-religious practices. The Foundation can partner with faith-based NGOs such as Christian Aid UK and the Africa Faith and Justice Network, a Sisters Initiative grantee, to leverage existing relationships with sisters and other organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States, OXFAM, and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to promote gender equality in agricultural investments in Nigeria.

The foundation can also derive lessons from projects funded by other donors. For example, the two key reason for the success of the United Nations' FOA program with China were, first, the precise identification of the rural communities with the most acute need and, second, using the available data to find the most efficient ways to meet those needs. Food security often requires systems-level changes, which in turn requires large, multi-partner initiatives. The success of the China-FOA partnership can be a lesson for the Foundation to consider as the Sisters Initiative explores ways of engaging Nigerian sisters and other stakeholders in supporting Nigeria's efforts toward the SDGs.

At the systems level, grants could be targeted to help sisters and communities learn new techniques for sustainable and integrated farming and new methods for storing a diversified range of crops. These advances would, in turn, entail the exploration of new markets for agricultural products, require citizens and local governments to address logistical challenges in the transport of goods to market, help to identify soil issues and encourage experimentation.

Education

Need

Education is administered at the federal, state and local government levels through the Federal Ministry of Education (FME), 36 state ministries of education and 774 local government education authorities.[56] The Constitution of Nigeria provides for compulsory and free universal primary education, free university education and free adult literacy programs.

The education system is structured with nine years of basic, compulsory schooling that includes six years of elementary and three years of junior secondary education. Education is conducted in Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa in the earliest years and is switched to English in year four. Post-basic education includes three years of senior secondary education.

At the tertiary level, there is a university sector and a non-university sector. There are currently 40 federal universities, 44 state universities and 74 private universities in Nigeria, as approved by the Nigeria Universities Commission. The non-university sector consists of polytechnics and colleges of education.[58]

The Nigerian education system faces significant funding, demographic, human resource and governance challenges to providing education to Nigerians. During the past five years, Nigeria experienced a severe recession and a precipitous decline in federal revenue. These followed a sustained drop in the global price of crude oil—a consequence of the expansion of hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") technologies in the United States' domestic petroleum sector. The loss of federal revenue in Nigeria has resulted in devastating cuts to an already overburdened education system. The spike in tuition at Nigerian universities led to student strikes and protests in 2016.[59]

The recent funding crisis compounds existing problems in the Nigerian education system. Approximately 20 percent of all children who are out of school in the world are in Nigeria, and with about 11,000 children born every day, demographic pressure "overburdens the system's capacity to deliver quality education," according to the Global Partnership for Education.[60] Nigeria's ongoing security crisis, which created an enormous population of IDPs, has also impacted the education sector, especially in northern Nigeria.

Role of Sisters

The Catholic Church provides a significant portion of private education in Nigeria, with 1,722 primary schools and 849 secondary schools across the country.[61] Sisters administer more than 90 percent of these educational institutions.[62] There are also several Catholic-affiliated universities located in the south and east of the country.

In 1975 the Nigerian government took over all schools in its push for universal, free primary education. A serious decline in funding and standards ensued in many of the schools formerly run by Catholic religious.[63] Within a few years the government allowed religious to manage their schools as long as they committed to the same standards of education required in public schools. Although Catholic schools are seen as having high standards of education in comparison to public schools, they face competition from other private schools and are now out of the reach of most poor Nigerians.[64]

Many members of the Nigerian Conference of Women Religious (NCWR) list education as their main ministry in the conference's online directory.[65] Programmatic data from the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC)—a grantee of the Sisters Initiative which has partnered with Sacred Heart Nursing School and Veritas University—offer some initial evidence of the role of sisters in educating young Nigerians. The 2017 data from ASEC reveals that 57 percent of sisters enrolled in the degree-granting Higher Education for Sisters in Africa (HESA) program were in education programs, reflecting the importance of education ministries for Nigerian sisters.

Key Players

The major education stakeholders in Nigeria include federal, state and local education authorities; Catholic dioceses and religious congregations that run private Catholic schools; funders such as the World Bank, USAID and DFID; as well as the Nigerian Union of Teachers. Another recent Catholic player is the Catholic Caritas Foundation of Nigeria (CCFN), established by the Nigerian bishops in 2010 as a national charity of the Bishops' Conference. Caritas provides relief and education services to many of the country's IDPs.

The World Bank recently funded a $100 million Global Partnership for Education (GPE) initiative with USAID as the coordinating agency. GPE funding supports the Nigeria Partnership for Education Project (NIPEP) to implement the strategic education-policy plans of Jigawa, Kaduna, Katsina, Kano and Sokoto states, which aim to improve teacher standards and the quality measures for primary education.[66] In the northern part of Nigeria, almost two-thirds of students are functionally illiterate, and young girls and women are particularly threatened by insurgent attacks and kidnappings. The five states in this region have "shown commitment to improving their education systems, but they face severe challenges, including high poverty levels, low enrollment, gender disparities, poor infrastructure and learning conditions."[67] The GPE funding has so far benefitted more than 1.8 million project recipients. Twenty-five percent of the beneficiaries are girls and young women.[68]

Challenges

Beyond funding and security issues, one of the important underlying drivers behind Nigeria's inability to meet its constitutional commitments to universal primary education and beyond is a lack of quality control from authorities at the federal, state and local levels. To address issues around educational quality and standards, the Nigerian government and international partners have pushed reform efforts focusing on educational curriculum and teacher training and assessment over the last decade. In 2008 the FME, through the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, developed and introduced the Nine-Year Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) in schools. This curriculum evolved out of the Nigerian government's introduction of its Universal Basic Education Program in 1988.[69] The BEC was later revised and implemented in 2014 to emphasize basic science and technology knowledge to meet the growing science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) needs of the country.[70]

Opportunities

Despite the challenging educational environment in Nigeria, there are some opportunity areas that sisters in Nigeria could capitalize on with support of the Sisters Initiative. Educating young girls and women is one of the cornerstones of preventing human trafficking and increasing the economic and cultural value of girls There are congregations such as the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena that operate schools in areas of the country (e.g., Zamfara State) that need more education programs focused on girls.[71] Sisters and Caritas Nigeria could build upon their existing education ministries with IDPs and tie these in with other human services such as mental health counseling and youth job training.

Other opportunity areas include working with state and local education authorities to improve the quality of teacher education programs. Sisters could be at the forefront of education reform in Nigeria in the areas of early childhood development and special education. The Daughters of Providence for the Deaf and Dumb in Imo State currently work with special education students. Sisters could support greater needs and become trusted sources of technical expertise in this area. Sisters also would benefit from programs similar to the Sisters Initiative-sponsored SCORE-ECD program, which provides training and mentoring in early childhood development in Kenya, Zambia and Malawi.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, there is a need for data and research on the impact of sisters and their education ministries on the Nigerian educational system and its students. There is no existing survey of educational ministries and congregations. Without basic data identifying where sisters are working and the type of educational ministries they are managing, it is difficult to construct a strategy to address opportunity areas in education that sisters can lead and make a significant impact.

