

## Executive Director's Message

This year 2024, we made significant strides in improving food security and livelihoods for rural women and youth. Our work focused on economic development, food security, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and social inclusion. We remain dedicated to empowering rural communities and ensuring access to quality food and healthcare. But all these would not have been achieved without the commitment and support of our dedicated staff, volunteers, and partners who have driven this positive change. I appreciate their wonderful efforts and hope to attain even greater heights in the future.



*Nnennaya Enyinna-Eneremadu*

## Organizational Overview

CARA Development Foundation is a non-profit organization which was founded in January 2014 with incorporated trustees at Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) on November 2014 with the vision of a healthy society free from poverty and food insecurity. We are driven by the mission to support local communities to achieve good health, reduce poverty, and attain food security for sustainable development. We maintain integrity, professionalism, partnership, excellence and sustainability in our aim to improve the lives of women and young people

in the communities, through poverty reduction, Stimulate the Agricultural value chain to ensure food security in our communities and improve the lives of women through safe motherhood programs. CARA has a strong human resource with vast knowledge, discipline and expertise in Agriculture, advocacy among others. The CARA team has been trained by its donors on strategic stakeholders' engagements, initiating community actions for social change, analysis, monitoring and evaluation, and telling success stories.

## Introduction

In this year 2024, the CARA team recorded several achievements made towards our mission of supporting communities to achieve good health, reduce poverty, and attain food security for sustainable development. The CARA team despite the challenges encountered during the course of their work, were able to identify 275 Farm service providers and with their support, mobilized 244 and 50 LGAs training 15,961 smallholder farmers on GAP in cassava production with a total of 31 demonstrated established in different communities to train these farmers, Strengthen linkages of out grower programme, linkages to finance and among market actors, trained 281 adolescent girls on life skills, sent 4 Quarterly Newsletter to 246+ stakeholder email subscribers, trained 63 CSEs across the Nine Niger Delta states to enhance access to improved cassava seeds in the Niger Delta, led 7 organizations to sensitize 261 persons of different groups on their menstrual hygiene to commemorate the International day for Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management. The team wrote a total of 21 proposals, carried out 5 assessments PIND Annual Impact Assessment including, PIND scoping study for next 5 years intervention, PIND outcome monitoring, Assessment of agro-dealers and FSP engagement in the cassava sector, PLA Assessment on SRHR, wrote 4 milestone reports, participated in 5 meetings including; Meeting with Ukwuoma Ndigbo Multi-purpose Farmer's Cooperative Society, PIND Review Meeting with Co-facilitators, Meeting with Stakeholders on Safeguarding against Violence, Imo State Committee Meeting on Ending Violence against Women and Girls, Communiqué of the Meeting on Education Financing: The Role of Stakeholders and several other achievements.

## Quarter 1

### Cassava Intervention Project across the Niger Delta State of Nigeria

Within the first quarter of the year 2024, CARA with the support of the market actor continued to facilitate the outreach activities of cassava intervention on Good agricultural practice (GAP), strengthen linkages/access to market among the market actors (farmers, Agro-dealers/FSPS, CSEs, Input companies), etc. across the Niger Delta states to enhance productivity and income. A total number of 3549 farmers (1578 and 1971) attended training on Good Agronomic Practices with a demo established to increase adoption of the practices by farmers. In doing this, the value chain actors would increase sales, farmers would reduce stress, and increase productivity. These clusters of farmers were trained in communities and Local Government Areas in Cross river, Delta, Abia, Imo, Akwa Ibom, Ondo, and Edo States. This sector accounts for the majority of livelihood of the rural and urban areas of the Niger States and beyond.

### Out Grower Scheme/ Market Linkages

CARA team held meetings with Ukwuoma Ndigbo Multi-purpose Farmer's Cooperative Society (MPCS), the pilot co-operative which benefitted from the Sombreiro Kapital loan scheme facilitated by PIND Foundation and co-facilitated by CARA in the year 2021. After the sales of the farms to large Processors (Dufil) and small-scale processors, a scale-up was introduced to improve the farmer's access to credit. A meeting was held at the CARA office for the Scale-up.



