

EVALUATION OF THE  
**KASA!**  
INITIATIVE



**The Campaign Against  
Sexual Violence Epidemic  
(CASE) in West Africa**

Evaluation Report

December, 2025



AFRICAN WOMEN'S  
DEVELOPMENT FUND

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AADS	Association Actions pour le Développement du Sénégal
AFA	Alliances for Africa
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AJS	Association des Juristes Sénégalaises
AWDF	African Women's Development Fund
CBO	Community-Based Organisation CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEWHIN	Centre For Women's Health and Information
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CYDPAN	Centre For Young People Development and Poverty Alleviation Initiative
DOWSU	Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (Ghana Police Service)
DV	Domestic Violence
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GP	Grantee Partner organisation
GSO	Grassroots / Small Organisation (as used in some stakeholder descriptions)
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
KII	Key Informant Interview
LBT	Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (women and gender-diverse persons assigned female at birth)
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and other sexual and gender identities
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
NETRIGHT	Network for Women's Rights in Ghana
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OSIWA	Open Society Initiative West Africa
PAORP	Pan-African Organisation for Research
REPSFECO	Réseau Paix et Sécurité des Femmes dans l'Espace CEDEAO (Women, Peace and Security Network in ECOWAS)
ROCDI	Round Care Development Initiative
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SOAR	Sexual Awareness and Response Initiative
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SWIDA	Savannah Women Integrated Development Agency
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
TSIC	The Social Investment Consultancy Africa
VAPP Act	Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (Nigeria)
WODA	Women of Dignity Alliance
WRO	Women's Rights Organisation
YLO	Youth-Led Organisation

## Executive Summary

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The Kasa! Initiative, led by the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) in partnership with the Ford Foundation and Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), is an ambitious feminist programme working to prevent sexual violence, strengthen survivor support, and shift harmful social norms across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal. The Initiative supports 42 women's rights and feminist organisations through grant-making, advocacy, and accompaniment, emphasising community-rooted interventions and survivor-centred approaches.

This evaluation assesses progress made between 2021 and 2024, identifies enabling and limiting factors, and proposes strategic directions for sustainability, replicability and scale-up for AWDF. The evaluation is based on the participation of 34 (83%) of Grantee Partner organisations, AWDF leadership and programme team, and through site visits in all three countries, mainly Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions, an online survey, and document review, and finally, a stakeholder validation workshop - all guided by feminist and trauma-informed methodology.

The Initiative has contributed meaningfully to shifting the silence surrounding sexual violence, strengthening community protection ecosystems, and deepening feminist organising power. However, the evaluation also highlights risks relating to staff burnout, sustainability, uneven service systems, and inclusion gaps for women, girls and gender diverse persons facing compounded marginalisation.



## Context

Across West Africa, sexual violence remains pervasive, systemically underreported, and socially minimised, shaped by intersecting forces of patriarchal norms, economic dependency, weak institutional accountability, and deeply entrenched cultures of silence. While Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal each have distinct legal and social landscapes, the core issue areas that Kasa! was designed to address are shared across the region: survivors' limited access to justice and protection, heavy reliance on informal or family-based dispute resolution, persistent victim-blaming, and chronic under-resourcing of frontline feminist organisations who often act as the de facto support system. Rising disclosure - driven by youth activism, digital organising, and legal reform - has increased both visibility and vulnerability, creating an urgent need for survivor-centred accompaniment, protective community norms, and stronger multisector response systems.

National nuances also shaped the severity and expression of these challenges.

In **Nigeria**, strong statutory frameworks such as the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act coexist with uneven domestication, insecurity, and moral policing backlash, making survivor support heavily dependent on local actors, personal networks, and youth-led organising. Digital activism has expanded voice but intensified harassment, particularly for young feminist organisers.

In **Ghana**, despite relatively robust laws and institutional structures (e.g., DOWVSU), social norms around family honour, economic survival, and rising anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment create additional barriers, placing organisations at heightened reputational and political risk. Survivors in low-income communities face overlapping vulnerabilities linked to poverty, early relationships, and sexual exploitation.

In **Senegal**, landmark legal reform (Law 2020-05 criminalising rape) opened new advocacy opportunities, yet cultural conservatism and family-led mediation continue to suppress reporting. Strong religious influence means that shifts in norms depend heavily on the engagement of marabouts, traditional leaders, and longstanding peacebuilding networks.

Across all three contexts, economic precarity, youth unemployment, displacement, and climate-

linked instability further increase girls' and women's vulnerability to coercion, transactional sex, and exploitation. The validation workshop reinforced that Kasa! was operating in a moment where awareness was rising faster than systems could respond; feminist organisations were carrying disproportionate responsibility for survivor protection; and cultural gatekeepers were becoming both barriers and potential catalysts. Kasa!'s model—centred on feminist accompaniment, community-rooted organising, cultural fluency, and trust-based funding—was therefore not only relevant but essential in addressing these regional dynamics and national complexities.

## Key Achievements

**Prevention, Advocacy & Narrative Change: Breaking Silence and Shifting Norms:** *community dialogue spaces and local-language radio platforms sustained across three countries, shifting how sexual violence is discussed and understood.*

Partners in Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal created trusted, recurring forums - school clubs, women's circles, youth-led dialogues, mosque/church discussions, and call-in radio shows- that moved sexual violence from taboo to public concern. Evidence from KIs, FGDs, and validation workshop reflections shows reduced victim-blaming, increased bystander engagement, and stronger willingness to report. Cultural fluency (faith framing, traditional values, local idioms) amplified reach and credibility.

Kasa!'s most powerful gains came not from one-off campaigns but from repeated, dialogue-based engagement: school clubs, women's circles, youth forums, faith dialogues, market association meetings, and local-language radio call-ins. These forums enabled communities to question norms, recognise violence, and support survivors. Partners reported clear shifts in openness, willingness to intervene, and reductions in victim-blaming. Validation participants emphasised that prevention is inseparable from accompaniment: communities only speak up when they trust survivors will be supported. They also noted increasing backlash—especially online—against

young feminists and organisers, underscoring the need for digital protection and safety planning.

**Survivor Centred Support Systems:** *Survivors reached with psychosocial, legal, medical, and accompaniment support through Kasa!-supported structures. Across all countries, feminist organisations served as the primary and most trusted responders. Models such as Nigeria’s one-stop centres, Ghana’s school-based detection and community accompaniment, and Senegal’s Ziguinchor counter-referral model improved continuity of care. Validation findings highlighted improved referral reliability and earlier evidence collection, critical for legal outcomes. They offer relational accompaniment, walking with survivors to clinics, police, courts, family negotiations, and follow-up care. This emotional and practical labour fills systemic gaps that state systems cannot meet consistently. Referral pathways improved significantly: Yet sustainability remains fragile: case follow-up depends on staff emotional endurance, transport funds, and informal relationships. The validation workshop highlighted the need to price accompaniment properly and institutionalise wellness support.*

**Feminist Organising and Movement-Building:** *Feminist organisations strengthened through trust-based funding, cross-country networks, and shared learning practices.*

Kasa! deepened movement cohesion: youth-led collectives expanded in Nigeria, Ghanaian grantees strengthened ties to **Network for Women’s Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT)** and domestic violence (DV) Coalitions, and Senegalese partners linked peacebuilding, legal advocacy, and survivor support. Informal mentorship and cross-organisational solidarity reduced fragmentation and increased collective voice. Kasa! strengthened feminist ecosystems by enabling organisations to collaborate without competition, deepen shared political analysis, and expand youth feminist leadership. Healing spaces for frontline workers emerged as a major movement-building achievement. Yet cross-country learning remains underdeveloped. Validation participants expressed a strong desire for structured regional hubs, thematic learning clusters, and bilingual exchanges to build shared strategy across Francophone and Anglophone contexts.

**Stakeholder Engagement and Social Norms:** *Several traditional, religious, and community leaders actively engaged; several now enforcing reporting, co-hosting dialogues, or embedding protection norms.*

Chiefs in Ghana endorsed by-laws mandating reporting; imams and pastors in Nigeria integrated dignity language into sermons; and marabouts in Senegal publicly recognised rape as a crime post-Law 2020-05. Validation discussions confirmed that leader-led messaging accelerated norm shifts, especially in rural communities. The Initiative shifted who can publicly speak about sexual violence. Chiefs, queen mothers, imams, pastors, youth chiefs, teachers, and market leaders are now carrying messages once associated only with feminist groups. This change emerged from slow, relationship-centred engagement: “sitting, listening, and returning” - not from mass campaigns. Leaders adopted by-laws, integrated dignity framings into sermons, supported club structures, and referred cases directly. The validation workshop reaffirmed that engagement must be continuous and ethically guided, with clear MOUs, risk protocols, and safeguards against patronage and political co-option.

**Collaboration & Strategic Partnerships:** *New alliances formed across sectors - legal, health, education, traditional governance - improving coordination for survivor response. Evidence from all countries shows stronger cross-sector referral networks, joint programming, and complementary advocacy roles. While private sector engagement remains limited, multi-actor coalitions (e.g., Ziguinchor’s platform, Ghana’s district-level taskforces, Nigeria’s state-level collaborations) have strengthened local systems.*

**Grantmaking:** *All partners reported that Kasa!’s flexible, feminist grantmaking enabled more relevant, culturally grounded, and adaptive interventions.*

AWDF’s trust-based model allowed partners to shift strategies in real time (e.g., navigating Ghana’s anti-LGBTQ+ climate, leveraging Senegal’s new law, responding to security constraints in Nigeria). Validation feedback highlighted this flexibility as the single strongest enabler of relevance and effectiveness. Kasa!’s flexible, grant-making was universally seen as catalytic. It allowed organisations, especially community-based and rural groups, to design interventions grounded in lived realities, adapt to shifting contexts, and respond to emerging needs. However, short funding cycles undermine gains, especially for accompaniment work, movement-building, and multi-actor coordination. Validation participants emphasised that sustainability requires multi-year core support, integration of staff wellbeing resources, and structured peer learning that goes beyond ad hoc exchange.

**Programme Design, Adaptation, and Learning:**

*Nearly all partners adapted programmes based on community feedback, political shifts, or survivor needs- showing strong feminist reflexivity.*

Partners adjusted language, strategies, and delivery modalities to remain effective in restrictive or changing contexts. Learning was mostly relational but impactful: peer exchanges, WhatsApp groups, shared tools, and thematic mini-clusters strengthened collective problem-solving. The validation workshop reinforced the appetite for more structured cross-country learning. The Initiative's feminist accompaniment approach gave partners autonomy to design context-specific strategies and adapt them as political or cultural conditions changed. While learning was rich, it remained largely informal and undocumented. Validation participants expressed strong interest in structured regional learning hubs, thematic practice clusters (e.g., survivor support, digital safety, faith engagement), and reflection spaces for staff to process demanding emotional labour. There is major opportunity for AWDF to institutionalise learning as movement infrastructure.

**Inclusion, Ethics, and Safeguarding:**

*Survivor confidentiality and trauma-informed practice strengthened across all implementing organisations, with expanded support to marginalised groups.* Organisations enhanced safeguarding protocols, strengthened survivor confidentiality, and improved trauma-informed engagement with adolescents, rural women, informal workers, and conflict-affected groups. However, the validation highlighted persistent gaps for LBT survivors and women with disabilities, requiring targeted resourcing. Therefore, grant-making strategies can ensure intentional design rather than relying on organic uptake by explicitly resourcing inclusion from the outset, structuring grant windows, partner selection, and accompaniment processes to prioritise groups whose needs rarely surface organically such as women and girls with disabilities, LBT communities, informal-sector workers, adolescent girls, displaced women, and urban poor communities.

Kasa! strengthened survivor-centred safeguarding practices across contexts. Confidentiality systems improved, referrals became more trauma-informed, and organisations deepened ethical practice in difficult cases. Yet the biggest gap lies in safeguarding staff. Frontline workers face burnout, secondary trauma, reputational risk, and, increasingly, digital harassment. The validation workshop strongly emphasised the need for wellness funds, reflective supervision,

disability-inclusive practice, and organisational safety planning- particularly in environments of political hostility or moral panic.

**Sustainability:** *Multiple community structures - youth groups, peer mentors, chiefs' councils, school clubs, survivor circles - continue activities beyond grant cycles.*

These structures show early signs of community-level institutionalisation. In many areas, leaders now initiate dialogues, families seek medical certificates proactively, and youth advocates continue peer support independently. The evaluation finds that sustainability rests on relationships - trusted organisations, peer educators, traditional leaders, teachers, and survivor advocates who now carry the work. However, sustainability is fragile and uneven: it relies on continuity of presence, staff retention, and ongoing funding. Short grants disrupt trust-building and threaten emerging local systems. Partners expressed the need to consolidate referral networks, nurture youth leadership pathways, and embed feminist practices in community institutions. Validation discussions reaffirmed that sustainability for Kasa! is not about exit - it is about deeper presence and strengthened infrastructure.

**Emerging Issues and Future Preparedness:**

*Kasa! partners identified rising backlash, economic precarity, and digital threats as critical future risks requiring proactive feminist protection.* Validation workshop insights affirmed growing moral panic (Ghana), digital harassment (Nigeria), and cultural resistance despite legal gains (Senegal). Economic dependence continues to entrench vulnerability across contexts. Sexual-violence work is becoming more politically charged, digitally contested, and economically strained. Backlash is rising (especially in Ghana and northern Nigeria), digital harassment is growing, and survivors' economic dependency continues to drive vulnerability. At the same time, opportunities exist to influence national policies, standardise referral protocols, and strengthen institutional accountability, if supported by long-term feminist accompaniment. Validation participants underscored the need for a feminist preparedness agenda: digital safety, political-risk anticipation, economic protection for survivors, and intergenerational movement resilience.

## **How These Achievements Contribute to Systemic Change**

Collectively, these achievements demonstrate that Kasa! has helped shift West Africa's response to sexual violence from fragmented, reactive, and individualised to relational, community-rooted, and increasingly system-aware. By strengthening feminist organisations, the backbone of survivor protection, Kasa! has catalysed shifts in discourse, improved multi-sector coordination, and expanded culturally grounded prevention models that can be replicated across the region. Innovations such as accompaniment-as-standard, leader-led norm change, peer-led youth mobilisation, and regional cross-learning have shown strategic leverage: they work across languages, legal systems, and cultural contexts. These achievements align directly with Kasa!'s core goal: to build resilient feminist ecosystems capable of advancing safety, dignity, and accountability well beyond any single grant cycle.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Kasa! has built a strong foundation: community-rooted feminist organising, survivor-centred support systems, youth and grassroots leadership, and culturally fluent prevention models. These gains are real—but vulnerable. The next phase must consolidate and expand the movement infrastructure that Kasa! has seeded. Core recommendations include multi-year trust-based funding; institutionalising accompaniment as funded work; strengthening staff care and safety; expanding intersectional reach; formalising referral networks; investing in regional learning; and building a feminist preparedness framework that protects activists and survivors in increasingly volatile environments. As partners said during validation:

*"The work continues because the women continue. Our strength is that we do not walk alone."*

## **Lessons Learned**

### **Transformation is relational, not event-based.**

Across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal, partners consistently emphasised that social and behaviour change does not happen through one-off campaigns or high-visibility events. Communities shifted when organisations returned repeatedly, listened, held space for difficult conversations, and built trust over time. The validation workshop reaffirmed that "the work is in the follow-up," especially in contexts where silence and stigma have deep roots. This means that the most effective prevention approaches were those grounded in ongoing relationships, not isolated activities.

**Accompaniment is the core of protection, not referral.** A key insight across all countries is that survivors rarely experience safety from being "referred" to a service alone. What protected them was the presence of an advocate walking with them - through reporting, medical visits, family negotiations, court procedures, and emotional recovery. Validation discussions highlighted that accompaniment requires time, emotional labour, and practical resources, and that its absence can result in survivors withdrawing from the justice pathway. The lesson is clear: accompaniment is the intervention, not an add-on to it.

### **Youth leadership drives cultural change faster than any other entry point.**

Young feminists, peer educators, and school-based clubs proved to be among the most influential actors in shifting norms around consent, safety, and bodily autonomy. Their messages are relatable, their networks are agile, and their engagement reduces stigma among their peers. The validation workshop highlighted that when youth-led groups are trusted with meaningful roles - not just "sensitisation" - they become catalysts for community-wide change. Investing in young women's leadership is therefore both an equity imperative and a strategic lever.

### **Legitimacy accelerates impact: when traditional and faith leaders speak, communities listen.**

Partners demonstrated that shifts in norms happened more quickly and became more durable when respected leaders, chiefs, queen mothers, imams, pastors, market leaders, publicly aligned with survivor protection. Their endorsement reframed sexual violence from a private issue to a community concern. During the validation workshop, partners emphasised that building these relationships requires patience, humility, and co-creation of messages, but once secured, these leaders become "carriers of the work" who sustain momentum long after project activities end.

### **Staff wellbeing is a determinant of programme success, not an internal HR matter.**

Frontline staff and community facilitators disclosed high levels of emotional strain, secondary trauma, and burnout due to constant exposure to disclosures and crisis response. The validation workshop made this even more visible, with partners noting that exhaustion affects decision-making, survivor safety, and organisational stability. The lesson is that staff care and supervision are not administrative concerns, they are central to programme effectiveness and the sustainability of feminist protection systems.

The evaluation shows that the Kasa! Initiative has strengthened feminist prevention and response systems across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal by expanding survivor-centred accompaniment, shifting community norms, and deepening the legitimacy of feminist organisations in public life. These achievements were made possible through trust-based funding, relational organising, and locally grounded leadership, particularly among young women, peer educators, and long-standing community actors. The Initiative has catalysed meaningful change: more survivors are disclosing, communities are increasingly challenging stigma, leaders are publicly acknowledging violence as a collective responsibility, and grassroots organisations are coordinating more intentionally around survivor protection. However, these gains remain fragile and unevenly distributed, particularly in contexts of political volatility, economic stress, and rising backlash against feminist organising. The next phase must therefore treat consolidation, not expansion alone, as the strategic priority.

Looking ahead, sustainability will depend on AWDF's ability to deepen the relational infrastructures that make change durable. Across all countries, the most effective models, accompaniment, peer-led mobilisation, community dialogues, faith-leader engagement, and coordinated referral networks, require continuity, skilled staff, and predictable resources. Short funding cycles interrupt trust-building, weaken referral pathways, and place emotional and financial strain on frontline teams. To sustain and stabilise these achievements, AWDF will need to expand multi-year, flexible funding that covers both programmatic and institutional costs, including staff retention, wellness, supervision, digital and physical security, and the practical expenses that make survivor accompaniment possible (transport, emergency funds, documentation fees, case coordination). Sustainability also requires strengthening country-level coalitions so that knowledge, responsibilities, and protection structures are shared among organisations rather than carried by a few overstretched actors.