Maternal and Child Health

Need

Despite huge investments in health, health indicators in Nigeria are some of the poorest in Africa, and the country underperforms relative to countries that spend less on health. Although maternal mortality has been generally declining since the 1990s, maternal, newborn and child health is one of Nigeria's most critical development challenges. The estimated annual 40,000 pregnancy-related deaths account for about 14 percent of global maternal mortality,[72] placing Nigeria among the top ten most dangerous countries in the world for a woman to give birth.[73] Nigeria has the second highest rate of stillbirths in the world, at 42.9 stillbirths per 1,000 births.[74]

Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	**576**
Lifetime risk of maternal death	**0.033**
Antenatal care (4+ visits) (urban to rural diparities 75 and 38)	**51%**
Births attended by a skilled health worker	**38%**
Total fertility rate	**5.5**
Contraceptive prevalence	**16%**

SOURCE: Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2013[75]

In Nigeria, there are substantial regional and other variations in some of these key indicators. Urban women are more likely to be assisted by a skilled health provider (67 percent) than births in rural areas (23 percent), and urban women are similarly more likely to receive antenatal care from a skilled provider than their rural counterparts (86 percent and 47 percent, respectively).[76] Moreover, women in northern

Nigeria generally use skilled providers and formal health facilities far less often than their southern Nigeria counterparts. For example, in 2013, 78 percent and 75 percent of women in the southeast and southwest, respectively, reported delivering their babies in a health facility, compared to only 20 percent and 11 percent in the northeast and northwest. There are also critical regional variations in the utilization of skilled postnatal care, with fewer women in regions in the north receiving a medical check within the 41-day postnatal period in a formal health facility.[77]

In terms of child health, infant mortality in Nigeria has declined by 26 percent over the last 15 years, while under-5 mortality has declined by 31 percent over the same period. Yet, the conditions are still severe. Infant and under-5 mortality rates in the past five years are 69 and 128 deaths per 1,000 live births, respectively. At these mortality levels, one in every 15 Nigerian children die before reaching age 1, and one in every eight do not survive to their fifth birthday.[78]

Role of Sisters

In Nigeria, there are 272 hospitals and 259 dispensaries that are operated as Catholic health institutions.[79] Sisters are likely to be operating a majority of these institutions. The dearth of specific data on women religious orders and their services highlights the need for data that accurately captures the work carried out by sisters and their distribution across the country. For example, it is likely that the majority of their facilities might be concentrated in the southeastern and Middle Belt areas, where a number of religious communities are located today, especially because conflict in the north has led to the displacement of communities in that region. More data on sister-led health ministries, especially those addressing maternal and child health needs, is essential to understanding the capacity of sisters to meet the substantial regional variations in Nigeria's needs.

Media reports as well as the websites of religious communities do, however, offer anecdotal examples of the various kinds of services and facilities offered by sisters. While likely over representing the medical ministries of more financially solvent international communities of women religious, they offer a glimpse into the broader landscape that sisters

operate in meeting the needs of women and children. For example, Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus operate five health ministries in Nigeria, in the regions of Abuja, Lagos and Oghara, along with some rural health clinics with sister-nurse-midwives on staff.[80] Medical Missionaries of Mary (MMM) in Nigeria have health care facilities in Oyo, Econyi and Akwa-Ibom states. The MMM Family Life Center in Itam is a residential unit for the treatment of women suffering from vesico-vaginal fistula.[81]

There are also communities that address maternal and child health issues by providing training to skilled, culturally sensitive midwifery practitioners (non-religious) who would be capable of providing high-level care to individuals and expectant families in primary health care settings. The St. Louis School of Midwifery in Zonkwa was established in 1961 by the Sisters of St. Louis from the Irish Region, and caters to students from all 36 states in Nigeria.[82] Apart from the hospital and five outstation clinics the sisters run, the mid-wifery school has to date trained at least 1,000 students through its Basic Midwifery Education program, a three-year course of study as prescribed by the Nursing and Midwifery

Council of Nigeria. The school faces several challenges, however, including a shortage of staff to run the school effectively, reliance on foreign funding, and the constant and ongoing threats of the terrorist group, Boko Haram, which has a firm presence in Zonkwa.

Key Players

There are many key players in maternal and child health in Nigeria, and this assessment includes a few of the major partners that the Sisters Initiative may consider working with as it develops its second strategy. Local key players include the Federal Ministry of Health, especially the Family Health Department, which is concerned with creating awareness of reproductive, maternal neonatal and child health issues. Other potential local partners include the Nigeria Society of Neonatal Medicine, Pediatrics Association of Nigeria, the Society for Obstetrics and Gynecologists of Nigeria, the National Association of Nigerian Nurse and Midwives, and the Association of Catholic Medical Practitioners of Nigeria.

Nigeria's high rates of mortality have been attributed in part to low rates of use and access to maternal and child health services. A number of federal programs have been implemented over the years to address this problem, some of which the Sisters Initiative could look toward for lessons learned, as well as for potential future collaborations.

For instance, in 2009, the National Primary Health Care Development Agency established the Midwives Service Scheme (MSS), a public sector collaborative initiative, designed to mobilize midwives, including newly qualified, unemployed and retired midwives, for deployment to selected primary health care facilities in rural communities, to facilitate an increase in round-the-clock access to skilled care in underserved rural areas of Nigeria. Overall, the MSS did not have the expected impacts, with a small increase in the proportion of births attended by a skilled attendants largely confined to the south, where there were fewer challenges with midwife retention. Key learnings from the program were the challenges of focusing not only on demand-related issues, but also improving supply-side factors. The lack of adequate and regular compensation for midwives, inadequate housing for midwives working in rural areas, and the need to create a "career ladder" for midwives seeking professional development opportunities, were noted recommendations of the study.[83] The Sisters Initiative may look toward these interventions by the state and NGOs to understand the comparable impact that religious communities operating midwifery programs might have in improving maternal and child health indicators.

On the one hand, sister-nurse-midwives, for example, might be well positioned to overcome some of the noted supply-side challenges in midwife retention. In short, sisters aren't engaged in maternal and child health for the money. On the other hand, religious communities rely financially on the stipends that sisters bring from their ministry work; sisters require safe housing and working conditions when they are dispatched into rural areas away from their convents; and as would any team of medical professionals, sisters need proper healthcare infrastructure, drugs and equipment to do their work. How are orders such as Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus and others that run midwifery programs addressing such challenges?

Recently, at the World Health Assembly 2016, Nigeria committed to the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health, a roadmap for ending all preventable deaths of women, children and adolescents within a generation. The global strategy includes the targets and objectives of the global Every Newborn Action Plan (ENAP), launched in 2014, and Ending Preventable Maternal Mortality, launched in 2015.[84] The Nigerian ENAP—authored by the Federal Ministry of Health in partnership with Save the Children, the US Agency for International Development, and the Maternal and Child Survival Program—is a document that presents a four-pronged intervention packages aligned the National Health Policy 2017–2021. In developing its second strategy, the Sisters Initiative may look toward this roadmap to understand how its own interventions in relation to maternal and child health may overlap, supplement or differ from the strategies of the government and its partners.

Saving One Million Lives (SOML) is a government-led initiative supported by a $500 million World Bank International Development Association credit. SOML will use the Program for Results (PforR) instrument to encourage greater focus on results, increase accountability, improve measurements, strengthen management and foster innovation. PforR rewards states with untied fiscal transfers from the federal government when they achieve improvements in the coverage and quality of key maternal and child health services as measured by independent household and health facility surveys. It will be implemented over four years.[85]

Founded by Chinomnso Traffina Ibe, the Traffina Foundation for Community Health (TFCH) is a Nigerian-based non-profit organization that complements the efforts of the Federal Health departments.[86] It aims to reduce high maternal and child mortality and morbidity rates in Nigeria through provision of free maternal health and child health services in rural primary health centers in Nigeria. TFCH is led by a group of young midwives, community health workers, nurses, doctors, traditional birth attendants and other young professionals.[87]

In addition to government and NGO partners, there are several major funders active in the area. USAID's Maternal and Child Survival Program, headed by John Snow International, has worked to strengthen health care delivery in Bauchi and Sokoto states through the Targeted States High Impact

Project. It also has funded the Mobile Alliance for Maternal Action, with the goal of catalyzing a global community to deliver vital health information to new and expectant mothers and their families through mobile phones.