During the meeting, the Executive Director of CARA Development Foundation, Nnennaya Enyinna Eneremadu notified the members of the cooperative that Sombreiro Kapital (SK) has agreed to partner with the co-operative to access loan for cassava production, if they will adhere to terms and conditions related to access to loan. The Executive Director pointed out that the cooperative will be in control of the project while CARA will only be responsible for facilitation and monitoring. The group members appreciated the efforts of CARA in supporting farmers with access to loan which is a key aspect of Market System Development and also ensuring increased productivity and income to farmers groups to enhance their livelihood and provide sustainability.

### PIND Review Meeting with Co-facilitators



The Executive Director of CARA Development Foundation actively participated in the Foundation for partnership initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) review meeting with the stakeholder to reassess 2023 facilitation of Economic Development Programme and discuss the challenges and foster solution which helped to plan 2024 intervention for the cassava sector, a whole lot were identified to have changed such as farmers adapting GAP, linkages created across key actors taxed on incentives. Challenges were mostly on access to land which is still impacting negatively on productivity and access to markets.

### Time out with the girls on Valentine's Day (in-school training at Obazu Girls secondary school Imo state)

The CARA team had a robust celebration of Valentine's Day with the students of Obazu Girls secondary school, Mbieri in Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State on February 14, 2024. An amazing theme of "Valentine's Day.....Beyond chocolates and roses" guided the Valentine's Day celebration; sparking meaningful discussions and engagements among students. The objective of the program is to foster a deep understanding and positive outcome of the Valentine's Day celebration among the students. This is to create a hands-on understanding of the significance of Valentine's Day to the students and increase their ability to say no when confronted by peer pressure against their wishes.



The team built the understanding of 492 girls on the values and expressions associated with Valentine's Day. The students were gifted sanitary pad, toilet soap and refreshment for their active participation in paying attention to the teachings, asking and responding to positive questions. The Principal, teachers and the students of the girls Secondary school were very grateful for the visit.

### Meeting with Stakeholders on Safeguarding against Violence

CARA team member, was involved in a meeting with stakeholders on safeguarding against violence by YAF in partnership with OSAI Foundation. The convention is an opportunity to sensitize stakeholders to work together and creating a reporting and action pathway in Imo state in order to manage issues of violence against women and Girls more effectively through responses to health, security, Justice, Information and Education. CARA shared experiences from facilitating the multi Sectorial response pathway with Abia State GBV Resource centre.

## 2024 Informal Sector round table by Jobber Man and the MasterCard Foundation



The Executive Director, CARA Development Foundation, Nnennaya Enyinna-Eneremadu participated in round table gathering in Abuja continental Hotel where key stakeholders gathered to foster insightful conversations around key findings from the research conducted by Jobber man on the informal sector. The discussions were on the critical issues and opportunities within the informal sector. Her participation provided an ample opportunity to Visit the Palladium office and Network with other players in the Agric sector focused on food security and access to funds/resources for improved agricultural value chain performance.

## Strengthening Civic Advocacy and Local Engagement (SCALE) Project Advocacy for Agricultural budget increase to 5% in Imo, Abia and Ebonyi States, Nigeria.

The CARA Development Foundation in partnership with the Agric Budget plus Cluster, extended a warm welcome to the Chief of Party of the Nigeria SCALE Project, Barr. Lydia Odeh and the Cluster Line Manager, Maxwell Ahunnanya at the CARA Head Office in Owerri, Imo State. The Cluster alongside the SCALE team had a Strategic engagement with the Ministry of Agriculture in Imo State to further strengthen the partnership that was already created and sustain the collective impact in the state regarding Budget release. Also, the team visited the Ministry of Budget, Economic planning and Statistics to request for support to the cluster to achieve proper implementation of the allocated budgets. Big win for Imo, Abia, and Ebonyi farmers for the increase! Thanks to the hard work of CARA, CYDI and other CSO's, Media and some of the members of the commodity groups, for their significant effort to collaborate and partner with the MDA'S to achieve budget increase in Imo, Abia and Ebonyi. This year's budgets allocated 2.06% in Imo, 5.98% in Abia and 5.98% in Ebonyi to Agriculture respectively. This is a big leap from the previous year's allocations of 1.7%, 2.1%, and 2.3%. A big shout out to everyone who worked tirelessly to make this happen, including people with disabilities (PWDs). This is a great success that can be achieved with Collective impact using Partnership and collaboration.