Scalability and replicability will require AWDF to invest in what the evaluation identifies as the Initiative's most transferable assets: simple but powerful models of feminist accompaniment; school- and youth-led prevention structures; community-rooted dialogue platforms; leader-engagement pathways with chiefs, queen mothers and imams; and adaptable referral systems such as the Casamance counter-referral loop or Ghana's school-based early detection mechanisms. Scaling these models is not about expanding activities, but about resourcing the conditions that make them viable - cross-country learning hubs, shared

tools, protected knowledge exchange, stronger MEL systems, and feminist data infrastructure that allows partners to track and communicate shifts without compromising survivor confidentiality. Phase 2 must therefore focus on embedding these proven models into community and institutional ecosystems, strengthening the capacity of organisations who carry them, and building collective protection strategies against backlash and political risk.

In summary, the report concludes that the next phase of Kasa! should prioritise deeper grounding, not broader reach: sustained investment in feminist protection systems, long-term accompaniment of organisations and survivors, and intentional consolidation of learning across regions. With multi-year, flexible funding and structured cross-country collaboration, Kasa! is well positioned to shift from programme-level impact to regional feminist infrastructure - one capable of protecting survivors, strengthening movements, and sustaining change across generations.

The annexes include detailed case studies from site visits to organisations in Ghana (WODA), Nigeria (BAOBAB), and Senegal (KIRAAY). These case studies provide grounded, day-to-day illustrations of how Kasa! operates in practice, showing how organisations build trust, accompany survivors, negotiate cultural and institutional barriers, and mobilise community-led change. They highlight real experiences from programme implementers, beneficiaries, youth advocates, and community facilitators, offering a vivid picture of the initiative's relational impact and the emotional labour required to sustain survivor-centred work. These narratives enrich the evaluation by demonstrating not only what has changed, but how change is being made possible on the ground.

The annexes also include an overview of the validation workshop outcomes, summarising cross-country reflections, areas of convergence and divergence, and partner-led refinements to the findings and recommendations. This ensures that the final report is grounded in collective interpretation and accurately represents partners' lived realities, priorities, and strategic insights.

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## Introduction

The African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) has commissioned The Social Investment Consultancy Africa (TSIC)<sup>1</sup> to conduct the Evaluation of the Kasa! Initiative. This pilot initiative aims to address and reduce sexual violence and its deep-rooted drivers across West Africa and specifically in Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal. The initiative works by strengthening women's rights and feminist organisations, focusing on advocacy, supporting survivor-centred interventions, and challenging harmful social norms.

This evaluation report outlines<sup>2</sup> the progress made during the 2021–2024 implementation period, assessing results across prevention, response, survivor support, movement-building, and stakeholder engagement. It examines how the initiative has expanded feminist organising capacity; strengthened referral and accompaniment systems; shifted public discourse in schools, communities, and religious spaces; and enabled survivors to access greater dignity, protection, and care.

The review draws on mixed methods, including key informant interviews, site visits, focus group discussions, online surveys, documentation review and a stakeholder validation workshop. It reflects the voices of, frontline practitioners, community advocates, youth leaders, and survivors themselves and AWDF programme staff, whose lived experiences and strategic insights shape both the analysis and recommendations.

The purpose of this Evaluation is not only to evaluate progress to date, but to identify what is working, what requires strengthening, and what strategic opportunities exist for the next phase of Kasa!. The findings contribute to learning across AWDF, grantee partners, and the broader West African feminist movement, providing grounded guidance for sustaining and scaling efforts that prevent sexual violence and support survivors with dignity, agency, and care.



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<sup>1</sup>This report has been prepared by a small team from The Social Investment Consultancy led by Sarah Jane Danchie (TSIC Director for Africa; with critical country reports from TSIC Senior Associates, Fatima Aliyu, Harriet Ahokposi, while Bashiratu Kamal provided advisory evaluation focused on feminist organising and safeguarding and Adjoa Kudoadzi provided project assistance with preliminary research and interviews

<sup>2</sup>The report uses AWDF's report structure template agreed during the inception phase of this evaluation

# Summary matrix of findings, data sources and recommendations

See Annex 2 below.

## Introduction

### Programme background and context of sexual violence

The **Kasa! Initiative** is a feminist effort led by the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), in partnership with the Ford Foundation and the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), to **prevent sexual violence, reduce its incidence, and strengthen survivor-centred responses** across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal. Launched in 2021, Kasa! draws its name from the Akan word (a language spoken in Ghana) meaning "**Speak Out!**", reflecting its core commitment to **breaking silence**, amplifying survivor voice, and shifting the social, cultural, and institutional conditions that enable sexual violence to persist.

Kasa! recognises that while legal and policy frameworks exist, **silence, stigma, and power inequalities** continue to shape how sexual violence is understood and addressed. As AWDF leadership noted, sexual violence in West Africa is not only an event, but a **socially patterned issue connected to power, gender norms, and community expectations**. As the AWDF leadership emphasised: *"The laws are there, but the social environment makes it difficult for women and girls to name harm, or to seek help safely. Kasa! is about transforming those conditions, not just responding to incidents."*

The Initiative therefore invests in **community-rooted women's rights and feminist organisations**, including youth-led, grassroots, and long-established feminist advocacy groups. These partners work across:

- **Prevention and narrative change**, including girl-led voice, community dialogue, and religious/traditional leader engagement.
- **Survivor support**, including **accompaniment models** that ensure survivors are *not left to navigate unsafe systems alone*.
- **Movement-building and leadership**, strengthening the visibility, legitimacy, and coalitional power of feminist actors.

- **Policy and accountability advocacy**, where relevant, to shift institutional practice.

As the Kasa Programme staff explained: *"We are resourcing feminist organisations who already hold trust in their communities. They know how to respond, they know what safety looks like. Our role is to support and amplify that."*

Between 2021 and 2024, a total of **57 grants** have been awarded to 42 organisations to date across the three countries including 3 repeat grants, 8 travel grants and 5 Zinariya grants, supporting organisations working at **community, district, national and regional levels, with a focus on adolescent girls, survivors of sexual violence, women at the margins of economic and social protection systems, and gender-diverse persons**.

The long-term aim is not only to **reduce the incidence of sexual violence**, but to **reshape narratives, behaviours, and institutional responses, and to expand feminist movement power** capable of sustaining change. As framed by AWDF during programme initiation:

*"Kasa! is about the collective work of transforming the environments in which violence becomes possible, and making space for women and girls to speak, act, organise and lead."*

Sexual violence remains a pervasive and deeply rooted reality across Ghana, Senegal, and Nigeria, shaped by entrenched patriarchal norms, socio-economic dependency, and the social expectation of silence. Although policy and legal frameworks exist in all three contexts, survivors continue to face environments where **speaking about harm is risky**, and where social systems are structured to **preserve family reputation, marriage stability, and community cohesion over survivor safety**. As AWDF's CEO observed: *"The issue is not that laws do not exist. It is that the social environments women and girls live in make disclosure dangerous, and seeking justice unpredictable."*

AWDF's programme staff further noted that the silence surrounding sexual violence is **learned, reinforced, and socially policed**: *"Violence is treated as something to manage quietly within the family. Our work challenges the belief that silence is the safest option."* KASA Programme staff, AWDF.

Across the three countries, grantee organisations described sexual violence not simply as individual acts, but as a **patterned outcome of gendered power relations**. In Ghana, facilitators reflected: *"Girls are taught to endure and adapt, not to name what is happening to them."* Programme Implementer, Ghana

In Senegal, organisations highlighted the role of **religious and age-based authority** in determining whether harm is even recognised: *"If a community leader says it is a private issue, then it remains invisible. Silence is enforced."* Women's Collective Leader, Senegal

In Nigeria, partners emphasised **economic dependency as a primary trap** that prevents survivors from leaving abusive situations: *"She may know her rights and still not have the resources to act. Without alternatives, she must stay."* Grantee Staff Member, Nigeria

**Yet across all three countries, shifts are emerging.** Through the safe spaces, club structures,

peer support networks, and accompaniment models supported under KASA, girls and women described **gaining vocabulary, confidence, and solidarity** to question and refuse harm. As one adolescent girl in a programme space said: *"We used to think we had no voice. Now we know we can say no."* Adolescent Girl, Ghana FGD.

However, these gains are not without risk. When silence breaks, **backlash often intensifies** - from families, teachers, religious authorities, or peers. Implementers across countries highlighted: *"When girls begin to speak, systems push back. Change starts conflict before it builds protection."* Youth Mentor, Nigeria

This reinforces the core principle of the KASA initiative:

**Voice must be accompanied by protection**

**Confidence must be supported by collective solidarity**

**Agency must be matched with safe, viable alternatives**

As AWDF staff affirmed, *"We are not only preventing sexual violence. We are building the power and conditions needed for women and girls to transform the environments that make violence possible."*



## Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The Evaluation aims to:

- Assess progress made towards the intended outcomes of the Kasa! Initiative between 2021 and 2024.
- Examine how the initiative has contributed to building and supporting feminist movements tackling sexual violence.
- Identify the enabling and limiting factors that affect implementation and outcomes.
- Draw out lessons and strategic recommendations to inform the final phase of the programme and future programming.

## Programme description

The **Kasa! Initiative** is delivered through **grant making, advocacy and campaigning and collaboration among regional and international development partners** to women's rights and feminist organisations in Ghana, Senegal, and Nigeria. Specifically, the programme has been delivered through three strategic activity areas:

1. Grant-making to support local, national, and regional women-led civil society organisations, first responders, and institutions with the expertise and experience delivering impactful programming around sexual violence. The grant-making is focused on three critical areas: prevention, accountability, and support services.
2. Advocacy and campaigning, delivered by one or several national or regional organisations that will raise public awareness and call for policy change in Nigeria, Senegal, and Ghana, as well as across the region; and
3. Collaboration among regional and international development partners by participating in Ford Foundation-led efforts to establish and strengthen cooperation with relevant institutions to scale interventions.

The programme provides **flexible, trust-based grants**, allowing organisations to design and adapt activities based on what is happening in their

communities, rather than following rigid donor workplans. Grants range from small community-based awards to larger institutional strengthening grants, reflecting the diversity of organisations engaged in the work.

Kasa! supports interventions across four interconnected areas:

**Prevention and narrative change** – creating safe spaces for dialogue, building girls' leadership, and shifting beliefs that normalise sexual violence;

**Survivor-centred support** – ensuring survivors can access dignity, safety, and care through accompaniment and community solidarity;

**Movement-building** – strengthening the collective power and visibility of feminist organisers and women-led networks; and

**Stakeholder and community engagement** – working with families, teachers, religious actors, traditional authorities and local services to expand protection and accountability.

A defining feature of the programme is its use of **feminist accompaniment** at the level of survivor support. In this evaluation, based on stakeholder responses, accompaniment refers to the practical and emotional act of walking alongside a survivor, rather than simply referring them to a service and stepping back. It involves sustained emotional presence, practical guidance, and protection, such as accompanying a survivor to a clinic, sitting with them during reporting processes, negotiating safety within families, and checking in long after the immediate incident. It recognises that survivors often face stigma, disbelief, pressure to remain silent, or dependency on the perpetrator, and therefore need solidarity, not instructions. As one Nigerian implementer explained, *"Referral alone is not enough. If she goes into these systems alone, they can silence her. Accompaniment is staying with her so she is not alone in the fight for her own safety."* This survivor-level accompaniment is distinct from AWDF's broader organisational accompaniment model, which focuses on resourcing, strategic partnership, and institutional strengthening of grantee organisations.<sup>4</sup> As the AWDF Programme staff explained: *"Our role is not to tell organisations what to do. It is to walk with them, while they walk with survivors."*

Grantee organisations range from youth-

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<sup>4</sup>Throughout this report, "accompaniment" refers specifically to the survivor-centred support practice used by grantees. This differs from AWDF's institutional accompaniment approach, which focuses on supporting organisations through funding, capacity strengthening, and strategic engagement.

led collectives to long-established feminist organisations, each working in ways that reflect their **community realities, languages, and cultural contexts**. The programme structure intentionally **prioritises autonomy, trust, and learning**, recognising that meaningful change arises from **relationships and lived knowledge**, not externally imposed models.

### **Overview of Kasa! Initiative Reach and Demographic Focus (2021–2024)**

During the evaluation period, the Kasa! Initiative supported **42 women’s rights organisations** across **Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal**, amounting to **57 individual grants**. Of the 57 individual grants, 8 were travel grants and 5 were Zinariya grants. Together, these grants represent a wide but strategically varied approach to addressing sexual violence, with particular emphasis on **younger girls and adolescents**, who are among the most vulnerable to sexual abuse, coercion, exploitation and early marriage. Nearly **40% of all grants (39%)** focused primarily on girls **ages 0–17**, and an additional **25%** targeted young women **ages 18–21**, signifying a deliberate investment in early prevention, school-based activism, and youth-led leadership pathways. Meanwhile, **21%** of grants supported women **ages 22–64**, demonstrating attention to adult survivors and women navigating structural and economic barriers that heighten vulnerability to sexual violence.

Across all three countries, the Initiative supported a diverse range of marginalised groups; however, the distribution of this support was uneven, with certain populations such as women with disabilities, LBT persons, and urban survivors - reached far less consistently. Only **3%** of grants explicitly targeted **women and girls living with HIV**, and only **5%** supported **women and girls with disabilities**. Similarly, **grants directly reaching displaced women, widows, or women in ethnic minority communities accounted for 2–5%**, indicating **a need for deeper inclusion** in subsequent programme cycles. The Initiative did, however, take important steps in addressing **sexual violence in informal sectors and typically overlooked contexts**, with **11%** of grants supporting **sex workers** and **7%** supporting **gender-diverse or LBT populations**, including through psychosocial care, legal accompaniment, and stigma reduction interventions - most notably in Senegal.

A clear pattern appears in **geographic focus**. While **16%** of grants targeted **rural communities**, only **4%** focused specifically on **urban populations**, even though survivor testimonies and stakeholder interviews indicate that sexual violence manifests in both settings but with different drivers, barriers

to reporting, and institutional response gaps. The Initiative therefore placed stronger emphasis on **rural prevention and referral strengthening**, particularly in northern Ghana, northern Nigeria, and Casamance in Senegal, where patriarchal norms, weak service infrastructure, and socio-political insecurity converge to heighten vulnerability.

The **scale of direct reach also varied significantly**. Nearly **half of all grants (47%)** directly reached **fewer than 1,000 people**, reflecting the Initiative’s emphasis on **deep, relational, trust-based work** rather than mass outreach alone. Approximately **16%** reached **1,000–5,000 people**, and only **11%** exceeded **5,000 direct beneficiaries**, often where radio campaigns, school networks, or community coalition platforms were leveraged. The data suggests that Kasa! partners prioritised **depth of transformation**, particularly around **attitude change, leadership activation, and survivor solidarity**, over scale for its own sake.

At the national level, **Nigeria held the largest concentration with 28 grants**, followed by **Ghana (16 grants)** and **Senegal (13 grants)**. The thematic emphasis also varied by context. In Nigeria, the largest share (32%) focused on **body and health rights**, and **25%** explicitly addressed sexual violence, anchored in service strengthening and movement-building. In Senegal, **31%** of grants focused on **sexual violence prevention**, shaped by recent legal reform and growing public discourse. Ghana’s portfolio reflected **multi-level community prevention strategies**, though with notable **gaps in programming for urban, disability, or LBT communities**.

Overall, the Kasa! Initiative successfully **expanded survivor-centred feminist infrastructure** across three countries by prioritising **youth engagement, community norm change, and multi-sectoral service referral strengthening**. However, the demographic profile reveals **strategic opportunities for the next programme phase**:

- **Expanding inclusion** of disability, LBT, urban, displaced, and minority groups
- **Strengthening support for adult women survivors navigating economic dependence**
- **Increasing multi-country learning across shared demographic challenges**

The Initiative has therefore laid the foundation for a more **intersectional, layered, and regionally connected feminist movement** in West Africa, one capable of both **preventing sexual violence at its roots and transforming the systems that enable it**.

## Evaluation Coverage, Reach, and Demographic Representation

This Evaluation assessed the Kasa! Initiative across its full geographic spread in **Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal**, engaging at least<sup>5</sup> 34 GPs (83%) through a multi-layered evaluation approach that captured the experiences of programme implementers, national feminist organisers, community partners, and survivors themselves. Based on the organisations engaged in this evaluation, an estimated **120,992 people** directly benefited from the Kasa! Initiative activities represented in this evaluation.<sup>6</sup> This reflects a **substantial share of the Initiative's overall reach**, with beneficiaries spanning girls and young women, adult survivors, and community members across rural and urban contexts.

The evaluation design prioritised depth, contextual nuance, and feminist learning principles. As such, inquiry was conducted not only at organisational level, but also within **schools, district systems, community spaces, and survivor-support environments**, reflecting the Initiative's theory of change which is rooted in relational, community-based transformation.

This evaluation therefore reflects **comprehensive programme engagement across diverse landscapes**:

- **Urban and rural zones**, including remote

and conflict-affected communities (e.g., Casamance, Northern Ghana, Northern Nigeria).

- **Different organisational maturities**, from long-established feminist institutions to youth-led collectives and grassroots community responders.
- **Multiple levels of social authority**, engaging not only survivors and girls but also chiefs, queen mothers, imams, pastors, teachers, school counsellors, health officers, police units (e.g., DOWVSU), and district assemblies.
- **Communities experiencing acute marginalisation**, including survivors facing family pressure, girls at risk of early marriage, LBT communities navigating criminalisation, and women experiencing workplace harassment or domestic violence.

This breadth ensures that findings are grounded in **real system experience**, rather than organisational reporting alone. The evaluation, therefore captures a **movement in evolution**: one that is deepening survivor dignity, shifting social norms, and consolidating feminist organising power across West Africa.

## Theory of Change

The Kasa! Initiative is grounded in the understanding that **sexual violence persists not only because individuals cause harm**, but because **social norms, power dynamics, and institutional responses enable silence, impunity, and vulnerability**. Therefore, **preventing sexual violence requires both individual and structural change**, rooted in collective agency and feminist organising.

At its core, Kasa! assumes that **when women's rights organisations and feminist collectives are resourced, trusted, and able to build solidarity and voice within communities**, they can:

- Shift social norms that normalise or excuse violence,
- Support survivors to access dignity, safety, and justice,
- Strengthen collective power to **challenge systems and institutions**, and
- Sustain change beyond project cycles.