The five-year U.K. Aid-funded Women for Health Programme was established in 2012 to address the rural staffing shortages in five states in the north. The programme is being implemented by a consortium led by Health Partners International (HPI), with Save the Children and GRID Consulting.[88] HPI has substantial experience in rehabilitating and equipping health facilities in a number of Nigerian states as well as other countries.

An organization that appears to be particularly invested in partnering with Catholic sisters in Nigeria in addressing maternal and child health needs is Partners International Foundation (PIF), a U.S.-based non-profit that supports a number of programs in West Africa, the Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes Region of east and central Africa. PIF supports three health clinics operated by the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus as well as a clinic and program run by the Daughters of Charity.[89] The strategic basis for PIF's efforts is the Capital Analysis and Performance Strategy, which views problems and solutions using multiple lenses that correspond to seven capital forms (Political, Natural, Economic, Infrastructure, Cultural, Social and Human).[90]

Challenges

One of the key issues that Nigeria faces in relation to maternal and child health is the regional distribution of and access to formal maternal health facilities. About half of the population of Nigeria lives in rural areas, and rural Nigerian women utilize formal maternal health services much less frequently than their urban counterparts, increasing their risk for poor outcomes.[91] In 2013, a study found that only about 21 percent of rural women (compared to 29 percent in urban centers) have access to focused antenatal care, and while 84 percent of urban women sought antenatal care, only 47 percent of rural women did so.[92] Many women, especially in rural areas, still have to travel long distances to reach a formal health care facility.

Moreover, while northern and rural areas of Nigeria host most of the public primary maternal health care facilities, the bulk of formal private medical facilities are located in urban and southern regions.[93] The uptake of antenatal services in the Christian-dominated south has been better than in the Muslim-dominated north.[94] Federal funding priorities also appear to be disproportionately focused on improving general hospitals located primarily in south and central Nigeria (a total of 12), while primary healthcare centers (250) are severely lacking in terms of equipment, facilities, essential drugs, electricity and staff.[95] Moreover, poor schooling in rural areas in northern Nigeria means that girls often cannot gain entry into local training centers to become health workers, contributing to the severe shortage of female health professionals.[96]

Not surprisingly, childhood mortality rates are higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Childhood mortality is highest in the northwest. Under-5 mortality rates range from a low of 90 deaths per 1,000 live births in the southwest to a high of 185 deaths per 1,000 live births in the northwest. Under-5 mortality is also relatively high in the northeast and southeast. The major causes of stillbirths in a hospital study in Nigeria included antepartum hemorrhage, hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, uterine rupture, low birth weight and congenital fetal malformations.[97]

Opportunities

As noted earlier, sisters run many of the clinics and hospitals in the most impoverished and conflict-ridden parts of Nigeria. However, more specific data on the programs sisters run is necessary to understand how well positioned sisters are and their capacity to address the country's severe maternal and child health care needs and challenges, and how the Sisters Initiative can build upon what Nigerian sisters have established in maternal and child health. The Sisters Initiative may also derive lessons from similar collaborations between other funders such as Partners International and religious communities like Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus.

In addition to the shortage of qualified health care personnel, negative attitudes of providers toward women have remained perennial features of maternity care delivery in Nigeria.[98] There are widespread reports of women resorting to home delivery because of unfriendly health care providers in public facilities. Studies have recommended that midwives receive training on interpersonal skills in order to have positive and sensitive attitudes toward their clients during labor. Sisters are generally appreciated for providing high-quality services with a kind, friendly and generous disposition. Sisters such as those running the St. Louis School of Midwifery in Zonkwa might be well positioned as trainers who can enhance the capacity of non-sister midwives.

As CRCC has recommended in other reports, the Sisters Initiative could initiate a series of meetings between sisters who work in the health sector, other funding institutions, the Ministry of Health and other select stakeholders like the Traffina Foundation to discuss how best to build a holistic, sister-driven model of development that partners sisters with other key stakeholders in Nigeria to address the root causes of maternal and child mortality, childhood poverty and malnutrition. In the context of Nigeria, regional disparities might be a central issue to be investigated in relation to efforts to boost the capacity of sisters to meet this need.

While communities of women religious are distributed throughout Nigeria, they are more highly concentrated in the southern and central regions, where Catholicism is predominantly practiced. Sisters who have practiced in rural northern Nigeria have faced forced displacement as a result of conflict, particularly in the northeast. This raises questions of the extent to which sisters in Nigeria are institutionally positioned to impact regional disparities of maternal and child health issues in the country, at least in the near term.

Human Trafficki

Need

Nigeria remains a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking, and according to UNESCO, has acquired a reputation for being one of the leading African countries in human trafficking, with both cross-border (particularly to neighboring West African countries and Europe) and internal trafficking.[99]

Nigeria enacted a law in 2003 prohibiting the trafficking in persons and established the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP). Nigeria also passed the Child Rights Act in 2003, which deals comprehensively with the issue of child trafficking.[100] However, women and children continue to be trafficked within and beyond the country for forced labor and sexual or physical exploitation.

According to the 2014 Global Slavery Index, an estimated 875,000 Nigerians were living in conditions of modern slavery, and women and children from Nigeria are trafficked for sexual exploitation through organized crime rings to Europe. In Italy and Belgium, Nigerian women account for 60 percent of all sex workers.[101]

Role of Sisters

Human trafficking is an area that sisters in Nigeria are particularly robust in combatting. Their activities today build upon several decades of activism and organizing, particularly around issues that contribute to the vulnerability of Nigerian women to sex slavery domestically, but also in Europe. Sisters' impact in this sector has been felt at the local, national and international levels.

Growing evidence of an alarming number of women and girls being trafficked for forced prostitution prompted Nigerian Major Superiors to establish the Committee for the Support of the Dignity of Women (COSUDOW) in 1999 in Benin City. A decade later, this fight against human trafficking expand-

ed to include women religious across the African continent through the African Network Against Human Trafficking (ANAHT).[102] ANAHT shares an office with COSUDOW in Lagos. The purpose of this partnership is to create a robust network among women religious in countries of origin, transit and destination. Through these organizations and others such as the Africa Faith And Justice Network, a Sisters Initiative grantee, a robust network of sisters in Nigeria has evolved to combat human trafficking through advocacy, education and service ministry at the local, national and international levels.

COSUDOW's director, Sr. Florence Nweonuma of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Sisters—who also serves as the national president of NCRW and the superior general of the Sacred Heart Sisters—was one of the pioneer advocates who pushed the Nigerian government to pass the anti-trafficking bill in 2003. She and other sisters of NCWR were instrumental in working with the government in drafting the bill, and they continue to collaborate with the government on this issue.[103]

The recent handbook for schools developed by COSUDOW, "Stop Trafficking in Women and Children: It Is a Crime Against Humanity," is being used to educate potential victims on the dangers of trafficking in persons through its distribution and use by schools and churches. More recently, through the African Faith and Justice Network in Nigeria, and with the support of the Sisters Initiative, sisters from different congregations across Nigeria made a five-day advocacy trip to Abuja to protest violence, particularly against women and children. During this visit, sisters were involved in education and awareness-building among communities, meetings with government leaders and local chiefs, as well as engaging youth about skill acquisitions and education for decent work.[104]

Sisters also provide rehabilitation, housing and counseling for victims of trafficking. For example, in 2016, sisters at Bakhita Villa, a safe house in Lagos, helped rescue and rehabilitate nine victims of human trafficking, offering them counseling, spiritual direction and skills development to help then secure alternative forms of employment.[105]

Key Players

Nigeria's main governmental authority responsible for anti-trafficking operations is the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP). Sisters already have an existing relationship with NAPTIP through COSU-DOW, as well as with other state agencies and NGOs in Benin City, including Girls Power Initiative, Idia Renaissance / End Slavery Now, Edo State Women Association and Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era.

