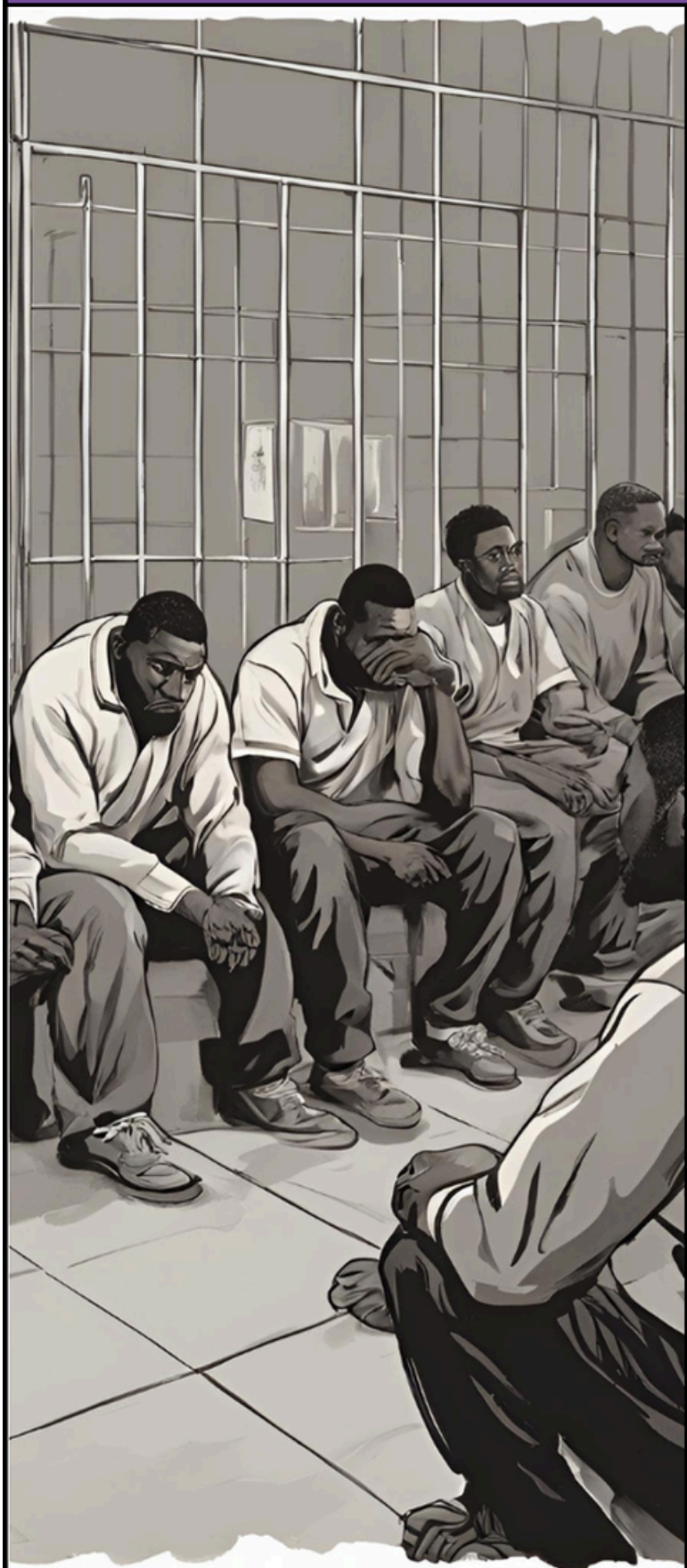


POLICY BRIEF

FACILITATING  
**BEHAVIOURAL  
CHANGE**  
IN MALE PERPETRATORS  
**OF  
VIOLENCE  
AGAINST  
WOMEN  
AND GIRLS**



## **Abstract**

Despite campaigns and advocacy to raise awareness against gender-based violence, male violence perpetrated against women continues to be rife, with one in 5 Nigerian women experiencing abuse before the age of 15, according to the United Nations Population Fund. This brief highlights policy-driven and actionable solutions by diverse professional Nigerian women to mitigate gender-based violence and protect the survivors.

## **Issues Identified:**

### **1. Approaches to facilitate behavioural change are not actionable:**

- Campaigns such as 16 Days of Activism fail to produce the required results of targeting the perpetrators, with a lot of women still experiencing violence during that period.
- Efforts to combat violence primarily focus on victims rather than addressing perpetrators or systemic causes.

### **2. Challenges in the justice system**

- The perpetrators of the violence deny accountability, lack empathy, and show unremorseful behaviour rooted in foundational societal issues.
- There are legal frameworks and policies in place. Unfortunately, they are poorly implemented, and the perpetrators are free without facing the consequences.
- Survivors are always facing obstacles like being blamed for getting violated, especially law enforcement, who are not sympathetic when the victims are seeking justice.

### **4. Education and Socialisation of Young Boys:**

- The education curriculum in Nigeria sometimes helps to reinforce stereotypes that are dangerous to women, therefore socialising young boys from an early age.
- Lack of grooming boys to respect girls in homes contributes to poor socialisation.



# Strategies to Facilitate Behavioural Change in Male Perpetrators of Violence

## 1. Restorative Justice:

- Nigeria should implement restorative justice approaches focusing on accountability, empathy, and relationship repair.
- Men should establish initiatives like men's accountability circles to promote positive masculinity and behavioural reform.

## 2. Targeted Campaigns and Re-education:

- We should design campaigns that address men directly, challenging stereotypes and fostering personal reflection.
- Introduction of gender equity and respect education into school curriculums to reshape societal norms early.
- Law enforcement officers should be better trained on how to handle issues of male violence against women.
- Law enforcement agencies should collaborate with more women's rights organisations, such as the UN Women, for impact.

## 3. Media and Information Reform:

- Journalists should be trained in ethical reporting to avoid perpetuating biases and stigmas.
- More media platforms should be established dedicated to amplifying survivor stories and challenging social norms that condone violence.
- Women-led media ownership should be promoted to influence societal narratives positively.

## 4. Strengthening Legal Frameworks and Enforcement:

- Enhancing implementation of existing laws, including the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act.
- Providing gender-sensitive training for law enforcement and judiciary actors to ensure survivor-centered justice.

- Increasing access to free legal services for survivors through organisations like the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Nigeria, Mirabel Centre, and Stand to end rape.

#### **5. Community Engagement and Accountability:**

- Society must leverage the traditional leaders and local security apparatuses to support and facilitate behavioural change from men.
- Nigerians should encourage men to act actively as allies and advocate for gender justice.

#### **6. Addressing Cultural and Structural Norms:**

- We must continue to promote resocialisation to unlearn harmful stereotypes.
- Nigerians should integrate positive masculinity traits into community education programmes.

### **Conclusion**

Ending male violence against women and girls requires an actionable approach that combines legal reform, society resocialisation, media accountability, and restorative justice. Focusing on systemic change and engaging men as allies can foster a safer, more equitable society for all.



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