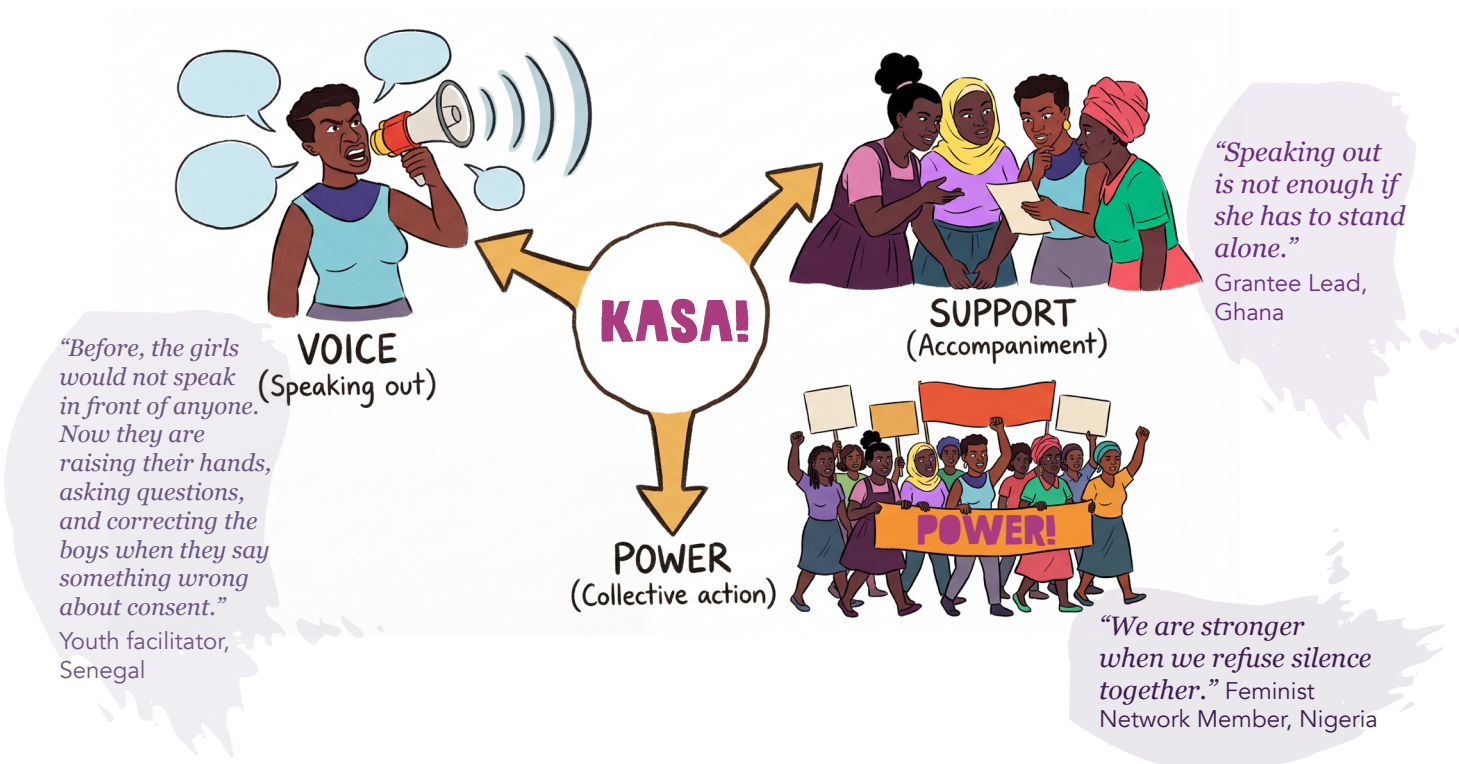
As the AWDF leadership stated: *"We are not responding to incidents alone; we are transforming the conditions that make violence thinkable and survivable."*

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<sup>5</sup>Potentially more due to the Stakeholder Validation workshop

<sup>6</sup>Using figures from AWDF documentation during the desk review

# How the Theory of Change Plays Out in Practice



## 1 Building Voice and Confidence (Prevention)

Grantees create safe, trusted spaces - especially for adolescent girls and young women - where harmful norms can be questioned and new forms of self-recognition can emerge. The initiative also supports agency and action.

## 2 Strengthening Protection through Accompaniment (Survivor Support)

Rather than relying only on referrals, organisations stay with survivors, navigating family pressure, school or religious authority, police systems, and emotional trauma.

## 3 Expanding Collective Power (Movement-Building)

Kasa! positions individual change within collective organising. Organisations work together to increase visibility, legitimacy, and advocacy leverage.

## Underlying Assumptions

The Initiative is based on several explicit feminist premises:

- **Survivors are experts in their own experience**; support should build agency, not dependency.
- **Community transformation takes time** and requires presence, not one-off sensitisation.
- **Systems rarely protect unless pushed**, therefore building **collective pressure and legitimacy** is essential.
- **Emotional labour is work** and requires **care, resourcing, and shared responsibility**.

As the Programme staff summarised: *“Kasa! is about transforming voice into power, and power into safety.”*

## Implications for Evaluation

This Theory of Change means the evaluation looks not only at:

- delivered activities, but how **relationships shift**;
- not only at awareness, but whether **girls and women feel safer to speak and act**;
- not only at services, but whether **survivors are accompanied and protected**.

## Evaluation methodology

TSIC’s applied a participatory, feminist, trauma-informed, and mixed-methods approach that centres the voices of feminist activists and community-based organisations. This cross-country evaluation draws on evidence collected in Ghana, Senegal, and Nigeria through a multi-method, primarily qualitative research approach supplemented by light quantitative inputs to frame and contextualise discussions. Data collection included Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with grantee partner organisation (GP) leads and programme staff, as well as AWDF leadership and programme teams. In each country, a site visit was conducted, incorporating Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with programme implementers and target audience groups. Additional insights were gathered from community and referral actors such as teachers, school counsellors, traditional and religious leaders, health providers, and local protection services, enabling a deeper understanding of the enabling and constraining system conditions surrounding survivor support and norm change.

A review of AWDF programme documentation and MEL reflections provided portfolio-level grounding, while an online survey offered supplementary quantitative perspective. Survey response rates were uneven (Ghana: 1; Senegal: 1; Nigeria: 8), and therefore used to support, but not drive, comparative analysis.

To ensure robustness, triangulation was achieved by examining convergence and divergence across:

1. grantee organisation perspectives,
2. community and beneficiary experiences,
3. AWDF's programme intent, design, and accompaniment practices, and
4. system actors engaged in prevention, referral, and accountability.

Finally, a cross-country Validation Workshop involving grantee partners, and AWDF staff provided an additional layer of evidence and collective reflection. Breakout discussions across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal allowed participants to validate findings, nuance interpretation, and articulate priorities for sustainability, replicability, and scale-up of the Kasa! Initiative. These workshop insights (detailed in the Annex) form an integral part of the final analysis, ensuring that conclusions are grounded in practitioner experience and country-level realities.

AI-assisted tools were used only to support summarising and organising textual data to enhance clarity and timeliness. All analysis, interpretation and evaluative judgement remained human-led, and no identifiable personal or sensitive data was processed using AI. This ensured rigour, confidentiality, and ethical integrity throughout.

Our methodology included:

- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with total of 20 grantees (Nigeria: 9, Ghana: 6, Senegal: 5)
- Site visits in all three countries (one visit/country) with 3 organisations including 6 FGDs with programme target audiences/beneficiaries and programme implementors
- Online Survey: Responses from 10 organisations (8 Nigeria; 1 Ghana and 1 Senegal) to enable more participant organisations to contribute
- Interviews and FGDs with AWDF leadership and safeguarding staff and the Kasa! programme team
- Validation workshop with over 50 Grantee partners and AWDF team members
- Project documentation review: The evaluation included a light-touch review of programme documentation shared by AWDF, such as grantee summaries, internal multi-country synthesized reports, and contextual materials outlining the strategic intent of the Kasa! Initiative. In Nigeria, while not required for the evaluation, some organisations voluntarily shared additional project documents to support contextual understanding of their activities and outcomes. These materials were used to complement, rather than drive, the findings.



## Limitations of the Evaluation

The evaluation was implemented across three countries, varied organisational types, and diverse programmatic contexts. Some largely process-related limitations were encountered; however, each was mitigated through adaptive planning, triangulation, and expanded qualitative engagement. Importantly, none of these limitations substantively affected the validity or robustness of the findings. They are stated here simply to contextualise the practical boundaries within which the evaluation was conducted.

### **Budget constraints shaping the scope of the evaluation**

The budget available for the evaluation required careful prioritisation of methods and travel. This meant that some activities (e.g., additional site visits, in-person national validation workshops) could not be included at the desired scale. The evaluation therefore focused on generating strong insight per interaction, ensuring depth, nuance, and credibility within available resources.

### **Limited desk review**

As the evaluation did not rely heavily on desk review, AWDF shared selected cross-country documents that supported initial scoping. Also, the team reviewed some documentation to provide more context to discussions in Nigeria. Therefore, the evaluation centred primarily on primary qualitative data, KIIs, FGDs, site visits, and validation workshop discussions. Rather than depending on historical documentation, the evaluation captured how shifts are unfolding in real time and how partners interpret and experience change.

### **Low response rates to the online survey in Ghana and Senegal**

The online survey was sent to all other organisations who we could not include in the KIIs or site visit to give an opportunity for all GPs to get involved in the evaluation. Total response rate was 58% (10 out of 17). Despite extending the survey period and issuing repeated reminders via email and phone where possible, only one organisation from Ghana and one from Senegal ultimately completed the survey. Because of this, in-country survey analysis was not possible for these contexts. To address this, we drew more strongly on KII and site visit data, and presented survey-derived insights primarily at the cross-country level. This ensured that the evaluation retained a balanced and evidence-driven comparative analysis.

### **Site visits: one fewer visit in Ghana and Nigeria than planned**

The evaluation aimed to conduct two site visits per country; however, logistical setbacks enabled only one site visit per country. Ultimately, three site visits were conducted (one per country), providing rich qualitative insights. These visits were complemented by extensive KIIs and FGDs, ensuring a comprehensive grounding in lived experience.

Through mitigation strategies, such as extended engagement periods, flexible scheduling, layered data sources, in-depth interviews, and triangulation, the evaluation maintained strong rigor and representativeness. The limitations shaped the logistics of data gathering but did not diminish the credibility or clarity of the patterns, lessons, or implications identified and consequently, these limitations have not impacted the overall validity of this evaluation.

## Data Collection Processes, Including Ethical Considerations

The evaluation was guided by feminist evaluation principles, ensuring:

Data collection for this evaluation was grounded in feminist evaluation principles that prioritise **care, dignity, and agency**. All research activities were conducted with explicit attention to **data protection**, ensuring that personal information, case details, and organisational documentation were securely stored and handled in line with data governance standards. **Research ethics** guided the design and facilitation of interviews and focus group discussions, including the use of informed consent and voluntary participation frameworks.

The evaluation team placed particular emphasis on participant safety and emotional wellbeing. **Trauma-informed interviewing techniques were used** to ensure that individuals could

share experiences at their own pace, with the option to pause, decline questions, or withdraw from discussions at any time. **Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout**, with quotes and perspectives shared in this report attributed only in general, non-identifying terms (e.g., “programme implementer,” “survivor advocate”).

**All processes were aligned with AWDF’s safeguarding policies and procedures.** This included safeguarding risk review at the planning stage, provision of referral pathways where distress was disclosed, and avoiding any research practices that could place participants—particularly survivors and marginalised groups—at reputational, social, emotional, or physical risk. The evaluation, therefore, prioritised harm minimisation, respect, and trust-building in all interactions.

## Data Analysis

The data analysis process combined thematic synthesis of qualitative insights with limited descriptive interpretation of programme records and grantee demographic data. Interview and focus group transcripts were coded to identify recurring patterns, differences across contexts, and emergent themes linked to the programme’s core focus areas. Survey responses and organisational profiles were triangulated with site

visit observations to validate findings and surface cross-country dynamics. This mixed-methods approach enabled the evaluation to draw both depth (from lived experiences and practitioner perspectives) and breadth (from comparative analysis across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal), ensuring that the findings presented reflect both individual realities and system-level trends.



## Findings - Presentation of Analysed Data

### Regional Context for Sexual Violence and Feminist Organising

Across West Africa, sexual violence remains embedded in gendered power structures, economic precarity, and silence enforced at family and community levels. Although Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal differ politically, socially, and linguistically, partners across all three countries described a **shared landscape of stigma, inconsistent protection, and social norms that prioritise family honour over survivor safety**. As one AWDF programme staff member put it, *“The silence takes different shapes, but the weight of it is the same.”*

Legal and policy frameworks exist in all three countries, and public discourse on sexual violence has expanded significantly over the last decade. Youth-led organising, digital activism, feminist advocacy, and community dialogue circles have enabled more people to name and report harm. However, implementation remains uneven and deeply shaped by gatekeepers—police, chiefs, imams, teachers, elected officials and family elders. A facilitator in Nigeria captured this tension: *“The law is there, but protection still depends on who you meet first.”* Partners consistently emphasised four regional dynamics shaping the work:

#### **Rising visibility but insufficient institutional protection**

Disclosure rates are increasing, yet systems remain slow, unpredictable, or intimidating. As

one survivor advocate in Ghana noted during the workshop, *“Girls now speak, but the institutions are not ready to receive them.”*

#### **Economic and social vulnerability drive exploitation**

Across all countries, economic dependency was repeatedly identified as a core driver of vulnerability. A young woman in Ghana explained, *“If you don’t have money, you are not safe.”*

#### **Cultural and religious authority can enable or suppress change**

Senegalese partners stressed the importance of religious leaders: *“When the marabout says it is violence, people listen.”*

By contrast, Nigerian and Ghanaian partners highlighted youth-led and movement-led strategies as primary drivers of narrative change.

#### **Backlash is rising alongside feminist visibility**

Participants from all countries described online harassment, political pushback, and mischaracterisation of feminist work. A Senegalese participant summarised: *“When we speak more, resistance also grows.”*

#### **Country Context: Nigeria**



## **Nigeria has one of the region's strongest legal frameworks (VAPP Act, Child Rights Act), but enforcement varies significantly by state.**

Survivors' experiences often hinge on police attitudes, family negotiations, or the position of religious and traditional leaders. A programme lead explained, *"The frameworks exist, but the system still runs on personal networks."*

Economic insecurity, displacement, and conflict heighten vulnerability, especially in IDP contexts. As one CSO working in camps shared, *"Protection systems are broken; the risk is everywhere."*

Youth-led movements and digital advocacy (#ArewaMeToo; #JusticeForUwa) have shaped public discourse, creating momentum but also backlash. A young activist put it plainly: *"We are speaking louder, so the resistance is louder."*

Participants during the validation workshop stressed the need for formalised referral networks, greater protection for activists, and more sustained accompaniment funding—not one-off awareness efforts.

## **Ghana**

### **Legal Frameworks with Localised Realities and Persistent Social Norms**

Ghana's Domestic Violence Act and DOWVSU structures provide a strong legal basis, yet implementation is uneven and heavily influenced by local power structures. As one GP noted, *"The law exists, but if the chief does not support you, it ends there."* Young women described shifting self-perception through Kasa-supported initiatives: *"Before, I thought I couldn't say no. Now I know my body is mine."*

Economic precarity emerged as a consistent vulnerability. During the site visit FGDs, facilitators explained: *"Behaviour change came when girls had something else to depend on."*

The evolving anti-LGBTQ+ climate has created safety risks for women's rights organisations. One GP shared: *"They labelled us as lesbians and locked our office."*

Participants during the workshop highlighted the need for long-term engagement with chiefs and queen mothers, economic empowerment as prevention, and continued safety measures for feminist groups.

## **Senegal**

### **A Landmark Legal Reform Created Momentum for Change, but Application Remains Uneven**

Senegal's 2020 law elevating rape to a serious criminal offence created momentum and legitimacy for feminist organising. As a legal advocate stated, *"The law was a real game-changer."* However, many participants emphasised the gap between reform and practice: *"The law changed. The system has not yet caught up."*

One of the most significant shifts described was growing openness to discuss sexual violence, a profound cultural change. Religious and traditional leaders have become influential allies; as a network representative said, *"When the marabout speaks, the taboo breaks."* Yet social pressure to protect family honour continues to limit reporting, especially in rural areas.

Senegalese partners during the workshop called for investment in mediator systems in health facilities, expanded accompaniment, and reinforcing the gains of Law 2020-05 through sustained community engagement.

### **Francophone and Anglophone Differences**

- **Francophone (Senegal):** Centralised frameworks, strong influence of religious authority, collective advocacy, national dialogue platforms.
- **Anglophone (Ghana, Nigeria):** Movement-led activism, digital mobilisation, youth leadership, more confrontational public discourse, higher backlash.

As AWDF staff summarised: *"In Senegal, legitimacy comes from cultural authority. In Ghana and Nigeria, it comes from collective mobilisation."*

Yet across all contexts, the strongest cross-country convergence was the practice of **accompaniment**, described by multiple partners as essential: *"Awareness opens the door. Accompaniment lets the survivor walk through it."*

## Prevention, Advocacy and Narrative Change

Across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal, prevention work unfolded in a context where legal and policy gains outpaced actual protection, making narrative change and community dialogue essential. Senegal's Law 2020-05, Nigeria's VAPP domestication, and Ghana's existing statutory frameworks created visible openings, but partners stressed that enforcement remains uneven. As one Senegalese advocate put it, *"The law changed; implementation is still catching up."* A Nigerian grantee similarly noted, *"The law exists, but without pressure and accompaniment it remains paper."*

### Dialogue-led, culturally grounded approaches were most trusted and impactful

Partners across the three countries moved beyond one-off sensitisation to repeated, relationship-based prevention work:

- Nigeria: youth-led safe-space clubs and faith-based framing shaped conversations in schools and communities. A northern partner shared, *"When an imam says it, people listen differently."*
- Ghana: peer-led groups, intergenerational discussions with chiefs and queen mothers, and local-language radio opened previously closed conversations. A facilitator noted, *"We realised our strongest tool is voice."*
- Senegal: marabouts and local leaders naming rape as a crime publicly shifted what could be discussed: *"When the marabout calls it violence, people listen differently."*

Validation workshop discussions confirmed that these repeated, community-rooted dialogues were the approaches that participants felt worked best and generated the most trust and behaviour change.

### Attitude shifts are emerging, but fragile and uneven

Grantees and participants described noticeable shifts in how communities interpret sexual violence.

- Nigeria: teachers saw boys *"respecting girls' space"* after school dialogues.
- Ghana: girls said, *"Now I know my body is mine,"* and radio callers increasingly questioned victim-blaming.
- Senegal: partners observed more willingness to name rape after 2020-05.

However, backlash persisted, especially in conservative or conflict-affected communities. Youth mentors in Ghana and Nigeria noted that *"when girls speak, the pushback often comes first."*

At the validation workshop, participants stressed that community change is still *"early and easily reversible,"* particularly where police or health systems respond poorly, causing families to revert to informal settlement.

### Media and digital activism expanded reach but exposed new risks and capacity gaps

Local-language radio, call-in shows, and community theatre were widely mentioned as powerful tools: one Ghanaian programme recorded more than 600 listener messages during a campaign cycle.

Digital platforms—especially in Nigeria—amplified feminist activism and youth advocacy. Workshop participants highlighted that digital visibility helped *"normalise"* public conversation but also triggered harassment targeting young women and feminist organisers.

Across all three countries, partners raised concerns about gaps in rural reach, limited transport budgets, and the strain of responding to rising community interest: *"The need is everywhere; we cannot be everywhere,"* a Senegal grantee noted during a KII and reiterated at the validation workshop.

Prevention successes increased disclosure—raising emotional and operational workload

Where prevention and dialogue deepened, so did survivor disclosures:

- Ghana facilitators described girls bringing peers to seek help.
- Nigerian partners saw more cases when faith leaders preached against sexual violence.
- Senegal organisations reported increased naming of rape after the legal reform.