Caritas Nigeria's Anti-Human Trafficking and Migration Desk provides national coordination for the Catholic Church in Nigeria. The program is aimed at combating human rights abuses, human trafficking and irregular migration. Through this division, Caritas Nigeria supports the Justice Development and Peace Commissions and COSUDOW, as well as local dioceses such as those in Uromi and Benin through community education programs.[106] The organization also carries out household economics education programs than benefit orphans and children who are vulnerable to trafficking, as well as microcredit programs for women. Caritas Nigeria also supports the Orphans and Vulnerable Children Program through Catholic Relief Services, with more than 2,000 households enrolled. Caritas receives additional support for these initiatives from the German donor MISEREOR.

COSUDOW also works with sisters internationally to address trafficking. For example, a partnership with the Italian Union of Mother Superiors has brought Nigerian sisters to Italy to serve Nigerian women trafficked for sex work. Nigerian and Italian sisters have worked together on a repatriation project to support women who either are deported or voluntarily return to Nigeria.

Challenges

USAID's 2017 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report notes that during the reporting period, credible observers stated for the first time that some elements of the Nigerian Security Forces (NSF) used children as young as 12 years old in support roles, and the NSF continued to detain and arrest children for alleged association with Boko Haram, which may have forcibly recruited them.[107] The Nigerian military also conducted activities with the Civilian Joint Task Force, a network of non-governmental self-defense militias that recruited children, possibly unwillingly, and deployed them in support roles. At least one of these militias received state government funding. Furthermore, despite worsening human trafficking conditions in the country, the government has decreased funding for NAPTIP, including a reduction in its budget for victim services.

Conflict and war make women and children particularly vulnerable to exploitation. The TIP report notes finds that government officials—including military, police, and federal and state officials—were involved in widespread sexual exploitation of Borno State women and girls displaced by Boko Haram, at times forcing women and girls in IDP camps to provide commercial sex acts in exchange for food. Outside of the conflict regions of the northeast, societal attitudes toward childless marriages create a demand for baby harvesters and the abduction of young girls, who are forced to bear babies for desperate childless couples.[108] At the same time, negative attitudes toward children born out of wedlock abet human trafficking. Young pregnant girls are kept away from the public eye, and when the young mothers give birth, their babies are placed in the hands of child traffickers.

Opportunities

In response to the deficits in its anti-human trafficking campaign, NAPTIP has been taking steps to strengthen its operational strategies. In early 2018, NAPTIP initiated a "Traffic in Persons" awareness campaign in national school curriculums.[109] Building on such an initiative, the Sisters Initiative and local NGO partners such as Caritas Nigeria might form a working group to expand sister-driven efforts, such as the recent handbook for Catholic schools developed by COSUDOW, "Stop Trafficking in Women and Children." The Foundation might also encourage sisters to uncover and document the lessons learned from advocacy and awareness programs like AFJN's recent tour of Abuja and state government centers in the southeast. At the same time, more research is required to understand the broader role of Catholic sisters in responding to trafficking and the push-factors that drive it.

As CRCC has found in previous country studies, sisters' roles in education and health care, as well as their relationships with young women, put them in a position to educate young people about the risks of trafficking, to build awareness among families and adults about falling pray to traffickers, and to empower youth and women to avoid exploitative situations. Sisters also could join campaigns to improve attitudes toward girls and women, particularly societal mores around childless marriages and children born out of wedlock, that increase the likelihood of human trafficking.

A broad concern shared among donors and NGOs engaged in anti-trafficking activities through advocacy and education is the limited capacity of these organizations to prevent victims from returning to sex slavery in Europe, as they often have few prospects back home in Nigeria and also face social stigma from their families and communities. These young women and children often require constant accompaniment, which many donor organizations are not capable of providing. The Sisters Initiative could partner with Caritas Nigeria and Christian Aid UK to bolster the two relatively modest facilities for trafficking victims that are currently run by COSUDOW. These facilities, in the Lagos region and the southeast, currently provide vocational programs administered by women religious as well as spiritual counseling. Ultimately, the congregations that run the programs assist girls returning from trafficking networks to form an action plan, find an apartment and make initial rent payments, with sustained monitoring and counseling throughout their recovery.

Entrepreneurship and Microfinanc

Need

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor described Nigeria as a country with "unparalleled enthusiasm for business creation."[110] With nearly 90 percent of Nigerian adults confident that they have the ability to become entrepreneurs, Nigeria leads the world in the proportion of the population who believe in their own entrepreneurial capacities and declare themselves ready to start and run a business. As the report finds, "This is not merely an opinion—of every 100 Nigerian adults, 35 are involved in some sort of entrepreneurial activities."[111] Nigerian youth represent a major pool of talent and motivation for entrepreneurship, with well over 80 percent of youth perceiving a good opportunity to start a business as well as having the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed. The optimism of the populace is matched by national ambitions. As noted in the economic section above, the federal government has set a target of making Nigeria one of the top 20 economies in the world by the year 2020.

There is, however, significant disparity between belief in entrepreneurial capacity and lived reality. The country's overall Global Entrepreneurship and Development Index score in 2018 is 20 percent. By comparison, Botswana has the highest score in Sub-Saharan Africa at 34 percent, and the United States has the highest score worldwide at 83 percent. Nigeria is ranked 101st out of 137 countries in the world and 8th out of 29 countries analyzed in Sub-Saharan Africa for its entrepreneurial environment.[112] A recent surge in unemployment, particularly among youth between the ages of 15-35, is a significant challenge as well.

Role of Sisters

Sisters' work and spiritual witness provide daily inspiration to young women. In Nigeria, where poverty and lack of opportunity often makes women vulnerable to exploitation by human traffickers, female entrepreneurship training among women and young girls is one of the potential areas of opportunity for sisters' efforts to encourage sustainable livelihoods and gender equity.

Nigerian sisters have a great deal of entrepreneurial spirit, and anecdotal evidence suggests various innovative and sustainable activities are taking place in their religious communities. Because Nigerian sisters are generally limited in their use of technology and in social media, there is little information about their activities on the web. Sisters report that entrepreneurial activities have been a means for supporting their communities and ministries financially for the past two decades. ASEC also has helped sisters acquire business skills. Initiatives include a bakery and confectionery, small businesses (selling household and incidental items), farming and livestock, the cultivation of medicinal plants like Moronga, weaving and embroidery, interior decoration, and event and party planning. Often these projects began from the initiative of an individual sister and expanded to become a congregational project.

Key Players

Mastercard and Mercy Corps have partnered to ensure young girls and women receive the necessary financial literacy and entrepreneurship training required to start their own businesses.[113] A key entrepreneurial association is the Nigerian Association of Women Entrepreneurs, established in 1993 to promote Nigerian women in business. Another significant resource for sisters could be the Enterprise Development Center of Pan African University in Lagos, which offers a certificate in entrepreneurial management to classes of roughly 50 students per quarter. Graduates of this program are trained through a practical case-study curriculum and provided with support services such as mentoring, business advising and networking. In the public sector, possible partners include the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency, which was established to help entrepreneurs in their business ambitions through small-scale financing schemes in cooperation with commercial banks.