## Quarter 2

### International Menstrual Hygiene Day Celebration 2024



In celebration of International Menstrual Hygiene Day on May 28th, the Imo Network of Technical Working Group (TWG) on Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management (MHHM) in Imo State launched a series of activities starting with a live social media chat on May 21st, 2024. This outreach aimed at educating various religious groups on MHHM and continued with events until June 5th, 2024. The network reached 274 individuals, including 13 members of different religious groups via Google Meet, 69 attendees at Mgbirichi and Okohia Health Centers, 110 students at Okpofe Community Secondary School and Avu Comprehensive Secondary School, 25 persons with disabilities, and 57 Peer Educators Group members.

A significant achievement was the distribution of 130 reusable sanitary pads, benefiting students, teachers, and people living with disabilities. The initiative profoundly impacted the community, particularly at Avu Comprehensive Secondary School, where students and teachers gained vital knowledge about menstrual health. The school's commitment to establishing a health club to continue discussions on Adolescent Reproductive Health was a notable outcome. Looking ahead, the network plans to support local tailors in Mgbirichi and Okohia to learn how to produce reusable pads, providing a sustainable economic opportunity and ensuring the availability of these essential products for women and girls in the community.

### PLA Assessment Report on SRHR for Imo, Abia and Ebonyi State

In a concerted effort to address the critical issues surrounding comprehensive sexuality education and access to Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services, the CARA Development Foundation conducted a series of rapid assessments and consultative sessions across Imo, Abia, and Ebonyi States. The sessions were held at key locations: the Community and Youth Development Initiative Office in Owerri, the Neighborhood Environment Watch Foundation in Abakaliki, and the Rural Development Planners (RUDEP) Conference Room in Umuahia with her stakeholders.



A Participatory Learning and Action tool using Problem Tree, Solution/Objective Tree, and Gendered) Resource Mapping, participants delved into the root causes and effects of inadequate comprehensive sexuality education and the barriers faced by vulnerable and marginalized groups in accessing SRHR services. These tools facilitated a thorough examination of the challenges, allowing participants to propose actionable solutions and identify existing and necessary resources. The discussions highlighted the urgent need for enhanced educational initiatives and better access

to SRHR services, aiming to empower youth and marginalized communities with the knowledge and support they need. The outcomes of these sessions underscore the importance of a collaborative approach in overcoming these critical issues and ensuring equitable access to essential health services.

## Imo State Committee Meeting on Ending Violence against Women and Girls



On April 17, 2024, the inaugural Imo State Committee Meeting on Ending Violence against Women and Girls convened at Rockview Hotel, Owerri, gathering 27 dedicated participants. This critical meeting was a response to the rising cases of violence against women in Imo State, focusing on strategies to ensure the full implementation of the Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law. The day began with a thorough presentation of a situation analysis, revealing significant legislative and administrative gaps hindering progress. Participants engaged in dynamic discussions, identifying key barriers to accessing services for victims and proposing actionable solutions. The conversation then shifted to strengthening prevention programs and the establishment of a state regulatory agency to enforce the VAPP Law by 2024. The session concluded with a shared commitment to strategic actions, including advocacy efforts targeting state leadership and a planned outreach to educate 500 women across the state's three senatorial zones. This meeting marked a crucial step forward in creating a safer and more equitable environment for all women and girls in Imo State.

## Documentary Premiere on the Lived Experience of Women with Disabilities



On June 27, 2024, the Centre for the Right to Health (CRH) premiered a documentary showcasing the lived experiences of women with disabilities in Imo State. With over 100 participants in attendance, the event aimed to break the silence surrounding the challenges faced by these women and to shift public opinion towards greater inclusion and respect for their human rights. The documentary, created in collaboration with other advocacy groups, serves as a powerful tool for media and advocacy efforts, highlighting the need for societal change.

Key lessons from the event emphasized that including disabled women in societal conversations and decision-making is a fundamental right, not a choice, and that there is strength and potential

within disabilities. As a next step, CRH plans to launch a donation campaign to further support these women and continue advocating for improvements in their quality of life and societal inclusion.

### Ongoing Cassava Value Chain Intervention Activity

From April to June 2024, our collaboration with PIND focused on empowering cassava farmers in the Niger Delta through the promotion of Good Agronomic Practices (GAP). This initiative aimed to boost productivity and income for 3,457 farmers (1,254 men and 2,203 women) by providing comprehensive training using demonstration plots. We also identified 18 CSEs for a stem multiplication program and introduced 19 new Agro-dealers/FSPs, enhancing market access by connecting these farmers with reliable service providers.