This generated significant emotional and logistical demands: accompaniment to health facilities, family mediation, transport, documentation, and follow-up. As one Senegalese partner said, *"The demand is higher than the resources."*

Validation workshop participants emphasised that this increased workload is a predictable outcome of effective prevention, and that organisations

are “*carrying more than grants were sized for*”—including emotional labour not reflected in budgets.

### **Cross-country points consistently reinforced at the workshop**

Across all groups (Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal), participants highlighted that:

- Prevention works only when led by trusted voices (youth, religious leaders, peers).
- Repeated dialogue, not events, creates shifts.
- Backlash is real and increasing, especially online and in conservative areas.
- System failures undermine narrative gains, pushing families back to private resolution.
- Urban–rural disparities in access to prevention remain wide.
- Prevention efforts have directly increased cases, making accompaniment essential to sustain credibility.

### **Survivor-Centred Support Systems**

**Feminist organisations now function as the region’s most trusted backbone of survivor care, linking health, justice, psychosocial support and economic safety where state systems are thin or uneven.**

Across all three countries, Kasa! partners mapped and strengthened multi-sector pathways that survivors can actually use. In **Nigeria**, one-stop and specialist centres (e.g., Mirabel Centre/PFJ, WRAHP’s Ireti Centre, Project Alert’s shelter and hotline) anchor medical, legal and counselling services, “*Survivors trust us more than the system because we listen first,*” a partner noted. In **Ghana**, CSOs broker working ties with DOWSU, Social Welfare and district health teams, while school-based detection and economic safety via VSLAs close the gap between disclosure and protection, “*We make sure survivors are not sent from office to office,*” a programme officer explained. In **Senegal**, legal boutiques (AJS) and the Casamance (Ziguinchor) coordination model link shelters (Kullimaaroo), psychosocial care and legal aid so families now go first for medical certificates before police reporting—an institutional habit-shift that did not exist before.

**Referral systems improved and, in some locales, are exemplary, but coverage and consistency still depend on relationships, geography, and**

**budgets.**

In **urban Nigeria**, formal protocols and MoUs can deliver comprehensive support within 48 hours. Elsewhere, referrals hinge on trusted contacts: “*Sometimes a nurse calls us because she knows our number, there is no formal protocol,*” a respondent said. **Digital tools** (WhatsApp groups, toll-free lines) help track cases across actors and were crucial during insecurity/lockdowns. In **Ghana**, district task-forces convened by PAORP reduced siloed working and cut delays; yet costs for medical reports and transport still stall cases, “*The system still punishes the poor,*” a GP officer reflected. **Senegal’s** Ziguinchor network demonstrates how tight counter-referral loops accelerate evidence collection and reduce attrition, but partners stressed unevenness beyond better-served hubs.

**Care is becoming more holistic: accompaniment, trauma support, and economic safety are moving from ‘nice-to-have’ to ‘standard of care’.**

Kasa! partners converged on **accompaniment**, walking with survivors through clinics, police, courts, family negotiations, and aftercare, because disclosure without protection invites harm. Ghana’s VSLAs provided discreet cash buffers so women could act; Nigeria’s youth groups added **peer mentors** for adolescents; Senegal’s shelters combined safe housing with **reintegration** and schooling. As one Ghana facilitator put it, “*Healing doesn’t start in court- it starts when a woman realises she’s not alone.*” Young survivors in Nigeria echoed the value of a steady adult: “*Speaking out is not enough if she has to stand alone,*” a programme lead said.

**Evidence of effectiveness is mounting, greater service uptake, better coordination, and early signs of accountability, but documentation and follow-through still lag in places.**

In **Nigeria**, partners estimate ~6,500 survivors accessed psychosocial, medical or legal support via Kasa-supported facilities (2022–2025); survey data show over 70% of respondents saw significant improvement in service access and the remainder moderate improvement. Concrete systems shifts include:

- Abia State – VSI supported a Sexual Violence & Response Unit in the Ministry of Justice (now moving toward statutory status).
- Imo State – AfA service guidelines reduced provider bias and improved coordination.
- Rivers State – GWIHR won precedent-setting compensation with NHRC/NAPTIP.
- Ogun State – TMSI brokered hotel-police alliances to protect women at work.

In **Ghana**, structured coordination (PAORP) and formal partnerships (SWIDA with DOWVSU/CHRAJ/Social Welfare) improved continuity; Tiyyumba's school advocates advanced early identification; Inspire Her shifted chief-led mediation toward protection and prosecution. **Senegal** reports families proactively securing **medical evidence** first, signalling norm movement inside institutions. Yet across contexts, partners acknowledge case tracking gaps once crises pass.

**The system's biggest unpriced cost is human: frontline emotional labour and staff burnout threaten quality and continuity.**

Providers across the three countries described carrying survivors' pain without commensurate support, *"We carry the pain of others without places to drop our own,"* one Nigerian counsellor shared. Senegal teams flagged secondary trauma and fatigue; Ghana partners highlighted thin availability of professional counsellors, with NGO staff filling clinical gaps; Nigeria shelters face 24/7 caseloads with limited debriefing. Without structured wellness, supervision, and fair compensation, gains risk eroding.

**Best practices are clear and portable—one-stop models, peer networks, chief/faith engagement, and case-conference culture travel well across languages and legal traditions.**

Replicable practices include one-stop centres (PFJ/WRAHP), peer support for adolescents (SOAR/Teenage Network), traditional/faith leader protocols (Inspire Her, Senegal coalitions), district task-forces and case conferences (PAORP, Ziguinchor platform), economic safety as protection (Sung VSLAs), and secure, anonymised case registers (multiple). *"We have built the emergency room of women's safety. Now we need the hospital,"* a Nigerian partner concluded—calling for institutionalisation.

**Gaps to Close (Cross-Country)**

- **Affordability:** medical reports, transport, safe housing, interpreters (incl. disability access)
- **Coverage:** rural/remote geographies beyond urban hubs
- **Consistency:** protocol use beyond "who you know"
- **Data:** confidential documentation and follow-up to reduce attrition
- **Wellness:** systematic prevention of burnout/secondary trauma

**Feminist Organising and Movement Building**

Across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal, Kasa! strengthened feminist organising by resourcing women's rights groups to operate with autonomy, shared political purpose, and deep relational trust. Although movement-building was not a formal programme pillar, Kasa!'s flexible, values-aligned funding model created the conditions for collective leadership to expand organically.

**Trust-based funding enabled authentic feminist organising**

Partners across all three countries emphasised that AWDF's approach allowed them to work in ways that aligned with their political identity and community realities, rather than donor-driven agendas.

- *"This is the first fund where we did not have to dilute who we are,"* one Ghanaian partner noted during the workshop.
- In Nigeria, groups described being able to build alliances with youth-led collectives and queer-inclusive feminist activists "without fear of donor sanction."
- Senegalese organisations highlighted that flexibility allowed them to "respond in real time when survivors needed us, not when reports were due."

This autonomy strengthened solidarity and reduced competitive fragmentation, long recognised as a barrier in the women's rights sector.

**Inclusive feminist principles shaped organising, despite hostile environments**

Across countries, partners upheld the principle that safety, dignity, and access to services must apply to all women and girls, regardless of sexuality, livelihood, or social status.

This frequently demanded courage:

- In Ghana, grantees described increased surveillance and reputational attacks linked to the anti-LGBTQ+ political climate; as one organisation shared, *"They locked our office because they assumed we were lesbians."*
- In Nigeria and Senegal, criminalisation continues to expose LBT survivors and sex workers to heightened violence and institutional neglect.
- Workshop participants across countries affirmed that "quiet protection strategies" are now essential

to sustaining inclusion without exposing staff or survivors to risk.

Despite this, organisations consistently defended the right to protection for structurally marginalised women, an essential feminist achievement of the Initiative.

### **Movement ecosystems expanded through collaboration, mentorship, and shared political analysis**

Kasa! strengthened national feminist ecosystems in multiple ways:

- **Ghana:** Partners deepened engagement with NETRIGHT, the Domestic Violence Coalition, the Women’s Manifesto Coalition, and local movements confronting harmful norms.
- **Nigeria:** Established organisations mentored emerging youth-led groups, helping to strengthen leadership pipelines and digital feminist activism. One participant noted, *“We are not only building programmes, we are building successors.”*
- **Senegal:** Networks stitched together community-level advocacy and national legal reform spaces, particularly in Ziguinchor’s peacebuilding and justice coalitions.

Workshop discussions across all three countries emphasised that Kasa! reduced the “fragmentation mindset” created by earlier funding cycles: *“This programme made it possible to collaborate without competing.”*

### **Care as political strategy: feminist wellness and healing practices gained visibility**

One of the clearest expressions of feminist organising came from Ghana, where partners convened a healing and wellness retreat for frontline workers coping with secondary trauma.

This was widely acknowledged, during KIs, FGDs, and the workshop, as a powerful example of feminist movement-building rooted in care, rest, and collective renewal.

Participants echoed similar needs in Nigeria and Senegal, where burnout remains acute.

### **Cross-country organising remains a major opportunity**

While national collaboration strengthened, partners across all contexts repeatedly expressed a desire for structured regional learning and collective advocacy spaces. As one Senegalese participant said at the workshop: *“We are fighting the same fight in*

*different languages. We need to sit together.”*

This includes needs for:

- thematic feminist learning clusters
- shared strategies on backlash management
- cross-country accompaniment exchanges
- digital safety and legal literacy
- movement-oriented data for advocacy

Kasa! has therefore laid a strong foundation, but formal, resourced mechanisms are necessary to scale the movement-building gains achieved.

Across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal, Kasa! strengthened feminist organising by resourcing women’s rights groups to operate with autonomy, shared political purpose, and deep relational trust. Although movement-building was not a formal programme pillar, Kasa!’s flexible, values-aligned funding model created the conditions for collective leadership to expand organically.

### **Trust-based funding enabled authentic feminist organising**

Partners across all three countries emphasised that AWDF’s approach allowed them to work in ways that aligned with their political identity and community realities, rather than donor-driven agendas.

- *“This is the first fund where we did not have to dilute who we are,”* one Ghanaian partner noted during the workshop.
- In Nigeria, groups described being able to build alliances with youth-led collectives and queer-inclusive feminist activists “without fear of donor sanction.”
- Senegalese organisations highlighted that flexibility allowed them to “respond in real time when survivors needed us, not when reports were due.”

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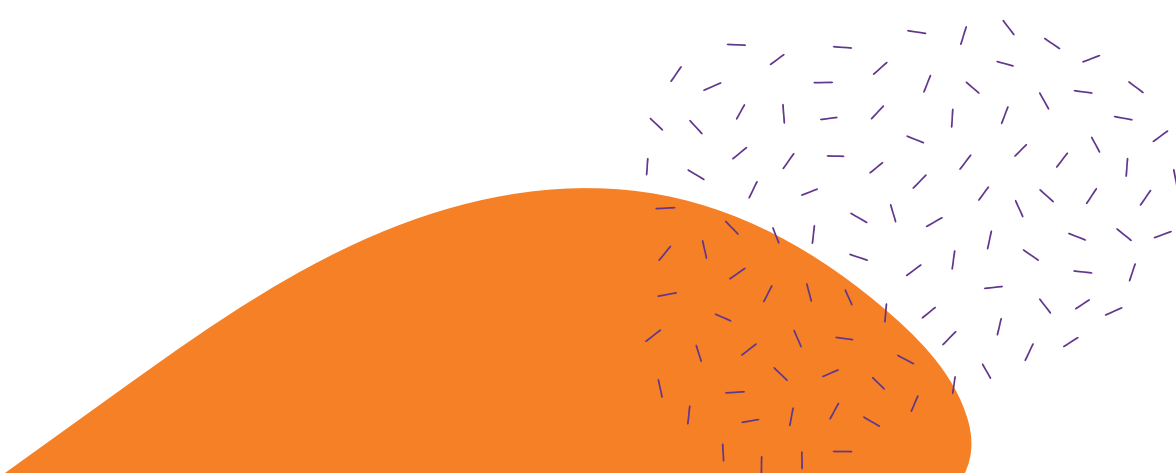
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## Collaboration and Strategic Partnerships

Across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal, Kasal strengthened collaboration within the feminist ecosystem, particularly among community-based organisations, legal actors, health services, and traditional/religious authorities. The most effective partnerships emerged where organisations already had relationships they could deepen, rather than creating new structures from scratch. As one Ghanaian partner noted, “We build on trust that existed before the project, that is why it works.”

### 1. Collaboration Improved Referral Coordination and Collective Response

Partners described tangible improvements in how protection, health, and justice actors coordinated survivor support.

- **Nigeria:** Organisations formalised MoUs with Police Gender Desks and Ministries of Justice, enabling faster referral and follow-up. The Imo State Service Guidelines and Lagos-based hotline collaboration were widely cited during the validation workshop as “clear proof that joint action works.”

- **Ghana:** District taskforces (e.g., PAORP) brought DOWVSU, Social Welfare, schools, and CSOs into shared problem-solving. Workshop participants emphasised that “having everyone in one room reduces the temptation to settle cases quietly.”

- **Senegal:** Ziguinchor’s coordination platform mirrors a functional counter-referral system where health facilities, shelters (Kullimaaroo), and legal boutiques (AJS) now actively share case information, a “habit shift” credited to joint capacity building.

These partnerships made the referral chain more coherent and accessible, even in low-resource environments.

### 2. Mentorship and Horizontal Learning Strengthened Capacity

The Initiative encouraged informal mentorship between established and emerging organisations, especially visible in Nigeria, where older feminist organisations guided youth-led groups on case management, documentation, and activism safety.

In the validation workshop, Nigerian participants stressed that mentorship helped “newer groups avoid the mistakes we made years ago,” while Ghanaian partners described collaborative planning and shared radio programming as “strength through togetherness.”

### 3. Collaboration With State Actors Improved System Responsiveness, But Remains Uneven

Engagement with police, justice, and health institutions generated incremental systems change, yet effectiveness varied by geography, turnover, and personalities.

- In Senegal, medical staff adopting more survivor-sensitive triage practices was cited as a direct result of training delivered through coalitions.

- In Ghana, inconsistent cooperation from some local officials meant CSOs still relied on personal networks, not guaranteed institutional support.

- Nigerian partners noted that collaboration “works best when individual officers care, not because the institution is accountable.”

This reaffirms that systems progress remains **fragile and person-dependent** without structural commitments.

### 4. Limited Engagement With Private Sector and Local Businesses

Across all three countries, collaboration with the private sector was minimal, except for isolated examples such as hospitality-sector engagement in Nigeria. Validation workshop feedback reaffirmed this gap: “We have the skills to work with communities, not with companies, we need guidance.”

There is clear demand but limited existing architecture for business partnerships (e.g., safe workplace codes, economic reintegration opportunities).

### 5. Cross-Country Collaboration Remains a Major Missed Opportunity

Partners across all breakout groups emphasised that they felt part of the same movement but lacked structured opportunities to learn across borders. As one Senegalese participant put it, “We face the same issues, why should we struggle alone?”

There was strong appetite for: Peer learning residencies; Joint advocacy campaigns; Shared digital safety resources; and A regional feminist referral/practice hub. These reflections confirm that Phase 1 generated strong national collaboration, but regional coherence is yet to be unlocked.

Workshop participants reinforced four priorities

that will inform the final report:

**1. Formalise coordination platforms** so partnerships are not personality-dependent.

**2. Resource collaboration** — meetings, travel, data-sharing, case-conferences — rather than expecting it to occur unfunded.

**3. Strengthen collaborative documentation**, including shared tools for case tracking, safeguarding, and referral quality assurance.

**4. Build cross-country learning structures** as a deliberate programmatic component rather than an aspirational add-on.

Kasa! catalysed stronger collaboration within national feminist ecosystems and improved multi-sector coordination for survivor support. However, collaboration remains uneven, under-resourced, and overly dependent on personal relationships. Future sustainability and scale require embedding collaboration into structures, budgets, and cross-country learning systems, transforming informal cooperation into durable movement infrastructure.

## Grant-making

Across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal, partners consistently described Kasa!'s grantmaking as *distinctively feminist*, flexible, trust-based, and grounded in organisations lived realities rather than donor-driven prescriptions. This enabled partners to design contextually relevant interventions, adjust activities as new risks emerged, and prioritise relationships, safety, and care.

### **Flexibility Enabled Context-Responsive, Community-Rooted Work**

Grantees repeatedly emphasised that Kasa! allowed them to work in ways other donors do not. A Ghana partner noted: *"This is the first grant where our knowledge of our community was the starting point, not an afterthought."* Nigerian organisations explained that flexibility allowed them to pivot strategies as political conditions shifted: **"The context changed, and AWDF moved with us, not against us."** Senegalese partners used the grant to leverage momentum after the 2020 rape law, expanding legal awareness and strengthening referral pathways. Because the grant did not force rigid logframes, partners could invest in community dialogues, accompaniment, collaboration with chiefs and religious leaders, youth clubs, and survivor circles, activities that are often undervalued but essential for norm change.

### **Short Funding Cycles Clash With the Long-Term Nature of Norm Change and Survivor Support**

Across all countries, organisations stressed that one–two year grants were not long enough to sustain the work. Trust-building, leadership development, and survivor accompaniment all require continuity. A youth-led Nigerian group said: *"We built trust, but trust takes years to maintain, the funding ended while the work was just beginning."* Ghanaian partners highlighted that accompaniment costs (transport, court fees, emergency support) were quickly exhausted because survivor needs were high. Senegalese organisations emphasised that community-level progress could reverse without stable support: *"Momentum exists, but it cannot hold on short-term funding."*

Validation workshop participants across all three breakout groups reinforced this point — calling multi-year, flexible core funding the single most important factor for sustainability and scale.