Challenges

The foremost challenges to entrepreneurship in Nigeria are access to finance and markets, poor national infrastructure, and information technology and support services, as many Nigerians rely on agricultural production for their livelihoods and live in rural areas with poor communications. For women, these challenges are even greater. Nigeria is 54th of 77 countries rated on the female entrepreneurship index (FEI) score. Women in Nigeria are estimated to own or manage 25-30 percent of registered businesses, of which a mere 10-15 percent have access to appropriate bank credit.[114] Such realities severely limit women's ability to develop and grow their enterprises, stimulate employment and make a positive contribution to the country's economy.[115] At the same time, out of the 10 countries surveyed in 2012 for the GEM report, Nigeria stands out as one of the only two countries where a higher proportion of women (36 percent) than men (34 percent) were involved in start-ups or recently established businesses. Like trends in the general population, there is a disparity between Nigerian women's eagerness and capacity to start a business and their access to the resources they need to maintain and grow those businesses.

Opportunities

The Nigerian Ministry of Education found that at least 60 percent of high school graduates are not able to get employment immediately, prompting many to turn to entrepreneurial ventures with inadequate training or knowledge about business. Classes in entrepreneurship are now a compulsory part of the high school curriculum.

Similarly, the Sisters Initiative could develop vocational training and entrepreneurship grants that support the education of entrepreneurial women in programs administered by sisters. This could especially be targeted at women and young girls vulnerable to human trafficking. These grants could also

showcase sisters' existing entrepreneurial skills or build on congregations' existing small business and vocational education enterprises while providing mentorship opportunities.

Stimulating entrepreneurship and small business skills in sisters' congregations and giving them the tools (for example, seed money, access to business experts or training from the Enterprise Development Center at Pan African University) to cultivate entrepreneurship and small business acumen in vulnerable populations would be a major step toward helping sisters lead the drive to eradicate poverty and build sustainable livelihoods in Nigeria. Sisters could become the nexus between the needs of entrepreneurs and small businesses on the ground and key government, academic and private sector stakeholders.

V.

Assessment

Based on the data collected for this report, CRCC performed a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) for Nigeria, focusing on the role of sisters in the five sector areas of interest to the Sisters Initiative. CRCC concludes with recommendations on how the Sisters Initiative can have a greater impact in Nigeria through the second iteration of its strategy. Many of the recommendations are echoed from the Zambia and Uganda reports, as sisters face similar challenges in all three countries, particularly in their internal capacity. Still, governance and security pose particular risks in Nigeria. It also became apparent in our conversations with both sisters and non-Catholic stakeholders that, in Nigeria, a cross-sector approach to development work will have a greater likelihood of success than efforts that tackle poverty, education and human trafficking, for example, as discrete problems. With this need for a comprehensive, cross-sector approach in mind, we have tailored each of the following recommendations specifically for the Nigerian context.

SWOT Analysis

Nigeria offers a challenging, high opportunity environment for investment with sisters who are committed to working with the country's most vulnerable populations, despite the obstacles and limitations before them. While sisters do great work in communities throughout the country, their ability to effect change on a macro-level is often constrained by their lack of training and resources, along with their general unfamiliarity with negotiating partnerships, which prevent them from being strategic in their planning and leveraging their social capital. That said, sisters' central organization, the Nigeria Conference of Women Religious, is strong and networked with male religious orders and other components of the Church in Nigeria. The Catholic Church holds a respected place in Nigerian civil society, and some sisters, most notably through COSUDOW's initiatives around human trafficking, have established partnerships outside of the Catholic world, creating an opportunity to increase the visibility and leadership of sisters in a country in which women traditionally have not held leadership roles. [Figure 16] provides a summary view of these on-the-ground factors. The Sisters Initiative will need to take these strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats into consideration as it considers investing in Nigeria.

fig. 16

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis for Nigeria

	STRENGTHS (+)	WEAKNESSES (-)
INTERNAL FACTORS	■ Sisters concentrated in southeast, but active everywhere ■ Catholic Church plays a respected role in civil society ■ Strong religious associations, including inter-faith groups ■ Catholic and faith-based NGOs are eager collaborators ■ Wide array of local and international NGOs	■ Dysfunctional governance ■ Poor infrastructure (electricity, food storage, transportation) ■ Lack of strategic congregational planning ■ Large IDP population ■ Sisters' limited social media presence ■ Developmental inequality between north and south
	OPPORTUNITIES (+)	**THREATS (-)**
EXTERNAL FACTORS	■ Support sister-led data gathering efforts ■ Develop networks between sisters, NGOs and government ■ Increase the visibility of sisters and their work ■ Rebuild civic infrastruction in the northeast ■ Engage in conflict resolution in Biafra ■ Strengthen organizational capacity of NCWR	■ Political corruption and instability ■ Internal conflict (Boko Haram, Herdsman Crisis, Biafra) ■ Climate change (desertification in the north) ■ Rapid population growth

While Nigeria's political dysfunctions often thwart progress in human development, there are rich opportunities for Catholic sisters to build their own capacities and to partner with others to create a more functional civic infrastructure in all parts of Nigeria. As noted above, several of our informants said that the political stock of the Catholic Church—and, by extension, Catholic sisters—is quite high, since Catholics are perceived as working for the common good, regardless of religion or ethnicity. The bishops of Jos and Sokoto are particularly well respected on the national level, and representatives of the Church as well as Catholic NGOs are generally able to enter the development world without being accused of bias. This reputation for compassion and fairness is perhaps Nigerian sisters' greatest asset in their effort to realize their charisms.

The threats in Nigeria affect the ability of sisters to do their work and may influence human development interventions that the Sisters Initiative chooses to fund. The greatest threats to any investment in Nigeria will be the the ongoing issues of political corruption and ethnic as well as religious conflict. Any funding should provide internal buffers or safeguards against downturns in the political environment or increased internal or regional conflict. The security risks that sisters face are equally grave concerns, which the Sisters Initiative will have to consider as its weighs whether to support sisters re-entering and working in the northeast, where both the needs and the risks are high.

That said, the northeast and Biafra could be laboratories in which sisters develop new capacities and partnerships— in this case, around transportation, communication and security—that can be replicated in South Sudan and other areas where sisters face acute risks to their safety. NGOs like Mensen met een Missie can advise sisters on security as they begin to take on prominent roles in politically volatile areas.

Recommendations

The ultimate goal of this case study is to provide a series of high-level recommendations to the Sisters Initiative and Foundation for potential funding opportunity areas. Although this case study has its limitations because of the short length of time in the field and the large scope of analysis, it does provide general guidance and potential milestones to consider over the next five-year funding period. CRCC also includes specific recommendations of opportunities for investment that should be corroborated and built upon with a country-specific strategy developed with input from a sector expert at the implementation stage. In this report, specific opportunities are intended to provide the Sisters Initiative with ideas of what is possible in Nigeria. The following recommendations focus first on spiritual formation and the health of congregations, then on data collection, grassroots organizing for policy advocacy, strategic partnerships, leadership development and regional humanitarian needs.

Adopt a "lifetime formation" approach to building capacity in sisters' congregations and ministries.

Nigerian sisters echo the concerns of sisters globally when it comes to formation needs, from postulancy into old age. Like sisters in Uganda and Zambia, sisters in Nigeria need both education and spiritual support at all stages of life, so that the congregation as a whole can maintain its vitality and its missions.

- Support NCWR to run collective programs, such as formation for postulants, leadership trainings, formator training, spiritual retreats and counseling.

- Assist with congregational retirement liabilities so that sisters can access the spiritual, physical and mental care they need as they age.