In addition, we established partnerships with five large-scale processors to ensure a stable market for fresh cassava root (FCR) throughout-grower schemes or aggregation. However, despite the promise of cassava to bolster Nigeria's economy, several challenges remain. Farmers face limited access to high-quality, disease-resistant planting materials, making it difficult to fully implement the GAP training. Post-harvest issues also persist, with smallholder farmers struggling with the high costs of transporting bulky and perishable cassava crops. These obstacles highlight the ongoing need for support and resources to fully realize the potential of cassava farming in the region.

### Peer-To-Peer Learning Forum in Port Harcourt and Awka



The SCALE project organized a peer-to-peer learning forum to create a collaborative platform for organizations implementing the SCALE project across Nigeria. The platform created an opportunity for knowledge sharing, exchange of experiences, and lessons learned thus creating networking opportunities among organizations in the project. The information gathered during the structured forum discussion helped inform the next line of action as these organizations leverage the opportunity to learn and increase their capacities in lacking areas, enhancing growth and sustainability among member organizations.

## Participatory Strategic Review (PSR)



This year 2024 marks the end of the 5 years strategic period in PIND Foundation and there was a need to assess the engagements with diverse stakeholders across the Niger Delta region where PIND operates. Following the two days of training in the PIND-EDC Warri Office, facilitated by the New Nigeria Foundation (NNF), CARA led the team that conducted the Participatory Strategic Review in Imo and Abia States respectively, throughout April 2024; utilizing a revised tool that targeted specific stakeholders including NGOs, networks, state actors, private sector players, professional and academics, the findings were documented and forwarded to NNF for analysis.

## Anchor Leaders Peer-To-Peer Learning

This event was important to the SCALE project to share lessons from existing anchor leaders of the previous clusters that implemented the project and targeted budget-related advocacy areas with new clusters focused on strengthening advocacy for budget lines to address Tuberculosis across Nigeria. It was organized by Palladium and CARA was represented by the Executive Director Nnennaya Enyinna Eneremadu, accompanied by Mr. Eme Orji, the Director of Budgets in Abia State Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, and Mrs. Mfon Williamson, the Permanent Secretary of Ebonyi State Ministry of Finance representing the Agric Budget Plus Cluster as state actors and Richard Okoro of Rural Development Planners (RUDEP) Abia State as an NGO actor.



The team shared information on the processes that we adopted to engage the relevant key stakeholders, expand the cluster, build capacity, sustain awareness, hold technical sessions, and document commitments for follow-up until the increase in state budgetary allocation to the agricultural sector was increased from less than 2% to 5.8% in the two states respectively.



## Dialogue Session on Human Rights



This event was organized on June 10, 2024, at The Envoy Hotel, 305 Diplomatic Drive, Abuja by the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC) to Explore Remedies for Human Rights Abuses. The session provided a platform to discuss the best strategies to tackle the challenge of increasing human rights violations and shrinking civic space in Nigeria, as well as identify available remedies for victims of human rights abuses.

Following the welcome address by Mr. Clem Nwankwo, the Executive Director of PLAC, highlighted the various forms of human rights abuses that Nigerian citizens have experienced before this recent democracy to date. The panelists were drawn from the National Human Rights Commission, Amnesty International, the Ministry of Police Affairs, and CLEEN Foundation and the discussions covered what constitutes human rights abuses, including but not limited to unlawful arrest, arbitrary detention, torture, extrajudicial killings, restrictions on freedom of expression, gender-based violence. The conversations established that Nigeria has legal frameworks to protect human rights and hold violators accountable, CSOs must increase their pressure and efforts as human rights defenders and marginalized groups including women, ethnic minorities and indigenous people must be empowered.

Participants were encouraged to create awareness for citizens to reach out to Amnesty International, file complaints to the National Human Rights Commission, engage the media and elected representatives, and promote CSO collaboration while seeking legal aid to access legal remedies and other recourse for victims of human rights abuse. To conclude, we agreed that if we can't address the issues of human rights abuse, it means that our democratic government is endangered.