### **Accompaniment Was Strong, but Partners Requested More Structured Organisational Support**

Partners valued AWDF's relational and respectful accompaniment. As a Senegalese grantee noted: *"AWDF listens to the realities, not only the reports."* However, many organisations, especially smaller or youth-led groups, expressed the need for more structured support in: safeguarding systems; MEL and survivor-safe documentation; human resource and finance systems; digital safety and risk management; and emotional wellbeing and burnout prevention. Workshop contributions echoed this strongly: groups asked for cohort learning, peer mentorship, and regional technical assistance hubs rather than isolated check-ins. As one Nigerian partner put it, *"We don't need policing. We need solidarity, strategy, and skill-building, and AWDF can convene that."*

### **Kasa!'s Model Strengthened Feminist Ecosystems, but Institutionalisation Requires Predictable, Multi-Year Resourcing**

The grant model allowed organisations to deepen alliances, expand movement spaces, and engage gatekeepers more confidently. But partners warned that achievements - from school clubs to coordination platforms, survivor networks to by-law development - risk fading without continued support. A Ghanaian implementer summarised: *"The work continues every day, whether or not the project period has ended."*

Kasa!'s grantmaking model enabled authentic,

context-driven feminist practice across three diverse countries. The approach was widely seen as a catalyst for trust, innovation, and community legitimacy. To ensure sustainability, replicability and scale, grantees highlighted three priorities:

**Shift toward multi-year, core + programme funding** to match the long-term nature of norm change and survivor care.

**Strengthen structured accompaniment** (MEL, safeguarding, financial management, digital safety, wellness).

**Resource cross-country and cohort-based learning** to consolidate feminist movement-building and shared practice.

## Programme Design, Adaptation, and Learning

### Programme Design Rooted in Feminist Accompaniment and Community Knowledge

Across all three countries, partners described Kasa! as a programme built around lived realities, relational trust, and survivor agency, rather than a top-down technical blueprint. As AWDF staff put it: *“Our role was not to tell partners what to do, but to support what they already know works.”* This approach enabled locally grounded design:

- **Ghana:** SWIDA-GH, Inspire Her Africa, and Tiyumba began with listening circles to understand how silence and stigma operate across generations.
- **Senegal:** Organisations worked with religious and customary leaders to frame feminist principles in culturally resonant terms.
- **Nigeria:** Survivor autonomy was embedded from first contact through case management: *“Healing starts when she realises she is not alone.”*

Validation workshop participants affirmed that this design made Kasa! “feel like our programme, not an external agenda,” strengthening ownership and legitimacy.

### Adaptation Was Continuous and Integral to Feminist Practice

Partners across all contexts adapted strategies in response to political shifts, feedback from communities, and the needs of survivors, rather than following rigid plans. Key forms of adaptation included:

- **Language and framing:** In Ghana, rising anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment required careful reframing. *“We could not use the word ‘rights’ in some spaces—we used protection and dignity instead.”*

- **Leveraging legal and political openings:** In Senegal, the new rape law (2020-05) allowed partners to re-anchor dialogue in legal legitimacy: *“The law allowed us to say what we were already saying, but now with authority.”*

- **Operational flexibility:** In Nigeria, insecurity prompted digital counselling, WhatsApp-based case coordination, and faith-based referral networks. Youth-led organisations shifted school models after learning that: *“Young people listen to each other before listening to us.”*

Across countries, adaptation reflected feminist values, shifting methods while holding firm to dignity, consent, and agency. Validation workshop groups described adaptation as “the strength of Kasa!” and emphasised the need for Phase 2 to protect this flexibility.

### Learning Was Strong but Mostly Informal, Structured Learning Systems Remain a Major Opportunity

Learning primarily occurred through **peer exchange, WhatsApp groups, and AWDF convenings**, creating what Ghanaian partners called “a sisterhood of practice.”

- In Nigeria, established organisations mentored emerging youth-led groups: *“Kasa! taught us that we don’t compete, we build each other.”*
- In Senegal, partners valued exchange visits and asked for more thematic clusters (e.g., accompaniment, engaging religious actors).

However, learning was rarely documented systematically due to heavy service delivery workloads. Several organisations said they “knew what they were learning” but lacked tools or time to turn insights into shared knowledge or institutional memory. Validation workshop participants highlighted this gap clearly, calling for:

- structured cross-country learning;
- shared tools for accompaniment, MEL, and safeguarding;
- and dedicated spaces for reflection and practice exchange.

Kasa!’s design enabled culturally grounded,

survivor-centred programming. Adaptation was continual and essential, allowing partners to navigate political shifts and community realities while upholding feminist principles. Learning flourished relationally, but partners now seek formal systems to consolidate, document, and scale collective knowledge.

## Inclusion, Ethics, and Safeguarding

Safeguarding and ethical practice were central across all three countries, where survivors continue to face stigma, disbelief, and pressure to stay silent. Grantees strengthened confidentiality, safe documentation, and trauma-informed referral pathways. As a Nigerian partner noted, *“Referral alone is not enough, she cannot walk into these systems by herself.”*

### Accompaniment as Core Feminist Practice

Across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal, accompaniment became the defining feature of support: emotional presence, help navigating institutions, and ongoing follow-up.

A Ghanaian facilitator explained, *“Healing is not taking over her decisions, it is helping her find her voice again.”* Validation workshop participants reaffirmed that accompaniment is what differentiates Kasa!: *“Without walking with her, disclosure becomes dangerous.”*

### Strengthening Multi-Sector Pathways

Kasa! improved cross-sector referral coordination:

**Ghana & Nigeria:** CSO–health–police collaboration created clearer, safer referral routes.

**Senegal:** Health-centre mediators reduced discrimination and improved access for marginalised survivors.

These shifts were especially important where trust in state systems remains low. Workshop groups emphasised improved “speed, respect, and follow-up” in some locations, though coverage remains uneven.

### Persistent Safeguarding Risks and Emotional Labour

Organisations supporting sex workers, LBT individuals, and other stigmatised groups described harassment, digital surveillance, and visibility risks.

Frontline workers across all three countries

reported emotional strain and secondary trauma.

A Senegalese counsellor reflected, *“We support survivors every day, but we also have no one supporting us.”* Workshop participants flagged burnout, lack of supervision, and emotional overload as urgent risks to sustainability, noting that wellbeing structures are still underdeveloped.

### Inclusion: Strong Intent, Uneven Practice

Inclusion was strongest where partners centred intersecting vulnerabilities: adolescents, rural women, conflict-affected communities, informal workers. A Nigerian organisation said, *“Safety cannot depend on someone’s respectability.”*

However, inclusion of survivors with disabilities and LGBTQ+ communities remained inconsistent, limited by political climates and security concerns. Ghanaian partners described navigating the current anti-LGBTQ+ environment with “quiet forms of protection.”

Kasa! strengthened survivor-centred, feminist safeguarding in complex environments. Validation workshop discussions reinforced that sustaining these gains requires: stronger institutional resourcing; structured staff wellbeing support; and deliberate inclusion strategies for highly marginalised groups.

## Sustainability

### Sustaining Feminist Care and Collective Agency

Across all three countries, partners defined sustainability not as extending project activities, but as sustaining feminist care, agency, and community infrastructure. As an AWDF staff member put it, *“What we are sustaining is the community of women who refuse silence.”*

Kasa!’s flexible funding model supported this vision by allowing organisations to set priorities, adjust strategies, and respond safely to political and social shifts, particularly in Senegal following Law 2020-05 and in northern Nigeria where insecurity affects access.

### Strengthening Organisations and Movement Networks

Kasa! reinforced the backbone of feminist organising by enabling collaboration, peer support, and shared political analysis.

- **Nigeria:** Mentorship between established groups and youth-led organisations helped newer

actors adopt safeguarding standards and enter advocacy spaces.

- **Ghana:** Community-embedded organising expanded; chiefs, queen mothers, teachers, district officers, and youth groups now play active roles in prevention.
- **Senegal:** Solidarity-based networks (e.g., peer support circles, healing spaces) strengthened resilience in restrictive contexts.

The most durable outcome is not individual activities but relationships, trust systems, and shared feminist language built across partners, survivors, and institutions. Validation workshop groups emphasised that these relationships are now “the real infrastructure” of the Initiative.

### **Community Ownership and Leadership Pathways**

A key marker of sustainability is the emergence of local leaders and groups who carry forward anti-violence norms without project funding:

- Youth advocates in Ghana and Nigeria now run peer networks autonomously.
- Chiefs, queen mothers, imams and marabouts in Ghana and Senegal publicly condemn violence and encourage formal reporting.
- Survivor support circles in Nigeria and Senegal continue meeting and accompanying survivors beyond the grant window.

However, these gains remain person-dependent. Workshop discussions highlighted risks when trained leaders relocate, burn out, or lose legitimacy. Partners called for structured leadership pipelines and ongoing mentorship.

### **Sustainability of Service Ecosystems**

Kasa! made progress in strengthening referral and counter-referral systems:

- **Nigeria:** Most formalised pathways, especially around one-stop centres and MoUs with police and justice ministries.
- **Ghana:** Improved district-level coordination between DOWSU, Social Welfare and WROs, though uneven across districts.
- **Senegal:** Highly coordinated regional models (e.g., Ziguinchor) where health, legal, and psychosocial actors now follow consistent evidence-collection and referral routines.

Yet none of these systems are fully institutionalised. Continuity relies on funding for case workers, transport, medical exams, shelters, and psychosocial staff, areas partners say “collapse first when grants end.”

### **Emotional Sustainability and the Human Cost of Care**

Across contexts, the emotional labour of supporting survivors emerged as the clearest sustainability risk. Frontline staff described burnout, secondary trauma, and the strain of navigating hostile systems. A partner summarised: *“The work will continue; we are the ones who may not last without care.”*

Workshop groups reiterated this, calling for: structured wellness systems; reflective practice spaces; peer supervision; and fairer, more predictable staffing resources.

Kasa! generated meaningful and socially embedded sustainability through strengthened networks, community leadership, and improved referral pathways. But long-term continuity depends on multi-year feminist financing, institutionalisation of survivor services, and protection of the human infrastructure, the women and frontline teams carrying the emotional weight of change.

### **Emerging Issues and Future Preparedness**

The landscape for sexual violence work across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal is becoming more politically sensitive, economically strained, and digitally exposed, requiring stronger preparedness, protection, and adaptive feminist strategy. As AWDF staff noted, *“The struggle is no longer only about recognition of the issue, but about protecting the space to act on it.”*

### **Shrinking Civic Space and Heightened Backlash**

Across all three countries, partners reported that gains in awareness now coexist with intensified backlash, moral panic, and political volatility.

- **Ghana:** Rising anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment has narrowed civic space and increased risks for organisations working on bodily autonomy. Partners shifted language toward “protection” and “wellbeing” to maintain access, while holding feminist principles. *“We had to change how we speak, but not what we believe.”*
- **Nigeria:** Insecurity, moral-policing, and online harassment disproportionately target young feminist organisers. The digital sphere provides

visibility and solidarity, but also exposure: *“You gain visibility and vulnerability at the same time.”*

- **Senegal:** Partners described tension between legal reform and cultural readiness, with families under economic pressure reverting to private settlement. *“The law changed before the culture was ready — we are in the middle of that tension now.”*

Validation workshop groups underscored this trend, noting increased politicisation of gender work and the need for risk-management strategies.

### **Economic Stress as a Driver of Vulnerability**

Economic precarity is deepening exposure to sexual violence, particularly for adolescent girls, informal workers, and conflict-affected women.

- **Ghana & Senegal:** Cost-of-living pressures are increasing transactional relationships, early marriage, and dependence on abusive partners. *“For many girls, safety is a luxury they cannot afford.”*

- **Nigeria:** Women in the informal sector—including market traders, domestic workers, sex workers, and artisanal workers—remain among the least protected by formal systems.

Across contexts, partners emphasised economic empowerment as **protection**, not just livelihood support: *“When a woman has her own means, she has her own voice.”*

In Senegal’s Casamance, reintegration packages combined psychosocial support and income restoration, reflecting that *“healing is not only emotional, it is financial.”*

Workshop breakout groups reinforced that economic stress will continue to drive vulnerability and should be central in future programming.

### **Digital Space as a Frontline**

Digital platforms have become critical sites of mobilisation, narrative change, and survivor solidarity, but also of risk.

Youth-led Nigerian groups highlighted how online organising pushed sexual violence into mainstream discourse, yet exposed activists to harassment, doxing, and cyber-surveillance.

A regional youth feminist put it starkly: *“Online is where the story changes now, but it is also where we bleed.”*

Across countries, few organisations currently have: digital safety protocols; trauma-informed online support or reporting channels; cybersecurity training; and legal protection for digital advocacy work.

Workshop participants stressed the urgency of **digital readiness**, noting that feminist organising will increasingly depend on safe, resilient online spaces.

Emerging issues reflect a shift from *awareness-raising to defending space* for feminist action. Preparedness in the next phase requires:

- political and digital risk management
- deeper economic resilience for women and girls
- protection for frontline activists
- and sustained investment in community-level legitimacy and trust.

## **Discussion of findings: answering the evaluation questions**

The analysis below responds to the evaluation questions outlined in AWDF’s Terms of Reference and operationalised in the Evaluation Matrix. Evidence is drawn from KIIs, FGDs, site visits, the online survey, strategic document review, and, importantly, the regional validation workshop. Together, these sources illuminate how the Kasa! Initiative has influenced attitudes, strengthened survivor support systems, deepened feminist organising, and shaped enabling conditions for sustainability across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal.

### **1. Effectiveness of Campaigns and Initiatives in Shifting Attitudes and Behaviours**

Across all three countries, Kasa! contributed to a measurable softening of the “culture of silence.” Community dialogues, school clubs, radio programming, youth networks, and faith-engaged conversations helped shift sexual violence from being treated as a private matter to a public concern requiring action.

In Ghana and Nigeria, partners reported more parents reporting cases, greater peer-led bystander support, and reduced victim-blaming. As one Ghanaian adolescent said during a site visit, *“Before, I thought if my boyfriend asked, I could not say no. Now I know my body is mine.”*

In Senegal, grantees used the 2020 criminalisation of rape to reframe sexual violence as a crime, not a taboo topic. Leaders who once avoided

these conversations have begun naming violence publicly. *“When the chief says it is a crime, people listen differently,”* one implementer noted. **Validation workshop** participants affirmed that narrative shifts were clearest where work was repeated, dialogic, and locally voiced. They emphasised that backlash, especially online and around LGBTQ+ issues, continues to shape how far communities can openly go.

**Evaluative conclusion:** Kasa! interventions effectively shifted attitudes where messaging was culturally grounded and repeated over time. Gains remain fragile where systems do not respond consistently.

## 2. Improvements in Emergency Response and Adequacy of Survivor Support

Kasa! significantly improved the responsiveness and coordination of emergency and ongoing support. In Nigeria, one-stop centres like Mirabel and Ireti provided medical, legal, and psychosocial care under one roof. In Ghana, CSOs strengthened links with DOVVSU, Social Welfare, and health facilities, often preventing survivors from being bounced between institutions. Senegal’s Casamance network established a model referral chain where families now secure medical certificates before police reporting—an essential procedural shift.

Yet support systems still rely heavily on NGO presence, staff emotional labour, and personal resources. Transport, medical report fees, and confidentiality risks remain major barriers, especially for rural survivors. Validation workshop Grantee organisations across countries stressed rising disclosure rates linked to prevention gains, which increased case-load pressure. They highlighted the urgent need for funding for transport, psychosocial support, and follow-up.

**Evaluative conclusion:** Kasa! strengthened emergency and ongoing support, but continued investment and state institutionalisation are needed for equitable and sustainable coverage.

## 3. Support Systems for Survivors and Their Families

Support under Kasa! moved beyond referrals to feminist accompaniment—walking with survivors through reporting, family negotiations, health procedures, and court processes. A Ghanaian facilitator captured this approach: *“Healing is helping her find her voice again, not taking decisions for her.”*

In Nigeria, shelters and one-stop centres provided combined psychosocial, legal, and medical

support. Ghanaian organisations used emotional support circles and school-based systems to help adolescent survivors. Senegalese groups offered art therapy and reintegration support for survivors of incest, conflict-related violence, and exploitation.

Families also benefitted from counselling and support during reintegration, particularly where stigma remains intense. Validation workshop participants across all three countries reiterated that accompaniment, not awareness, is what actually shifts survivor outcomes. Survivors themselves confirmed that *“speaking up is only possible because someone stands with us.”*

**Evaluative conclusion:** Support systems are holistic and increasingly survivor-led, though long-term counselling, safe shelter, and economic reintegration require ongoing investment.

## 4. Role and Leadership of Women’s Rights Organisations (WROs)

WROs were the backbone of implementation—first responders, advocates, case workers, mediators, and movement-builders. Many organisations expanded credibility and influence within their communities and with state actors through Kasa!. Youth-led feminist groups in Ghana and Nigeria emerged as influential peer educators and activists.

However, leadership is accompanied by risk and strain. Staff described carrying trauma, managing backlash, and working long hours with limited wellbeing support. A Nigerian counsellor observed, *“We carry other people’s pain without anywhere to put our own.”*

Participants urged AWDF to strengthen wellness, supervision, and leadership pipelines—from young advocates to senior feminist leaders—to reduce burnout and dependence on charismatic individuals.

**Evaluative conclusion:** WROs are central drivers of progress; sustained investment in their organisational health is essential.

## 5. Engagement of Key Stakeholders and Gatekeepers

Kasa! partners effectively engaged chiefs, queen mothers, imams, pastors, teachers, district officials, and radio hosts. Gains were strongest where engagement was co-created, respectful, and rooted in shared values rather than strict “rights language.”

Examples include:

- Ghana: chiefs implementing by-laws requiring immediate police reporting.
- Nigeria: imams reframing violence as a violation of dignity and faith; markets adopting anti-harassment codes.
- Senegal: marabouts publicly condemning sexual violence, enabling previously taboo topics to enter communal dialogue.

The approach shifted private settlement to formal reporting in several communities.

**Validation workshop insight:** Participants stressed that gatekeeper engagement must be ongoing and protected from political turnover. They also highlighted the risk of backlash against women advocates.

**Evaluative conclusion:** Gatekeeper engagement is a proven enabler of norm change. It must be maintained through structured, multi-year investment.

## 6. Collaboration Between Agencies, Donors, and the Private Sector

Kasa! strengthened horizontal collaboration through mentorship, joint campaigns, referral networks, and shared problem-solving:

- Nigeria: strong mentorship between established

and youth-led groups.

- Ghana: joint school-based programming and coordinated radio engagements.
- Senegal: multi-actor coordination in Casamance between legal boutiques, health centres, and psychosocial teams.

Collaboration with the private sector was minimal. Coordination mechanisms remain largely informal and person-dependent. Workshop participants requested structured, resourced platforms for cross-country learning, thematic hubs, and documentation of best practices.

**Evaluative conclusion:** Kasa! catalysed meaningful coalition-building, but network governance and mechanisms for scale-up require formalisation.

## Overall Evaluative Conclusion

Kasa! has meaningfully shifted attitudes, improved survivor-centred care, strengthened feminist organising, and expanded coordinated responses to sexual violence across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal. These gains are real and substantive—but remain vulnerable without multi-year investment, stronger institutionalisation, and support for frontline workers' wellbeing. Participants across the validation workshop made this clear: *"The work continues every day. What we need now is the strength and systems to continue it well."*

## Best Practices and Lessons Learned

Across all three countries, accompaniment emerged as the strongest and most consistent best practice. Rather than handing survivors over to institutions, grantees stayed with them—through disclosure, family negotiations, medical reporting, police processes, and healing. Survivors repeatedly described this as what made it possible to seek help at all. As one participant affirmed during the validation workshop, *"If someone is not walking with her, she will go back home."*

Youth-led and peer-based mobilisation also proved highly effective. School clubs, safe-space circles, and youth feminist networks enabled conversations in familiar language and reduced power imbalances. Partners observed that adolescents "listen to each other first," a point reinforced during the workshop where youth-focused organisations stressed that peer advocates often detected cases earlier than adults.