- Support and provide training for congregational leadership and older generations of sisters so they can empower younger generations to put their education and knowledge to good use.

- Collect data with the congregations' health as the unit of analysis, so that the congregations and the Sisters Initiative can understand the impact of investments in formation. Look to the data to find key moments in the lives of sisters when they need support to continue their vital ministries and spiritual witness.

Support the Nigerian Conference of Women Religious (NCWR) and member congregations to leverage their existing assets and invest for their future.

Like sisters in Zambia and Uganda, Nigerian sisters traditionally rely on the charity model to sustain their congregations and missions. Thinking beyond this model and finding new ways to supplement their incomes and charitable donations could allow sisters to make their ministries more sustainable and magnify their impact on local human development efforts. Strategic planning would be required to determine how sisters can benefit from underutilized assets, network with outside experts and support under-resourced congregations.

- Assist NCWR and local congregations in developing financial and human resource plans and processes that address their current reality. Enlisting the help of local laity who are professional financial planners, human resource experts and organizational development experts is one low-cost option for building sisters' capacity. Other options include connecting sisters with private sector consulting firms or educational institutions with in-house expertise (e.g., Veritas University, Palladium Group).

- Assist congregations in developing better income-generating missions and ensuring proper remuneration from the Church, government and NGOs.

- Support social impact investing skills through a capacity-building partnership for sisters with Catholic Relief Services.

Support sisters by developing data systems to assist them in tracking their ministries, monitoring the health of their congregations and advocating on behalf of the communities they serve.

NCWR would benefit greatly from the systematic and standardized gathering of data on women religious, their communities and their ministries. This would enable sisters to be more forward-thinking in their planning and decision-making and to better understand and respond to challenges. We suggest two options to allow the Sisters Initiative to maximize NCWR's underutilized capacity-building infrastructure: First, create a small team of well-trained sisters to perform a human resources audit of all NCWR-registered congregations of women religious to identify sisters who have untapped potential as leaders and change-makers. Then, adapt the HESA and SLDI curricula to focus on applied learning strategies to help sisters become (a) capable gatherers and analyzers of data on their congregations and ministries and (b) capable partners with the full array of stakeholders who are working to cultivate grassroots civic engagement in all parts of Nigeria. Measuring impact is only possible if sisters are capable of establishing an accurate baseline of data against which change can be measured. Moreover, sisters can only establish that baseline—and can only hope to bring about change—if they learn to engage with the networks of organizations that are already striving to help Nigeria realize its potential.

After sisters develop these capabilities, they can begin to contribute to progress in Nigerian civil society by undertaking two of the most basic tasks that support good governance: gathering data to inform policy and helping citizens understand how to hold local officials accountable to their constituents. Documenting the impact of sisters' missions could also help raise awareness of and respect for their work among potential partners, funders, Church officials and government. Finally, better data collection and analysis would help the Sisters Initiative to understand the impact of its investments. The leadership of NCWR recognizes both the gaps in its own information and the benefits of gathering and using data.

As their own capacity to gather and share data becomes more robust, sisters would then be able to partner with groups—Learning, Evidencing and Advocacy Partnership (LEAP) and Nigeria Health Watch, for example—that are working to fill knowledge gaps that the federal government's dysfunction inevitably creates. These partnerships might mean working with both NGOs and local officials to ensure accurate birth registry and inoculation records, as well as partnering with a group like Christian Aid UK to help citizens document the needs of their communities and advocate for their rights at the grassroots level.

"Sisters can build the capacity of people to set priorities and go to government to say, 'This is how you can serve us better,'" said an informant who works with a Catholic NGO in Abuja.

- Support NCWR's work with congregations and Veritas University to gather data, develop baseline measurements and create an organization capable of managing and analyzing that data.

- Develop the capacity of sisters to track and use data in decision-making and planning.

- Encourage NCWR to expand its database working-group to include key stakeholders in the Catholic Church, government agencies and NGOs. These stakeholders can provide feedback on key sector variables that need to be tracked over the long term as well as on the structure of the database and how it might feed into national systems and networks.

- According to several sources, the government of Lagos State is more effective than most other regional polities. (The current governor of Lagos is not a member of an ethnic group indigenous to the region, nor was his immediate predecessor—a testament both to Lagos' reputation as "the melting pot of Nigeria" and to the state's relative political functionality.) This might make Lagos State an ideal laboratory in which sisters could forge innovative partnerships with both state-level officials and NGOs to expand the reach of data-gathering and civil advocacy initiatives.

Support existing partnerships between Nigerian sisters and local and international entities, and encourage the development of future partnerships.

Catholic sisters in Nigeria have existing partnerships with both Catholic and non-Catholic organizations, though because NCWR congregations are generally poorly networked, these capacities are often not transferred from one community of sisters to others. For example, while COSUDOW's anti-human trafficking efforts have involved partnerships with several non-Catholic NGOs, alumnae of ASEC's HESA and SLDI programs in Nigeria report no non-Catholic partners in their human development work. Moreover, as noted above, several informants from the non-Catholic NGO world told us that while they are eager to work with Catholic sisters, it is difficult to know how to reach sisters, who generally have a minimal social media presence. COSUDOW's experience of working with both Catholic and non-Catholic partners to address human trafficking as a challenge that demands a cross-sector approach could serve as a useful model for similar initiatives in other parts of Nigeria.

The northeast is an area where sisters might partner with others to build desperately needed civic institutions. While the basic, near-term needs of Nigeria's internally displaced people are urgent, rebuilding communities and social infrastructure must also get underway, but the federal government is not responsive. Children constitute roughly half of Nigeria's displaced population of 2 million people, and hundreds of schools in the northeast have been destroyed. Yet many of the ravaged towns and cities in the region lack a functioning system of civil authority, which allows the remnants of Boko Haram to continue to attack schools in the resulting security vacuum.

As a consequence of internal disagreements, the two largest Christian organizations in Nigeria—the Pentecostal Federation of Nigeria and the Christian Association of

Nigeria—have failed to unite Nigerian Christians in a recovery effort for the northeast. This presents a tremendous opportunity for sisters to spearhead a much-needed ecumenical effort, though ongoing security concerns commend a cautious approach to any collaborative, cross-sector project that sisters might undertake in the region. That said, such an undertaking would leverage the considerable cache of trust the Catholic Church has amassed in Nigeria, engage sisters in collaborations and capacity building, and move the broader story of governance forward in a way that could build momentum for further collaborative development efforts. Caritas Nigeria and Adopt-a-Camp, an NGO that works with internally displaced people in the northeast, would be good initial conversation partners for sisters working in this area, along with the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria. While this under-taking would be ambitious, its success calls for the constellation of capacities—data gathering, networking, partnerships, innovation and grassroots advocacy—that sisters must develop if they are to become agents for change.

- Develop case studies about current partnerships for distribution nationally and regionally.

- Develop a partnership/mentorship program connecting sisters with professionals in the private and public sectors.

- Provide resources for SLDI and HESA graduates to attend local and international meetings and join professional organizations.

- Fund national and regional meetings between NGOs and congregations that focus on specific sector issues.

- Integrate sisters into the development of grants and insist that projects enlist sisters in meaningful leadership roles and not just as service providers.

- Use bridge organizations that sisters trust (e.g., Caritas Nigeria, Africa Faith and Justice Network, Catholic Relief Services) to translate the arcana of the NGO world and connect them to partners beyond the Catholic Church.

- Support the efforts of Nigerian sisters to develop relationships with different faith communities in Nigeria, including Protestant churches and organizations as well as the Muslim community.

Develop sisters' voices as technical experts, advocates and policy developers at the district, national and international levels.

One of the principle ideas to emerge from this landscape study is the need for sisters' voices to be heard beyond the local ministry level. Sisters are working at the frontlines of health care, human trafficking, education and other critical sectors. In Nigeria, they provide many of the social services for rural and remote communities. They understand the daily challenges that vulnerable populations face as they struggle to survive economic hardship as well as ethnic and interreligious conflict. Yet the patriarchal culture of both the Nigerian Catholic Church and society often restrains sisters' leadership. Sisters report that while they have met with some success in finding their "prophetic" role—particularly around the issue of human trafficking and as grassroots community activists in Nigeria's southeastern Catholic heartland— they want to be more assertive in sharing their knowledge and perspectives.

Several NGO personnel interviewed for this case study described their work, in conjunction with the network of organizers and activists who partner with them, as essentially parallel systems of civil infrastructure delivering services that Nigeria's wealthy but dysfunctional government cannot provide. Nigerian sisters should become part of these networks, both to increase their own capacities and to become more effective in their ministries to those in need. Sisters can also become agents of change by empowering people in their communities to communicate their needs to local officials and to hold those officials accountable if those needs go unmet.

- Help sisters gain the technical education and experience required to be able to speak effectively at tables of influence and power.

- Support the continuing education of sisters at the Master's and Ph.D. levels, so that they gain the confidence and capacity to participate in political forums.

- Provide sisters with professional fellowships, mentorships and leadership training to educate them in how to navigate different organizational cultures and how to develop personal networks outside of their congregations and Catholic partners.

- Connect sisters with partners in the NGO world like Christian Aid UK as well as reliable and like-minded interlocutors in government and the private sector.

Develop a country funding strategy that is sensitive to both humanitarian needs and security concerns in Nigeria, focusing on collaborative cross-sector projects that leverage sisters' strengths and build new capacities.

Nigeria struggles to support a large internally displaced population while trying to develop its economy and provide security and basic services for the rest of its citizenry. The southeast—Biafra, the heartland of Nigerian Catholicism—also faces a particular set challenges related to governance and conflict-resolution that sisters are ideally positioned to confront. The impetus for reconciliation efforts must thus come from local governments and other grassroots stakeholders in the region, since the federal government is openly hostile to Biafran separatists.

Nigerian sisters have a long legacy in Biafra—the first indigenous community of women religious was founded in Calabar in the 1930s, and NCWR is headquartered in Enugu. Moreover, sisters in Biafra have proven deft at leveraging their reputational capital to effect change in other local causes. Potential partners and capacity builders for sisters could be drawn from alumni of the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme, a five-year initiative funded by the UK Department for International Development to reduce violent conflict in several of Nigeria's hotspots, including Biafra. Sisters trained in conflict-resolution and seasoned through experience could then transfer their knowledge and capacities to sisters in other parts of the country.

- Help sisters with strategic planning to deal with long-term development issues as they also respond to immediate humanitarian needs.

- Bring sisters into partnerships with knowledgeable interlocutors from the philanthropic world (the MacArthur Foundation and GHR Foundation) that can help them understand complex issues related to governance, conflict resolution and civil society initiatives.

Leverage sisters' passion and experience with anti-human trafficking   ojects to expand their work in that sector and build capacities that are transferable to other sectors.

No issue has inspired Nigerian sisters to enter the public square with greater passion than human trafficking. They have demonstrated at the governor's office of Edo State, where the trafficking problem is especially acute, as well as the National Assembly in Abuja, where dozens of sisters from across the country pressed for legislation to thwart traffickers and reduce the risk to the young women and girls who are most often preyed upon.

That said, sisters' efforts to mitigate the push-factors that abet human trafficking, as well as their work to heal and reintegrate the victims of trafficking into Nigerian society, could benefit from more strategic analysis and a wider array of partnerships. Such initiatives would include communications strategies to reach the poor rural communities where young women and girls are most vulnerable; grassroots mobilizations to help citizens demand the educational facilities and police protections that the Nigerian constitution theoretically affords them; livelihood training and economic empowerment for youth; and more robust recovery and training havens for the victims to whom sisters are called to minister.

- Develop a comprehensive, country-wide strategy for human trafficking prevention and response in collaboration with Caritas Nigeria, which has tackled the trafficking problem with an ardor that matches that of Nigerian sisters.

- Work with other philanthropies (GHR Foundation), private sector partners (Shell Nigeria) and NGOs (Christian Aid UK) to forge civil society initiatives to help remedy the underlying dysfunctions that are the root cause of human trafficking in Nigeria.
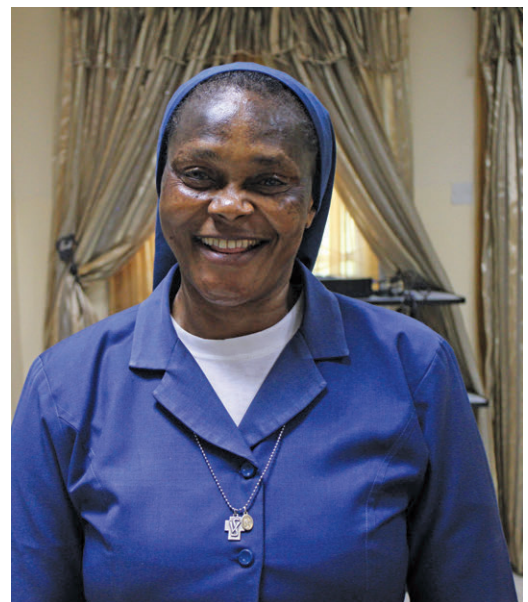
Conclusion

Nigerian sisters work with Nigeria's most vulnerable populations in a wide variety of ministries, including education, health care, food security, anti-human trafficking initiatives and livelihoods. Outside of the sectors that the Sisters Initiative is considering, sisters also have prominent projects in counseling around HIV/AIDS and grassroots forms of civic engagement. They have partnered with each other, Catholic organizations and some non-Catholic NGOs and government agencies. Yet they feel called to do more and, in particular, to be prophetic voices in Nigerian society.

Sisters operate in a difficult environment in Nigeria. The country has been plagued by corruption as well as ethnic and inter-religious conflict. Poor governance exacerbates the problems associated with poverty, unreliable healthcare delivery and overburdened schools and other forms of civil infrastructure. Internal conflicts, especially in the northeast, have devastated individuals' lives, torn communities apart and thwarted economic development.

In Zambia, food security emerged from research and interviews as the agreed-upon priority for the country, whereas in Uganda, sources from a wide variety of fields pointed to poverty eradication as the country's most pressing need. Nigeria, by contrast, produces ample food and is awash in revenue from its petroleum industry. Informants representing a wide array of stakeholders told us that the deep-rooted dysfunctions associated with political corruption and ineffectual governance mean that problems that plague much poorer countries continue to afflict Nigerians despite their country's comparative wealth. Still, while the challenges in Nigeria are great, Catholic sisters are eager to play a larger role in shaping their society and helping Nigeria realize its fullest potential for future generations.

Such seemingly intractable challenges as poverty eradication and governance reform reveal the complexity of trying to set funding priorities based on traditional human development sectors within a given country. Nearly any initiative undertaken by Nigerian sisters could fall under one of the five sector areas, though the initiative's prospects for long-term success will be diminished unless it also includes a component to promote more responsive governance in that sector. Zambia may be the outlier in the clarity of its priority, and Uganda and Nigeria may be more typical of countries in Africa and many other parts of the developing world.