Another strong practice was the strategic use of cultural and religious language. By framing protection through values such as dignity, justice, and family wellbeing—rather than external rights terminology—grantees built legitimacy in conservative contexts. This was especially noted by Senegalese and northern Nigerian partners, who highlighted that local framing "opens doors that rights language closes."

Trust-building before advocacy emerged as a foundational lesson. Organisations that began with listening, presence, and safety-building encountered far less resistance when progressing to community bylaws, policy engagement, or reporting protocols. This sequencing was echoed in the workshop, where participants emphasised that "relationships carry the work."

Finally, long-term reintegration support—emergency funds, livelihood pathways, and continued psychosocial accompaniment—was essential for sustained healing. Organisations that

supported survivors beyond the crisis phase saw stronger recovery and leadership emergence. Workshop participants stressed that this is often the most underfunded aspect of the work and should be treated as integral, not optional.

### **Key Lessons and Implications for Sustainability, Replicability, and Scale-Up**

Across all three countries, partners emphasised that **transformation is relational, not event-based**. One-off activities do not shift deeply embedded norms; progress depends on sustained presence, trust-building, and continuity with survivors and communities. This reinforces the need for **multi-year, flexible funding and long-term accompaniment**.

A second lesson is that **deep impact depends on staff wellbeing and institutional stability**. Frontline workers carry significant emotional labour—supporting disclosures, negotiating safety, and holding community tensions. Without structured wellness support, teams experience burnout and reduced capacity, undermining long-term sustainability.

The evaluation also showed that **intersectional inclusion requires intentional design**, not assumption. Groups such as survivors with disabilities, LBT communities, sex workers, economically marginalised women, and those in conflict-affected areas face layered vulnerabilities. Effective inclusion requires targeted strategies, partnerships, and resourcing.

### **Challenges Affecting Sustainability and Replicability**

Several constraints limit continuity and scale:

- **Short funding cycles** interrupt trust-building and behaviour change, with many organisations

noting that progress begins just as funding ends.

- **Emotional labour and resource strain** remain high, especially where wellness support, supervision, and protected staff time are lacking.

- **Inclusion gaps** persist for LBT groups, survivors with disabilities, and highly marginalised women.

- **Institutional collaboration remains uneven**, particularly where police, health, or justice systems lack consistency, accountability, or political will.

### **Opportunities for Strengthening Future Programming**

Validation workshop discussions reinforce strong opportunities for AWDF to support sustainability and scale:

- **Regional feminist coalition-building**, including cross-country thematic learning hubs (e.g., accompaniment, youth leadership, faith engagement, feminist legal advocacy).

- **Expansion into digital safety and narrative defence**, responding to rising online harassment and moral policing.

- **Strengthening urban advocacy and psychosocial wellness ecosystems**, recognising evolving patterns of vulnerability and burnout.

- **Institutionalising community-led and movement-based practices** that have proven effective across contexts and are highly replicable.

Overall, the key lesson is clear: **Sustaining and scaling feminist impact requires resourcing the relationships, emotional labour, and community legitimacy that make the work effective**, not only the activities themselves.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal demonstrate that the Kasa! Initiative has made meaningful progress in strengthening feminist networks, expanding survivor-centred support systems, and shifting community dialogue on sexual violence. However, the work also shows that these shifts are fragile and require continuity, deeper resourcing, and reinforced care for the organisations and individuals at the centre of this work. The next phase of Kasa! therefore needs to consolidate the gains made, address structural and inclusion gaps, and strengthen the conditions that enable long-term feminist organising. The recommendations below outline how AWDF can strategically deepen and **sustain impact, replicability and scale-up**, building on existing strengths while preparing partners for emerging risks, movement pressures, and evolving contexts.

### Regional Context for Sexual Violence and Feminist Organising

Across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal, the evaluation finds that Kasa! has helped shift sexual violence from a taboo, private issue into a public concern shaped by feminist leadership, community-led dialogue, and survivor-centred accompaniment. Survivors are reporting more, youth and women's rights organisations have expanded visibility and legitimacy, and faith and traditional leaders are increasingly echoing anti-violence messages. These gains were achieved not through one-off campaigns but through relational, trust-based organising that resonated with local values and protected survivors in hostile environments. Yet these shifts remain vulnerable to rising backlash, political volatility, economic pressure, and emotional strain on frontline actors. Inclusion gaps persist, and referral systems are uneven. Kasa! has built a strong feminist infrastructure—but its sustainability will depend on deepened, longer-term resourcing, strengthened movement protection, and regionally connected strategies that help feminist actors endure and adapt in increasingly complex contexts.

### Implications and Recommendations for AWDF (Sustainability, Replicability & Scale-Up)

#### 1. Invest in long-term feminist presence

Multi-year funding is essential to sustain trust in communities where silence and backlash co-exist.

#### 2. Resource frontline emotional labour

Survivors are disclosing more; frontline staff need wellness supports, reflective supervision, and

protection measures.

#### 3. Strengthen decentralised referral ecosystems

Support district-level networks in Ghana, state-level accountability pathways in Nigeria, and regional replication of the Casamance model in Senegal.

#### 4. Support quiet protection strategies

Including digital safety, legal backstopping, and political risk navigation—critical across all contexts.

#### 5. Facilitate cross-country feminist learning

Dialogue between Francophone and Anglophone partners on faith engagement, leader pathways, accompaniment, and school-based detection offers high replicability potential.

#### 6. Integrate economic safety into protection

Across all contexts, economic dependence remains the strongest driver of vulnerability.

### Advocacy and Narrative Change: Implications for AWDF Strategy

Across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal, Kasa! shifted norms most effectively through dialogue-based, relationship-centred advocacy that created trusted, recurring spaces for communities to speak openly about sexual violence. Partners used school clubs, youth forums, intergenerational conversations, faith dialogues, market-based discussions, and local-language radio to move sexual violence from silence into public concern. These approaches worked because they were culturally grounded, repeated over time, and led by community voices rather than external campaigns. Prevention efforts were strongest where dialogue was paired with survivor accompaniment—communities were more willing to acknowledge violence when they trusted that survivors would not be abandoned. At the same time, narrative leaders—especially youth organisers, radio hosts, and feminist advocates—faced growing online harassment and backlash, highlighting the risks tied to increased visibility. Grantees also emphasised the need for better tools to document emerging shifts in attitudes, reporting patterns, and community “permission to act,” noting that meaningful norm change is visible in behaviour, not only in discourse.

## **Implications for Sustainability, Replicability, and Scale-Up**

For AWDF, sustaining and scaling narrative change requires embedding dialogue as a long-term community institution rather than a series of project activities. Funding models should prioritise small, frequent, community-owned touchpoints—school clubs, youth networks, faith spaces, women’s circles, and local-language media—supported over multiple years. Sustainability also depends on resourcing survivor accompaniment as a core component of prevention, including rapid-response funds for medical, legal, and protection needs, as well as structured staff care and reflective supervision. Replication opportunities lie in codifying successful approaches—such as faith-aligned messaging, community by-law adoption, youth-led peer networks, and radio call-ins—and enabling cross-country exchange between Anglophone and Francophone partners. Finally, scale-up will require safeguarding the people who lead narrative change. AWDF can strengthen digital and physical safety systems, provide legal accompaniment for those facing backlash, and support a lightweight feminist monitoring mechanism to track shifts in community behaviour and reporting patterns. In short, sustaining progress means anchoring dialogue, protecting advocates, and resourcing the relational infrastructures that make narrative change durable.

### **Survivor-Centred Support systems**

Across all three countries, Kasa! partners remain the backbone of survivor protection, trusted not only for their services but for the dignity, presence, and emotional steadiness they offer in moments when formal systems fall short. Validation workshop discussions reaffirmed that accompaniment, not referral, is the true infrastructure of safety. Partners emphasised that survivors approach them because “they stay,” providing protection through family negotiations, securing medical certificates, navigating police interactions, and sustaining psychosocial follow-up long after the initial crisis. This continuity of care is particularly vital in rural and politically sensitive settings where trust determines whether a case proceeds or collapses. Workshop participants also underscored that this relational work is resource-intensive and emotionally demanding.

Burnout, secondary trauma, and the hidden costs of accompaniment, transport, case follow-up, documentation fees, shelter needs, remain the largest threats to system stability. At the same time, the evaluation and workshop insights highlighted the success of decentralised referral

ecosystems built on relationships rather than rigid protocols: Ziguinchor’s counter-referral model, Ghana’s school-based early detection structures, and Nigeria’s peer and paralegal networks were all cited as systems that work because they are community-rooted. Participants also stressed the need for secure, feminist data systems that support case tracking and inter-organisational coordination without compromising confidentiality or increasing administrative burden. Overall, survivor-centred systems strengthened under Kasa! are effective, trusted, and responsive—but fragile, heavily person-dependent, and under-resourced.

### **Emerging Implications for Sustainability, Replicability, and Scale-Up**

To sustain survivor-centred systems, AWDF will need to institutionalise what currently relies on personal commitment, emotional labour, and underfunded community solidarity. Sustainability requires multi-year support that explicitly prices accompaniment work—transport, emergency funds, documentation, case coordination, and psychosocial support—as core programme costs rather than incidental expenses. Replicability depends on documenting and adapting the strongest models across contexts, including Ziguinchor’s counter-referral loop, paralegal networks in Nigeria, and school-based early detection in Ghana.

Scale-up will require supporting country-level consortia to co-develop referral protocols, shared contact directories, and joint case discussions, ensuring coordination does not erode autonomy. Crucially, AWDF must invest in staff wellness and reflective supervision to protect the emotional capacity of frontline actors whose wellbeing directly shapes survivor outcomes. Strengthening survivor economic safety - through emergency funds and reintegration support - should be integrated as a core protection strategy, not a parallel intervention. Finally, developing simple, encrypted feminist data tools can enhance learning, advocacy, and system accountability without placing undue administrative load on grantees. Taken together, these measures will allow Kasa! to deepen, replicate, and secure survivor-centred systems so that the care infrastructure partners have built becomes durable, scalable, and collectively held.

### **Stakeholder Engagement & Norms**

Across the three countries, Kasa! has fundamentally broadened who holds the moral authority to speak about sexual violence. Chiefs, queen mothers, imams, pastors, teachers, youth leaders, and

market associations have become visible carriers of anti-violence messages, an outcome partners reaffirmed during the validation workshops. This shift emerged not from one-off sensitisation but from consistent, relational engagement and co-created messaging that aligned with local moral vocabularies. When these relationships deepened, leaders enforced by-laws, integrated dignity and protection language into sermons, referred cases instead of mediating them quietly, and supported school and youth structures that normalised conversations on consent and protection. This is norm change rooted in everyday authority, grounded in repetition, reciprocity, and presence. Workshop participants underscored that communities now “listen differently” when messages come from trusted leaders and that these alliances have been central to transforming private harms into public accountability.

### **Emerging Implications for Sustainability, Replicability, and Scale-Up**

To consolidate these gains, AWDF should treat leader engagement as a long-term strategic pathway, resourcing small, frequent, relationship-building activities rather than isolated campaign moments. This includes developing adaptable tools—MOUs, message guides, pledge templates, by-law frameworks—and supporting partners to navigate risks such as backlash, patronage expectations, or political co-option. Replicability will hinge on facilitating cross-country exchange of proven tactics, particularly Senegal’s interfaith engagement, Ghana’s traditional-authority by-law enforcement, and Nigeria’s contextual language reframing. Sustainable scale-up requires embedding norm-shifting practices into routine community systems—schools, faith settings, local councils, market associations—so change is carried by institutions rather than individuals. Finally, AWDF can strengthen measurement of social norms by supporting partners to track indicators of “permission to act”—leader-led referrals, public denunciations, enforcement of local bylaws—ensuring that progress reflects real community behaviour, not just attitude shifts.

### **Grant-Making**

Across all three countries, partners consistently described Kasa!’s flexible, trust-based grant-making as a defining strength that enabled culturally grounded, survivor-centred, and adaptive programming. The model allowed organisations—especially smaller or community-rooted groups—to respond to emerging realities, adjust strategies without bureaucratic constraints, and anchor their work in lived experience. Validation workshop discussions

reaffirmed that this flexibility was central to legitimacy and community ownership. However, partners also emphasised that short funding cycles undermine the durability of gains: norm change, survivor trust, and referral strengthening require continuity, not one- or two-year windows. They highlighted persistent emotional labour pressures, under-recognised accompaniment costs, and the need for structured peer learning to consolidate collective knowledge. While AWDF’s accompaniment was valued, partners expressed a desire for deeper, more intentional support that blends solidarity with practical institutional strengthening.

### **Emerging Implications for Sustainability, Replicability, and Scale-Up**

To sustain and expand the gains observed, AWDF should reinforce its feminist resourcing model through multi-year, blended funding that combines core support with programmatic grants, ensuring organisational stability and reducing the vulnerability created by short cycles. Investing in the wellbeing and retention of frontline staff is essential—reflective supervision, wellness funds, and burnout-prevention mechanisms must be treated as core programme costs, not add-ons. Replicability will be strengthened by creating structured, thematic learning clusters (e.g., survivor accompaniment, youth organising, faith engagement, feminist MEL) and curated peer-exchange platforms that allow practice to evolve collectively rather than in isolation. Finally, enhancing AWDF’s accompaniment approach with targeted institutional capacity-building—particularly in safeguarding, MEL, financial systems, and digital security—will ensure partners are equipped to manage risk, document impact, and scale interventions safely and effectively.

### **Programme Design, Adaptation and Learning**

Across all three countries, partners affirmed that feminist accompaniment is the signature strength of Kasa!’s programme design — the element that gives the initiative credibility, cultural resonance, and the flexibility to respond to shifting political and social landscapes. Validation workshop insights reinforced that the how of Kasa! — relational trust, organisational autonomy, and space for context-driven decision-making — matters as much as the what. This flexible design enabled organisations to adapt rapidly to rising moral panic in Ghana, legal reform openings in Senegal, insecurity in Nigeria, and evolving survivor needs across contexts. However, the evaluation found that while practice is rich, learning systems remain informal and uneven. Knowledge travels through relationships, not structured platforms, limiting

cross-country problem-solving and collective strategy development. Partners expressed a strong desire for intentional spaces to document insights, compare modalities, and sharpen practice — paired with resourcing for reflective time, burnout-prevention, and organisational strengthening so learning becomes institutional rather than individual.

### **Implications for Sustainability, Replicability, and Scale-Up**

To deepen and sustain programme quality, AWDF should strengthen the learning architecture that underpins feminist accompaniment. This includes resourcing thematic learning clusters (e.g., survivor care, faith engagement, youth mobilisation), structured cross-country exchanges, and practical documentation support to transform lived practice into shared feminist knowledge. Replicability will be enhanced by embedding reflective practice into funding structures — allowing organisations time and resources to process, adapt, and refine approaches without compromising service delivery. Sustainability also hinges on organisational resilience: safeguarding systems, MEL capacities, financial robustness, and staff care must be treated as core pillars of feminist infrastructure. By pairing relational accompaniment with targeted institutional strengthening, AWDF can ensure that adaptive, context-driven practice is not only preserved but scaled across countries.

### **Inclusion, Ethics, and Safeguarding**

Kasa! partners demonstrated a strong commitment to survivor dignity, confidentiality, and trauma-informed practice, often operating under intense political, cultural, and emotional pressure. Yet the evaluation, reinforced by validation workshop discussions, highlighted a major gap: while survivor-facing safeguarding has improved, the wellbeing and security of those doing the work remain critically under-supported. Frontline staff, peer educators, counsellors, and organisers described cumulative emotional strain, secondary trauma, digital harassment, and reputational risk, particularly in contexts shaped by rising conservatism, insecurity, and anti-rights sentiment. Organisations serving marginalised groups faced heightened surveillance and safety concerns. This work is ethically demanding and increasingly dangerous, and the people carrying it require structured protection, not ad-hoc coping.

### **Implications for Sustainability, Replicability, and Scale-Up**

AWDF should adopt a movement-centred

safeguarding approach that protects both survivors and those who accompany them. This includes funding trauma-informed supervision, mental health partnerships, wellness funds, digital and physical safety planning, disability-inclusive practice, and small emergency budgets for high-risk cases. Replicability requires safeguarding systems that can operate in volatile political environments without putting staff at risk. Sustainability depends on protecting emotional capacity: without care for caregivers, survivor-centred systems will weaken even where programme structures are strong. By integrating collective safety, emotional resilience, and ethical practice into core programme design, AWDF can reinforce the human foundation that makes survivor-centred feminist organising possible.

### **Sustainability**

Across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal, the evaluation shows that Kasa! has strengthened the feminist infrastructure for responding to sexual violence by resourcing organisations that are deeply embedded in their communities and trusted by survivors. These organisations anchor referral pathways, mobilise community leaders, accompany survivors through complex systems, and sustain the everyday relational work that makes protection possible. This embeddedness forms the core of sustainability: shifts that are carried by relationships, not by project cycles. However, sustainability remains uneven. Many partners continue to rely on short-term grants that do not match the long arc of survivor healing, norm change, or community trust-building. During the validation workshop, organisations reiterated that accompaniment expands after funding ends — not before — underscoring a structural mismatch between finite project timelines and the ongoing safety needs of survivors. Where organisations had stable staffing and predictable support from AWDF, they were better able to retain trained facilitators, sustain referral networks, and maintain momentum; where funding was intermittent, gains in trust and continuity were more fragile.

Crucially, sustainability is not only institutional — it is relational and movement-based. Youth advocates, survivor champions, engaged chiefs and imams, school-based networks, and coordinated multi-actor platforms are all emerging but still vulnerable. These gains require long-term commitment to consolidate and protect them from backlash, turnover, burnout, and political shifts. Partners across countries emphasised that sustainability is less about the survival of individual organisations and more about strengthening the ecosystem that holds survivors: a community safety architecture

made up of trusted people, shared norms, and functioning referral relationships. Without multi-year investment, emotional support systems for frontline staff, and strengthened coalitions, the foundations laid by Kasa! risk being stretched thin as demand for support continues to grow.

### **Implications for Sustainability, Replicability, and Scale-Up**

To secure and extend the gains of Kasa!, AWDF should:

- **Shift to multi-year core and programmatic funding**, particularly for organisations anchoring accompaniment, youth leadership, and referral networks.
- **Resource staff retention, reflective supervision, and burnout prevention**, recognising that emotional continuity is a determinant of programme quality and survivor safety.
- **Strengthen local coalitions** through shared referral agreements, joint advocacy, community leadership pipelines, and regular cross-organisation learning spaces.
- **Invest in adolescent and young women leaders**, whose growing activism is reshaping community norms but remains vulnerable to fatigue and backlash.
- **Support country-level sustainability strategies**, enabling partners to deepen partnerships with district institutions, embed norms in local structures, and adapt models for rural and under-served areas.

In summary, sustainability for Kasa! is not an exit pathway — it is a commitment to deepen presence, stabilise the ecosystem of care, and reinforce the feminist relational foundations that make long-term change possible.