These case studies, but Nigeria in particular, show the complexity of the challenges that countries face in pursuing sustainable development. The Sisters Initiative could work with sisters in any of the sectors in any country and find great needs to address. With limited funding, the Sisters Initiative will need to make difficult choices about how to direct its funding on human development. Overall, our recommendations for all three countries point to need to address fundamental capacity issues that congregations face as they undertake human development challenges, along with the importance of a holistic, cross-sector approach to human development.

Appendix

Traffic-Coding Assessment
A Snapshot of Nigeria's MDGs-End-point Report

Explanatory Key

	Target Met (100%)	*Strong progress (60% but less than 100% target met)*	*Fair Progress (45 – 59% of target met)*	*Weak Progress (Less than 45% of target met)*
Meeting Target	🟢	🟡	🟠	🟣

	Good	*Fair*	*Poor*
Policy Environment	🟢	🟡	🟠

Snapshot

	Meeting Target	Policy Environment
MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger		
Target 1A: **Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty.**		
· Indicator 1.1: Proportion of population below $1 (PPP) per day	🟣	🟢
· Indicator 1.2: Poverty gap ratio (%)	🟠	🟢
· Indicator 1.3: Share of poorest quintile in national consumption	🟠	🟢
Target 1C: **Halve between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffe hunger**		
· Indicator 1.8: Prevalence of underweight children under-fi e years of age	🟠	🟢

MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education

Target 2: **Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able complete a full course of primary schooling.**

	Meeting Target	Policy Environment
• Indicator 2.1: Net enrollment in primary education	🟣	🟢
• Indicator 2.2: Primary Six completion rate	🟣	🟢
• Indicator 2.3: Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds	🟣	🟢

MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Target 3: **Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015.**

	Meeting Target	Policy Environment
• Indicator 3.1a: Ratio of girls to boys in primary education	🟡	🟢
• Indicator 3.1b Ratio of girls to boys in secondary education	🟠	🟢
• Indicator 3.1c: Ratio of girls to boys in tertiary education	🟠	🟢
• Indicator 3.2: Share of women in wage employment in the nonagricultural sector (in per cent)	🟣	🟠
• Indicator 3.3: Proportion of seats held by women in the National Parliament	🟣	🟠

MDG 4: Reduce child mortality

Target 4: **Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-fi e mortality rate.**

	Meeting Target	Policy Environment
• Indicator 4.1: Under-fi e mortality rate	🟡	🟢
• Indicator 4.2: Infant mortality rate	🟠	🟢
• Indicator 4.3: Proportion of 1 year-old children immunized against measles	🟣	🟢

	Meeting Target	Policy Environment

MDG 5: Improve maternal mortality

Target 5: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.

	Meeting Target	Policy Environment
· Indicator 5.1: Maternal mortality ratio	🟢	🟢
· Indicator 5.2: Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	🟣	🟢
· Indicator 5.3: Unmet need for family planning	🟣	🟢
· Indicator 5.5: Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit)	🟣	🟢

MDG 6: Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Target 6A: Have halted, by 2015, and begun to reverse the spread of HIV and AIDS.

	Meeting Target	Policy Environment
· Indicator 6.1: HIV prevalence among pregnant young women aged 15 – 24	🟣	🟢
· Indicator 6.2: Young people aged 15–24 reporting the use of a condom during sexual intercourse with a non-regular sexual partner	🟣	🟡
· Indicator 6.3: Proportion of the population aged 15–24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV and AIDS	🟣	🟡
· Indicator 6.5: Proportion of the population with advanced HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs	🟣	🟡

Target 6C: Have halted, by 2015, and begun to reverse, the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

	Meeting Target	Policy Environment
· Indicator 6.6: Incidence and death rates associated with malaria	🟡	🟢
· Indicator 6.7: Proportion of under-fi e children sleeping under insecticide-treated bed nets	🟣	🟡
· Indicator 6.9: Incidence, prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis	🟣	🟠

		Meeting Target	Policy Environment
MDG 7: Ensure Environmental sustainability			
Target 7A:	**Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources.**		
	· Indicator 7.1: Proportion of land area covered by forest	🔴	🟡
Target 7C:	**Halve by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation**		
	· Indicator 7.9: Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source	🟡	🟢
	· Indicator 7.10: Proportion of the population using an improved sanitation facility	🔴	🔴
Target 7D:	**By 2020, to have achieved a significan improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.**	🟡	🔴

		Meeting Target	Policy Environment
MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development			
Target 8D:	**Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries**		
	· Indicator 8.1: Per capita ODA to Nigeria (USD)	🟢	🟢
	· Indicator 8.2: Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services	🟢	🟢
Target 8F:	**In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefit of new technologies, especially information and communications technology**		
	· Indicator 8.14: Fixed telephone lines per 100 people	🔴	🔴
	· Indicator 8.15: Cellular phone subscribers per 100 people	🟢	🟢
	· Indicator 8.16: Internet users per 100 people	🟢	🟢
	· Indicator 8.17: Tele-density	🟢	🟢

SOURCE: Nigeria 2015: Millennium Development Goals End-Report (2015)." The United Nations Development Programme. Accessed March 27, 2018. http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/ english/MDG%20Country%20Reports/Nigeria/Nigeria_MDGs_ Abridged_ Sept30.pdf?download.

A Summary of Nigeria's MDGs
Progress

Indicator		*Remarks*
Indicator 1.1	Proportion of population below USD 1 (PPP) per day (%)	Weak
Indicator 1.8	National level prevalence of underweight children under-fi e years of age	Fair
Indicator 2.1	Net enrollment in primary education (%)	Weak
Indicator 2.2	Primary Six completion rate	Weak
Indicator 2.3	Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds	Weak
Indicator 3.1a	Ratio of girls to boys in primary education	Strong
Indicator 3.1b	Ratio of girls to boys in secondary education	Fair
Indicator 3.2	Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector (percent)	Weak
Indicator 3.3	Proportion of seats held by women in the National Parliament	Weak
Indicator 4.1	Under-fi e mortality rate	Strong
Indicator 4.2	Infant mortality rate	Fair
Indicator 4.3	Proportion of 1 year-old children immunized against measles	Weak
Indicator 5.1	Maternal mortality ratio	Met
Indicator 5.2	Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	Weak
Indicator 5.3	Contraceptive prevalence rate	Weak

Indicator 5.5	Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit)	Weak
Indicator 6.1	HIV prevalence among pregnant young women aged 15 – 24	Weak
Indicator 6.2	Young people aged 15–24 years reporting the use of a condom during sexual intercourse with a non-regular sexual partner	Weak
Indicator 6.3	Proportion of the population aged 15–24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV and AIDS	Weak
Indicator 6.5	Proportion of the population with advanced HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs	Weak
Indicator 6.7	Proportion of under-fi e children sleeping under insecticide-treated bed nets	Weak
Indicator 6.9	Incidence of TB per 100,000 population	No progress
Indicator 7.1	Proportion of land area covered by forest	Weak
Indicator 7.9	Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source	Weak
Indicator 7.10	Proportion of urban population living in slums	Weak
Indicator 8.1	Per capita ODA to Nigeria	Fair
Indicator 8.2	Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services	Strong
Indicator 8.14	Telephone lines per 100 people	Weak
Indicator 8.15	Cellular phone subscribers per 100 people	Strong
Indicator 8.16	Internet users per 100 people	Fair
Indicator 8.17	Tele-density	Strong

SOURCE: Nigeria 2015: Millennium Development Goals End-Report (2015)." The United Nations Development Programme. Accessed March 27, 2018. http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/ english/MDG%20Country%20Reports/Nigeria/Nigeria_MDGs_ Abridged_ Sept30.pdf?download.

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Key Informants

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