### **Emerging Issues and Future Preparedness**

The evaluation highlights a rapidly shifting landscape in which public visibility around sexual violence is rising faster than the systems designed to protect survivors and frontline actors. Partners across the three countries—echoed again during the validation workshop—described a widening “visibility–protection gap.” Backlash is intensifying: Ghana faces heightened moral panic around LGBTQ+ identities that constrains civic space and exposes feminist organisations to mischaracterisation; Nigerian partners reported growing waves of online harassment and digital

surveillance; and in Senegal, despite progressive legal reform, cultural resistance continues to drive silence and private settlement. Economic precarity is deepening vulnerability across contexts, pushing many survivors—especially adolescents, informal workers, and conflict-affected women—to choose between safety and financial survival. Organisations stressed that without economic protection embedded into survivor support, autonomy remains out of reach. At the same time, emerging institutional openings—such as coordinated referral protocols, justice system reform, and national data efforts—present opportunities for influence, but risk remaining symbolic unless supported by sustained feminist accompaniment.

Validation workshop discussions further underscored that partners are working in increasingly volatile environments where political turnover, misinformation, and digital harms escalate risk for both survivors and activists. Youth-led groups, radio hosts, peer educators, and community organisers—all central to Kasa!’s prevention and narrative change work—are especially exposed. Partners expressed a need for stronger collective protection strategies, digital safety training, and rapid support mechanisms during periods of heightened tension. They also noted that intergenerational leadership pathways remain fragile; while young feminists are emerging as visible actors, they often lack structured mentorship and long-term resourcing. Across all contexts, organisations emphasised that preparedness is now essential: anticipating backlash, securing activist safety, and embedding economic and psychosocial resilience into programme design to withstand shocks. The next phase must respond to these emerging conditions with strategic, protective investments that strengthen the adaptability and endurance of the movement as contexts continue to shift.

The evaluation confirms that Kasa! has significantly strengthened feminist prevention and response ecosystems across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal, positioning partners as the most trusted and reliable actors in survivor support. Through flexible, trust-based funding and a strong feminist grounding, the Initiative enabled community-led prevention, survivor-centred accompaniment, youth mobilisation, and expanded referral pathways. Validation workshop discussions reaffirmed that these gains emerged because Kasa! invested in relationships, presence, and lived experience—not just activities. Yet partners also emphasised that these achievements remain fragile: backlash is rising, survivors’ needs are outpacing resources, and frontline staff carry growing emotional and

political risk. The relational labour that sustains the movement remains underfunded, and short grant cycles threaten continuity in systems that rely on trust and long-term engagement.

Across all three countries, the evaluation identifies five cross-cutting priorities: sustaining momentum through multi-year presence; protecting staff and organisers who face burnout, stigma, and security threats; expanding intersectional reach to include women and girls with disabilities, LBT communities, informal-sector workers, and displaced women; institutionalising coordination through shared referral protocols and cross-country learning mechanisms; and preparing for political volatility and backlash. Partners at the validation workshop stressed that preparedness is now essential, calling for stronger digital safety, economic protection for survivors, small emergency funds for rapid response, and collective risk-mitigation strategies. They also emphasised the need to transform emerging practice into institutional knowledge—moving from isolated learning to structured, feminist learning architectures across the region.

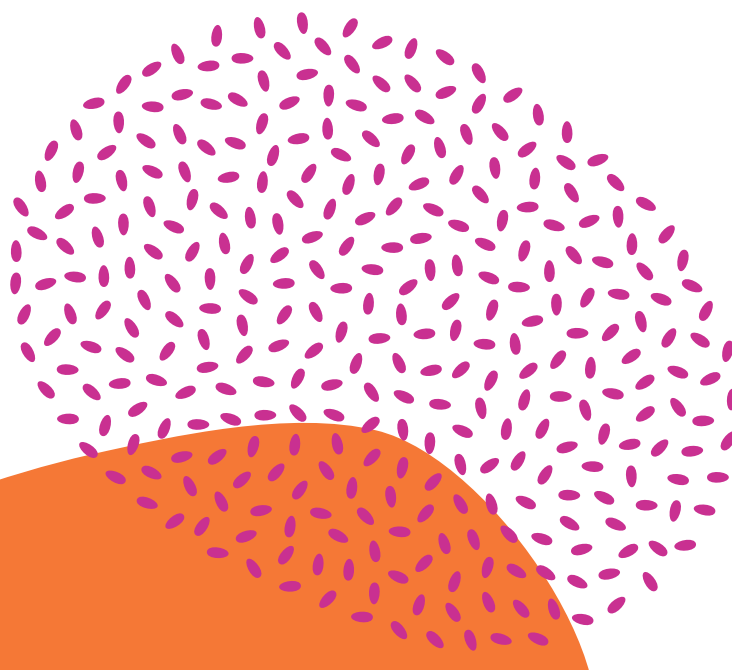
### **Key Recommendations for AWDF (Sustainability, Replicability & Scale-Up)**

AWDF should deepen its feminist resourcing model by expanding multi-year core and programmatic funding and by explicitly financing accompaniment as core work—including transport, emergencies, case-management time, and reflective supervision. Strengthening the ethical and emotional infrastructure of care is essential: staff wellness funds, trauma-informed

supervision, and digital and physical security protocols must be embedded across grants. Intersectional reach should be expanded through targeted windows for disability inclusion, LBT organising, survivor economic autonomy, urban-poor communities, and displaced populations. AWDF should support coordinated, region-wide learning through thematic clusters, cross-country hubs, and shared advocacy spaces to ensure knowledge circulates and strengthens the wider movement. Finally, Kasa!'s next phase should include a feminist preparedness framework—anticipating backlash, safeguarding civic space, strengthening narrative defence capacities, and investing in secure feminist data systems that support learning and policy influence without burdening organisations.

### **Way Forward**

Kasa! has laid the foundations of a resilient, intergenerational feminist movement across West Africa—one built on trust, care, accompaniment, and collective power. The next phase must focus on securing and expanding these foundations: reinforcing care as strategy, accompaniment as system-building, collaboration as resilience, and shared learning as movement memory. As partners noted in the validation workshop, “The work continues because the women continue.” AWDF's task now is to ensure the structures, safety, and resources needed for this work to endure—so that the pathways Kasa! has built become lasting feminist infrastructures capable of weathering backlash, deepening inclusion, and sustaining survivor-centred justice across the region.



## Case Study Annexes

### From Whisper to Voice: Change Grows Where Trust Lives A KASA! Evaluation Site Visit to BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights, Nigeria

BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights works in Northern Nigeria, a region where sexual violence has long been treated as a private matter, and where social and religious authority shapes community life. Within this context, the organisation's KASA-supported work demonstrates how feminist advocacy can take root not through confrontation, but through **trust-building, shared moral language, and slow cultural negotiation**. The site was selected as a representative case because it illustrates how feminist organising can shift community norms from silence to accountability, even in settings where public discussions of sexual violence were previously unthinkable.

The project has focused on prevention, community mobilisation, and survivor encouragement to seek help, with particular emphasis on **building relationships with religious leaders, youth activists, and men positioned as potential allies**. Rather than introducing new ideas as external values, BAOBAB rooted conversations in **familiar moral frameworks** about dignity, fairness, and communal responsibility. A member of the programme team explained that, *"We did not come to replace people's voice; we came to speak with them. That is why they listened."*

Through community dialogues, radio discussions in Hausa, intergenerational feminist learning circles, and training for social workers and paralegals, BAOBAB gradually helped shift how sexual violence is discussed and responded to. What was once whispered is now increasingly debated publicly. One facilitator reflected that, *"People used to whisper; now they ask questions in public. That is not small change."* The organisation also formed "Men for Change Circles," where men were invited to reflect on how violence disrupts family stability and community well-being.

These spaces enabled men to move from defence or denial to acknowledgement and, in some cases, public advocacy.

This gradual legitimacy-building contributed to noticeable shifts in community attitudes. Religious leaders began to speak out in sermons, sometimes reinterpreting scripture to emphasise mercy, dignity, and protection of women. During one community forum, an imam stated publicly that, "If harm is done to a woman, it is harm to the community." This reframing shifted sexual violence from an issue located inside the household to one of collective ethical responsibility. At the same time, younger women activists gained confidence to speak not only in safe spaces but in community dialogues. *"Before KASA!, we had ideas but no platform. Now we lead sessions, not just attend them,"* said a youth participant.

The strengths of BAOBAB's approach lie in **cultural fluency and relational leadership**. The organisation did not position feminism as foreign; it **translated feminist values into local idioms of respect and well-being**. This translation allowed community leaders to adopt prevention messages as their own rather than as directives from outside. Intergenerational mentorship also proved to be a quiet but powerful anchor of sustainability. Senior women's rights activists intentionally supported emerging organisers to take public-facing roles, which strengthened continuity and helped younger leaders articulate feminism in ways resonant with their generation and context.

Challenges remain, though they do not define the case. Staff and frontline facilitators absorb substantial emotional labour in responding to trauma, often without access to adequate counselling support themselves. Resource constraints

limit the organisation's ability to follow up on referrals in remote communities. In more conservative areas, backlash risk persists, particularly for women who speak publicly. These challenges highlight the need for **sustained, not episodic, support** for feminist survivors' work; however, they do not diminish the depth of change underway.

During the site visit, the atmosphere of the sessions was one of **trust, confidence, and shared ownership**. Women and girls spoke openly, men listened without defensiveness, and religious figures engaged constructively rather than adversarially. Participation was voluntary, not staged. The most striking observation was the **shift in confidence** — confidence to narrate experiences, to name harm, to insist on accountability, and to imagine alternative futures. These shifts are cultural in nature, not just programmatic, and therefore carry the potential for stability over time.

This case offers several implications for AWDF. First, **feminist norm change is relational**. It requires patience, presence, and time — not only funding cycles. Second, **intergenerational mentorship is movement infrastructure**; when younger activists inherit both tools and confidence, change becomes renewable. Third, **dialogue with religious and traditional actors can be transformative** when it is framed through shared values rather than ideological opposition. As one young activist reflected, *"We learned that feminism can live in our language, not only in English. That is when the message belongs to the people."*

In essence, BAOBAB's work shows that sexual violence prevention in conservative contexts is not achieved through louder messaging, but through **deeper belonging**. KASA's support allowed a feminist shift to emerge from within the community itself — and that is the basis for its durability.

## “We Began to Speak Without Fear”: Feminist Accompaniment and Survivor Confidence in Mamprobi

### A Kasa! Evaluation Site Visit to Women of Dignity Alliance (WODA), Ghana

Women of Dignity Alliance (WODA) works in Mamprobi, Chorkor, and Jamestown — dense coastal neighbourhoods where **economic precarity, stigma, and sexual exploitation intersect** in the daily lives of many young women and girls. In these communities, sexual violence is often normalised or dismissed, and because sex work is illegal in Ghana, survivors frequently lack **safe avenues to seek help**. WODA entered this landscape with a **feminist accompaniment approach** rooted in dignity, voice, and collective healing. Rather than treating survivors as passive recipients of services, WODA **positions women and girls as narrators of their own experience** and co-creators of their own protection strategies.

During the site visit, the organisation’s **office space functioned first and foremost as a sanctuary** — a place where the language used by girls and women was not policed, where shame was not assumed, and where confidentiality was upheld as a principle of dignity. A beneficiary described the shift simply: *“Here, we talk without someone laughing at us.”*

WODA’s programming under KASA focused on **building awareness, strengthening survivor knowledge, and enabling courageous reporting**. The organisation held group discussions, skills sessions, and private counselling, and coupled these with **interactions with parents, police, community youth leaders, and market women**. These engagements created **new legitimacy around the idea that a survivor has a right to be heard and protected** — even in contexts where sexual violence had long been treated as “a family matter”.

A central theme in WODA’s work is that

**language is political**. Community partners explained that discussions about sex and exploitation require careful navigation, not avoidance. In these communities, terms like *bolenamo* and *tsotswa* are used as “refined” expressions for sexual activity. Rather than dismissing these linguistic norms, WODA **works within them**, using language familiar to participants to **unpack harm without triggering defensiveness or shame**. A facilitator explained, *“This is a conversation that has to begin where the girls are — not where we want them to be.”*

#### Shifts Observed

Across FGDs with survivors, programme facilitators, and community partners, there was **consistent evidence of increasing confidence and voice** among young women. Survivors described recognising exploitation earlier, supporting peers, and seeking help. One girl shared that she now explains to her friends: *“This is not right. This is against your body. You don’t have to keep quiet.”*

Police officers and youth leaders in the community also acknowledged a **change in reporting culture**. Where cases once terminated in silence, survivors are now more willing to file complaints — and police actors are **less likely to dismiss them**. As one community partner put it: *“Now when she comes to the station, we listen first.”*

The work has also contributed to **new forms of empathy among mothers and caregivers**, who are often the first gatekeepers in reporting or concealing abuse. Community partners recounted that dialogues helped mothers recognise their role in **protecting rather than silencing** their daughters.

## Strengths of Approach

WODA's greatest strength lies in its **ability to bridge intimate and public spaces** — the home, the salon, the street corner, the police desk, the community durbar. Its strategy is **high-touch and relational**, built on long-term presence and **deep sensitivity to social power dynamics**. Survivors spoke about trust repeatedly, not as an abstract value, but as something that **allowed them to speak without fearing punishment**.

Another notable strength is WODA's **commitment to inclusivity and access**. Despite infrastructural limitations, the organisation intentionally adapts programming to include persons with disabilities — shifting meeting locations when needed, adjusting facilitation methods, and ensuring privacy and discretion.

## Challenges and Tensions

The core constraints are **structural**, not programmatic:

- **Inadequate psychosocial support infrastructure**, forcing facilitators to absorb emotional labour.

- **Legal precarity** due to the criminalised nature of sex work, which discourages open reporting.
- **Resource limitations**, preventing expansion into additional neighbouring communities where demand is growing.

Yet despite these barriers, **the cultural shift is undeniable**: survivors are speaking, leaders are listening, and silence — the oldest protector of abuse — is being slowly undone.

## Reflections for AWDF

The WODA case demonstrates that **survivor confidence is both an outcome and a strategy**. When women and girls learn to speak without fear, the **social architecture that protects abuse begins to crack**. This is the work of **feminist accompaniment** — to stand alongside, not above; to listen first, and to centre dignity before policy.

As one participant said softly in the FGD circle that day: *"We did not know we had a right to speak. Now we know."*

## “Where Healing Becomes Resistance: Feminist Mental Health Work in Hostile Environments”: A Kasa! Evaluation Site Visit to KIRAAY, Senegal

KIRAAY’s work under the Kasa! Initiative demonstrates how feminist organising can take root even in highly restrictive contexts, where sexual violence, identity-based stigma, and political hostility converge to silence survivors. Positioned at the intersection of mental health, bodily autonomy, and identity rights, the organisation created rare and vital safe spaces for primarily women, girls, and LBT (lesbian, bisexual, and transgender) persons, using this term strategically to refer to gender-diverse communities in a way that maintains both clarity and safety in Senegal’s restrictive socio-political context. As the Programme Lead explained, “We did not begin with advocacy in the streets. We began with healing. Because when someone has been silenced for a long time, giving them their voice back is the first act of resistance.”

Central to KIRAAY’s approach is the use of **art therapy as a medium of disclosure and healing**. Facilitators introduced simple tools: paper, pencils, shared silence, and gentle facilitation. In these spaces, participants were invited to draw what they could not yet say aloud. One implementor reflected, “Among peers, people open up and share what’s in their hearts. Drawing allows people to speak without words.” Over time, these workshops became emotional sanctuaries where survivors recognised their pain as shared rather than isolated. A young participant described the shift clearly: “It was the stories of others that made me strong. I realized I was not alone.” Through this collective witnessing, healing became a **political act**—a refusal to internalize shame.

KIRAAY’s programming unfolded against a backdrop of **legal hostility and socio-cultural repression**. Following a 2022 law imposing severe penalties on LGBTQ+ individuals and ongoing pressure to further criminalise, the organisation learned to navigate public life with care. Advocacy messaging was strategically reframed under the theme of “protection of women and girls,” enabling the continuation of essential

psychosocial and rights education without exposing participants to backlash. Neutral language - such as “key populations” instead of “LGBTQ+” - allowed dialogue where it would otherwise be shut down entirely. As one staff member put it, “We learned to speak in a way that opens doors, not closes them.” This adaptive framing preserved participants’ safety while quietly nurturing feminist and queer solidarities.

Despite the hostile context, **small but meaningful institutional openings emerged**. KIRAAY’s collaboration with health centres and psychological support services strengthened referral pathways, particularly for survivors who feared reporting cases through conventional channels. A breakthrough occurred in Mbour, where police officers agreed to a public photo session with program facilitators—an unprecedented signal of respect and tacit acceptance. Meanwhile, art therapy groups produced new leaders who organically formed their own grassroots association to continue organising and supporting peers. This peer-led expansion illustrates how leadership grows **from healing into mobilization**, not the other way around.

The project also surfaced urgent realities about survivor vulnerability. Many participants experienced violence within their families or close networks, making reporting dangerous or impossible. Staff frequently encountered cases of coercion, blackmail based on sexual identity, and abuse concealed under moral or religious justification. One survivor explained, “I did not speak because I feared losing everything—my home, my family.” These testimonies reinforced the necessity of **long-term psychosocial accompaniment**, something short funding cycles struggle to sustain. Facilitators acknowledged the emotional toll of holding these stories daily: “Supporting survivors every day can lead to exhaustion. We must also take care of ourselves if we are to continue.”

## Strategic Implications for AWDF

KIRAAY's experience underscores that **mental health is not peripheral to feminist organising—it is foundational to it**, especially in settings of criminalisation, stigma, and enforced silence. Survivor-centred programming in restrictive contexts requires **long-term, flexible, discreet funding**, allowing activities to adapt as political risks shift. Investments in **psychosocial support, staff wellness, and peer leadership development** are essential to sustaining feminist movement-

building where public advocacy is unsafe or impossible. The case also highlights the importance of **resourcing feminist strategies that cultivate change quietly and relationally**—through healing circles, creative expression, informal networks, and trust-based alliances with neutral institutional actors. For AWDF, supporting models like KIRAAY means safeguarding not only organisational continuity, but the **very possibility of dignity and community for those forced to live at the margins of public recognition.**



## Annex 1: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Focus Area	Corresponding Evaluation Theme	Evaluation Objective / Purpose	Rationale / Key Considerations
1. Effectiveness of campaigns, programs, and initiatives in shifting public attitudes and behaviours	Prevention and Attitudinal Change	Assess relevance and effectiveness of interventions in changing social norms around bodily autonomy and sexual violence	Gauges public awareness, attitudinal change, and behavioural shifts; helps identify what messaging and strategies have been impactful
2. Improvements in responses to emergencies and adequacy of survivor support	Response Systems and Services	Evaluate how timely and adequate emergency and ongoing support systems are for survivors	Captures health, legal, and psychosocial service responsiveness; supports accountability and survivor recovery
3. Support systems available to survivors and their families	Survivor-Centred Care and Justice	Examine access and quality of holistic care for survivors	Ensures survivor needs are central; identifies strengths and gaps in health, legal aid, shelter, and psycho-social support
4. Role and leadership of women's rights organisations	Feminist Leadership and Movement Building	Understand capacity, leadership and influence of grantee orgs	Demonstrates how feminist actors are shaping systems change and survivor-centred policy advocacy
5. Engagement of key stakeholders (community, religious, policy) in addressing harmful norms	Community and Stakeholder Engagement	Evaluate breadth and depth of stakeholder mobilisation	Assesses how different actors challenge or perpetuate harmful narratives and SGBV structures
6. Collaboration between agencies, donors, and private sector	Coordination and Ecosystem Strengthening	Examine cross-sector collaboration for systemic impact	Identifies level of synergy and opportunity for stronger aligned responses at national and regional levels
7. Best practices and lessons learned in implementation	Knowledge, Learning and Adaptation	Document innovations and learning emerging from implementation	Supports sharing of scalable practices and adaptive strategies responsive to changing contexts
8. Challenges and opportunities for programme adaptation and improvement	Adaptive Strategy and Contextual Responsiveness	Identify areas for iteration and scaling	Builds learning loops into program cycles and informs next phase design and investment

## Annex 2: Summary matrix of findings, data sources and recommendations

Thematic Area	Key Findings	Evidence Sources	Implications & Recommendations for AWDF (Sustainability, Scalability, Replicability)
<b>1. Survivor-Centred Support Systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisations are the <i>primary and trusted</i> support system for survivors across all three countries.</li> <li>• Accompaniment—not referral—is the backbone of effective protection.</li> <li>• Emotional labour is high and under-resourced.</li> <li>• Referral systems remain uneven and fragile after funding ends.</li> </ul>	KIIs with grantees; FGDs with survivors; site visits (WODA, BAOBAB, KIRAAAY); validation workshop reflections; document review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutionalise accompaniment as a <i>funded core practice</i> (case management, transport, emergency funds, supervision).</li> <li>• Provide multi-year funding to stabilise staffing and protect continuity of care.</li> <li>• Develop country-level referral consortia and shared protocols to enhance replicability.</li> <li>• Strengthen staff wellness infrastructure to sustain survivor support ecosystems.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Stakeholder Engagement &amp; Social Norms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chiefs, queen mothers, imams, teachers and youth leaders are now active messengers against SGBV.</li> <li>• Norm change rooted in long-term trust-building is more durable than campaign-led change.</li> <li>• Community “permission to act” is increasing but uneven across regions.</li> </ul>	KIIs with leaders; community dialogues observation; partner reports; workshop outputs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource long-term community engagement platforms rather than one-off campaigns.</li> <li>• Scale the most effective norm-shifting practices (e.g., by-law enforcement models, interfaith forums).</li> <li>• Develop adaptable toolkits for leaders to replicate messaging across contexts.</li> <li>• Support partners to measure community-level action indicators, enhancing policy leverage.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Feminist Grantmaking &amp; Resourcing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility and trust-based funding enabled innovation and legitimacy.</li> <li>• Short grant cycles undermine continuity of survivor support and norm change.</li> <li>• Peer learning is valued but currently informal.</li> </ul>	Grant documents; KII with AWDF staff; partner financial & narrative reports; validation feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand multi-year core + programmatic funding to anchor organisational stability.</li> <li>• Create structured cross-country learning clusters with thematic focus areas.</li> <li>• Integrate institutional strengthening (MEL, safeguarding, digital security) into accompaniment.</li> <li>• Design grant windows that intentionally resource inclusion (e.g., disability, LBT groups) rather than relying on organic uptake.</li> </ul>

<b>4. Programme Design, Adaptation &amp; Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feminist accompaniment drives adaptive programming and relevance.</li> <li>• Learning is rich but informal, undocumented, and uneven across countries.</li> <li>• Limited structured channels for cross-country strategic problem-solving.</li> </ul>	<p>Interviews across grantees; validation workshop thematic discussions; review of learning session notes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in structured learning architecture: thematic hubs, joint clinics, exchange visits.</li> <li>• Resource reflective practice, documentation support, and organisational mentoring.</li> <li>• Build a regional “feminist learning commons” to enable scalable and transferable practice.</li> <li>• Protect adaptation flexibility through less rigid reporting and more iterative learning spaces.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Inclusion, Ethics &amp; Safeguarding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong survivor-facing safeguarding practices.</li> <li>• Staff wellbeing and safety needs remain significantly under-supported.</li> <li>• Political and digital risks are rising, especially for young feminists and LBT organisations.</li> </ul>	<p>KIIs with frontline staff; FGDs; validation reflections; safeguarding documents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource staff wellness, trauma-informed supervision, and mental health partnerships.</li> <li>• Integrate digital and physical safety planning into grants.</li> <li>• Expand inclusion through targeted resources for under-served groups (LBT, disability, informal sector women).</li> <li>• Treat safeguarding as feminist infrastructure, essential to long-term sustainability.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Sustainability of Feminist Ecosystems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability is rooted in relationships, trust, and community ownership.</li> <li>• Gains are uneven due to short cycles and staff turnover.</li> <li>• Youth-led activism is rising but vulnerable to burnout.</li> </ul>	<p>Multi-country synthesis; youth leader KIIs; organisational capacity assessments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide multi-year institutional support for ecosystem anchors.</li> <li>• Strengthen community leadership pipelines (youth, survivors, traditional leaders).</li> <li>• Support coalition-building and joint advocacy platforms.</li> <li>• Embed economic safety mechanisms for survivors as part of sustainability.</li> </ul>
<b>7. Emerging Issues &amp; Future Preparedness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visibility-protection gap is widening, increasing backlash risks.</li> <li>• Economic precarity is amplifying vulnerability to violence.</li> <li>• Digital spaces are now a frontline for both advocacy and attack.</li> </ul>	<p>KIIs with partners; validation insights; review of contextual analyses; national SGBV trends.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a feminist preparedness agenda (grassroots security, digital safety, narrative defence).</li> <li>• Integrate survivor economic protection into support programming.</li> <li>• Use flexible grants to allow rapid adaptation in volatile contexts.</li> <li>• Facilitate cross-country risk awareness and resilience learning.</li> </ul>

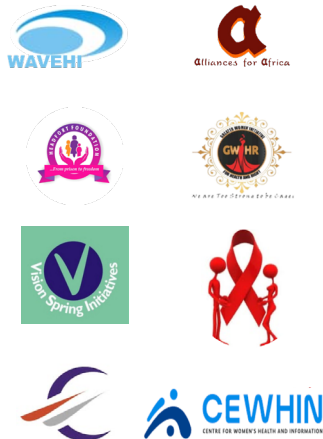
# Annex 3: Kasa! Grantee Partners Contributing to the Evaluation

## NIGERIA

### KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS



### ONLINE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS



### SITE VISITS PARTICIPANTS



## GHANA

### KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS



### ONLINE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS



### SITE VISITS PARTICIPANTS



## SENEGAL

### KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS



### ONLINE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS



### SITE VISITS PARTICIPANTS



## AWDF

Françoise Moudouthe

Renee Djanie

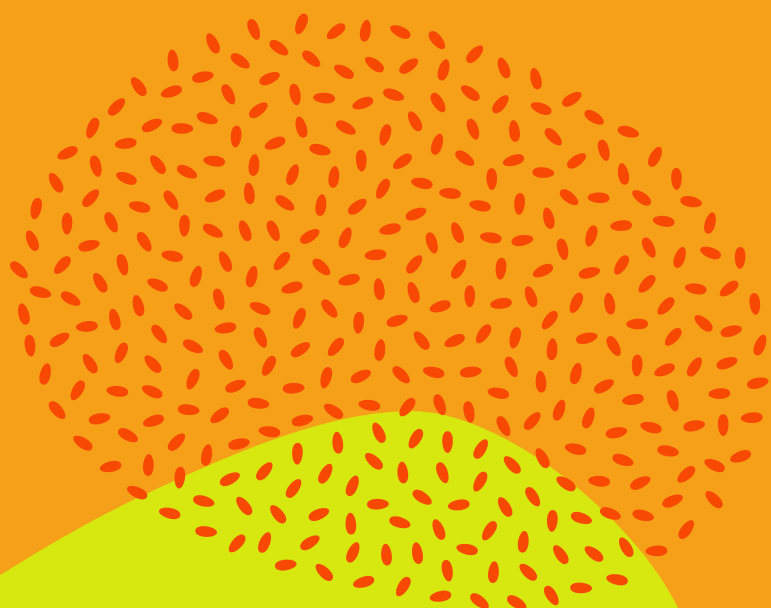
Abena Afari

Giftty Anim

Beatrice Boakye-Yiadom

Gertrude Bibi Annoh-Quarshie

Janet Okumi



# Annex 4: KASA Initiative Evaluation – Validation Workshop Annex Report



## 1. Introduction

On 18 November 2025, AWDF and TSIC convened a virtual validation workshop to review preliminary findings of the KASA Evaluation with over 60 participants mainly from grantee partner organisations from across Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria, and then members from AWDF and TSIC. The workshop aimed to validate the accuracy of the findings and collect country-specific nuance to strengthen the final report. After opening remarks from AWDF, participants were invited to take part in an icebreaker exercise by providing one word/short phrase on how the Kasa! Initiative helped their organization the most. The exercise revealed shared sentiments of courage, advancement, and flexibility, reflecting KASA's support across all contexts.

After TSIC's summary presentation of the key findings under each of the ten evaluation focus areas from the report, participants were invited to discuss the findings in three country breakout sessions. Within each breakout room, participants discussed the following 3 questions:

## 2. What Resonated Across All Three Countries

Partners across Ghana, Senegal, and Nigeria generally agreed that the evaluation captured their

realities and recognised the core contributions of WROs and feminist actors.

### 2.1 Survivor-Centred Approaches & Intersectional Programming

- Nigeria highlighted expansion of survivor-centred systems.
- Senegal affirmed holistic survivor support.
- Ghana appreciated faith/traditional leader engagement and arts-based survivor work.

### 2.2 Community-Level Prevention & Norms Change

- All countries stressed community engagement.
- Senegal and Nigeria emphasized boys' and youth involvement for long-term norm shifts.

### 2.3 Flexibility & Timeliness of Grants

- Ghana highlighted grant flexibility
- Nigeria noted strengthened organizational systems and advocacy power.

### 2.4 Recognition of Staff Burnout

All three countries resonated strongly with acknowledgment of burnout and emotional toll on frontline workers.

### 3. What Needs Correction or Nuance

Partners across the breakout rooms highlighted areas requiring sharper language and contextual clarity.

#### 3.1 Regional & Systemic Nuances (Nigeria)

- Southeast is underserved, not behind.
- Justice system inconsistency should be noted.

#### 3.2 Over-emphasis on Service Provision

- Nigeria requested balanced framing between prevention, protection, and response.

#### 3.3 Institutional Gaps (Senegal)

- Weak implementation at commune level.
- Lack of victim support budgets and absence of safe shelters.

#### 3.4 Safe Spaces & Visibility (Ghana)

- Ghana emphasised need for safe spaces and AWDF’s visibility at implementation level.

#### 3.5 Staff Protection

- Senegal stressed staff trauma protection must be treated as core, not secondary.

### 4. What Must Be Emphasised More

Several areas were identified for stronger emphasis in the final report.

### 4.1 Staff Wellbeing

- All countries highlighted need for institutionalised wellbeing systems.

### 4.2 Youth & Boys’ Engagement

- Senegal and Nigeria emphasised boys and youth as essential drivers of long-term change.

### 4.3 Feminist Coalitions & Synergy

- Senegal requested national feminist coalitions.
- Nigeria highlighted existing collaboration networks.

### 4.4 Safe Spaces & Survivor Leadership

- Ghana emphasized safe spaces.
- Nigeria stressed survivor and youth leadership.

### 4.5 Technology-Facilitated Violence

- Ghana highlighted emerging tech-related SGBV.

### 4.6 Structural Survivor Support Gaps

- Senegal stressed need for state-funded survivor medical/legal support.

### 4.7 Sustainability of Services

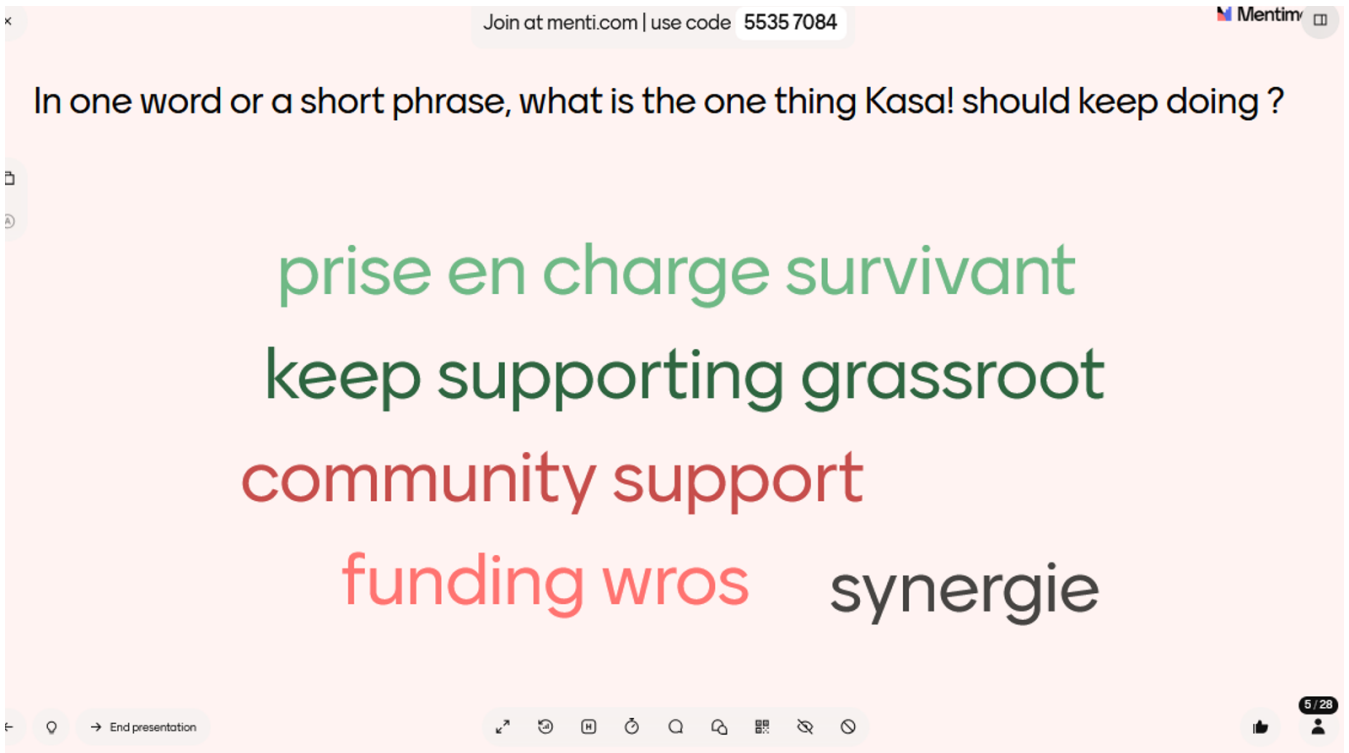
- Nigeria highlighted fragility of donor-dependent SARC and shelters.

### 5. Cross-Country Priority Themes

Aligned priorities emerged across all countries.

Priority Area	What Participants Said	Why It Matters	Recommended Action for AWDF
<b>Staff Wellbeing &amp; Self-Care</b>	Frontline workers face burnout, trauma, and emotional fatigue across Nigeria, Senegal, and Ghana.	Undermines programme quality, increases turnover, and heightens secondary trauma.	Fund structured wellbeing systems, therapy, supervision, and safe debriefing spaces.
<b>Balanced Prevention–Protection–Response</b>	Nigeria: prevention work is strong but underrepresented; partners emphasise school-based and community norm change.	Prevention reduces long-term SGBV incidence and builds social resilience.	Ensure balanced reporting; strengthen prevention-focused programming.

<b>Nuanced Collaboration Dynamics</b>	Nigeria: collaboration is already strong beyond donor-funded networks and should be acknowledged.	Collaboration improves referrals, joint advocacy, and collective action.	Support structured convenings, joint learning platforms, and coordinated advocacy.
<b>Government Accountability</b>	CSOs in Nigeria are filling roles government should deliver; police engagement remains inconsistent.	Lack of state responsibility burdens CSOs and weakens long-term systems.	Support accountability mechanisms, long-term law enforcement engagement, and governance reforms.
<b>Law Enforcement Challenges</b>	Police response remains unpredictable despite training (Nigeria).	Weak law enforcement discourages reporting and threatens survivor safety.	Invest in repeated engagements, oversight mechanisms, and multi-agency accountability.
<b>Survivor &amp; Youth Leadership</b>	Nigeria: survivors becoming advocates; youth leadership is shifting norms.	Empowers communities and accelerates change.	Fund survivor-led and youth-led models; document success cases.
<b>Safe Spaces for Survivors</b>	Ghana & Senegal stressed need for safe emotional and physical spaces; shelters remain limited.	Survivors lack safety and confidential support environments.	Co-invest in safe spaces; support partners to build trauma-informed environments.
<b>National Feminist Coalition</b>	Senegal partners strongly requested national coalition-building to unify feminist action.	Enhances collective influence on legal and policy shifts.	Support convening, coordination, and joint advocacy mechanisms.
<b>Shelters &amp; Survivor Support Infrastructure</b>	Senegal: severe lack of shelters; Nigeria: SARCs fragile and donor dependent.	Critical gaps hinder survivor protection and service delivery.	Co-invest in safe shelters; advocate for sustainable government-led services.
<b>State-Funded Survivor Support</b>	Senegal: need for medical and legal assistance funds.	Survivors face unaffordable costs that hinder access to justice and care.	Advocate for national survivor funds and budgetary allocations.
<b>Technology-Facilitated SGBV</b>	Ghana highlighted rise in technology-induced or assisted SGBV.	New forms of violence require adapted strategies.	Support digital protection, partner training, and tech-related SGBV responses.
<b>Youth &amp; Boys' Engagement</b>	Senegal & Nigeria strongly emphasised boys as key to long-term norms transformation.	Shifts generational attitudes and reduces intergenerational violence.	Scale peer clubs, school programmes, and youth trainings.
<b>Long-Term &amp; Flexible Funding</b>	All countries stressed multi-year, flexible funding as essential.	Enables sustained behaviour change, collaboration, and structural impact.	Promote multi-year grants and flexible, adaptive funding models.
<b>Evidence Systems &amp; Shared Learning</b>	Senegal: need unified data; Nigeria: strong informal networks already exist.	Strengthens accountability, coordination, and advocacy.	Resource shared dashboards, case reporting tools, and cross-country learning.



## 6. Additional Insights

Responses from the second icebreaker (completed after the meeting) underscored the importance of continued support to grassroots communities and consistent funding for WROs.

## 7. Summary

The validation workshop provided a constructive platform for partners to engage deeply with the evaluation findings. Feedback indicated that the report is largely accurate but requires some nuance to capture on-the-ground realities.



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