### Quarter 3

#### Communiqué of the Meeting on Education Financing: The Role of Stakeholders

On July 16, 2024, CARA's Officer, Gloria Ezike attended a high-level summit on Education Financing which held at the Imo State Universal Basic Education Board in Owerri, Imo State. The event, organized under the Education Out Loud project, brought together key stakeholders, including state ministries, NGOs, private sector representatives, and civil society organizations. The summit aimed to assess the current state of education financing, explore innovative mechanisms, and outline stakeholder roles to ensure sustainable funding.



Key discussions highlighted the existing funding gaps in the education sector, especially in areas such as gender-responsive plans, curriculum review, and teacher development. Presenters, including Mrs. Juliet Oby Okeiyi of CSACEFA and Mrs. Blessing Duru of Alliance for Africa, emphasized the need for diverse funding sources beyond government allocations, such as international donors and corporate social responsibility efforts.

Stakeholders proposed solutions like public-private partnerships (PPPs), greater community involvement in infrastructure maintenance, and leveraging technology to optimize costs. The event concluded with a renewed commitment to collaboration, innovative financing, and shared responsibility to improve education in Imo State.

#### Sensitization on the Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA) 2024 Annual Flooding Predictions.



On September 7, 2024, as part of the Flood Awareness Sensitization Program in Imo State, a team of civil society organizations conducted an outreach in Oguta Local Government Area. The purpose was to raise awareness and inform communities about the 2024 NIHSA flood predictions, which

forecast significant flooding in Imo State, including Oguta LGA. With 33 participants in attendance including the CARA's Officer, Gloria Ezike, the sensitization aimed to help community members prepare for potential evacuations and minimize the impact of the predicted floods.

The interactive session allowed participants to share their flood experiences and discuss how emergency responses could be strengthened. The CSOs also urged the community to collaborate with religious bodies for additional support. The sensitization concluded with a visit to flood-prone areas and the community's dilapidated emergency response center.

Moving forward, the program will continue in other affected LGAs, such as Ohaji Egbema, and advocacy efforts will be made to engage government agencies for better flood preparedness.

### **Training on Capacity building for GBV and Disabilities Advocates in Imo State.**

From July 8 to 11, 2024, the Center for the Right to Health (CRH) organized a 4-day training in Owerri, Imo State with CARA's Officer, Iheanachor Cynthia in attendance, the event aimed at empowering advocates for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and disabilities. The training, held as part of the project on building capacities of Disability and Women's Rights Organizations, focused on preventing GBV against women with disabilities and supporting survivors.



With a focus on understanding the intersectionality of disability and gender, participants, primarily women with disabilities, were trained in effective advocacy strategies, preventive measures, and inclusive support services. Group discussions and experience-sharing sessions deepened their understanding of GBV issues.

The training enhanced the capacity of advocates to support and defend the rights of GBV survivors with disabilities, with future efforts to focus on advocating for policies and extending community outreach.

### **Market System Development (MSD) Strategy Refresher Training**

From August 20 to 21, 2024, PIND Foundation held a two-day refresher training on Market System Development (MSD) strategy, attended by 20 market actors from various agricultural value chains in the Niger Delta. CARA's officer, Gloria Ezike attended the workshop aimed to strengthen participants' understanding of MSD concepts and their application in promoting competitive and inclusive economic growth.

The training covered the MSD cycle, theory of change, key principles, and approaches for sustainable development, with participants engaging in group work to reinforce learning. The use of the aquaculture sector as an example helped participants grasp the intricacies of sector selection

and project implementation. The workshop emphasized the importance of tracking systemic changes and applying the MSD strategic framework in future projects.



Participants left with a deeper appreciation for the MSD strategy's role in ensuring sustainability and unlocking untapped opportunities for effective project implementation in the development sector.

### **PIND Technical Analysis Workshop for Scoping Study**

CARA's Program Director, Eni Oko Elechi, participated in the Technical Analysis Workshop for the PIND Scoping Study held at the PIND EDC in Warri. This workshop brought together co-facilitators and the Market System Development team to align the Scoping study outcomes and identify key constraints, opportunities, and intervention areas for PIND Foundation's proposed initiatives over the next five years.



The Scoping Study focused on three thematic areas: Access to Technical Services and Business Development Services, Seeds and Inputs, and Agricultural Technology and Market, all emphasizing the integration of loan and credit facilities to enhance productivity and growth. During the workshop, participants discussed critical feedback to refine the Scoping Study reports, ensuring that PIND's future interventions are strategically focused and impactful.

### **PIND Cassava Seed Entrepreneur Certification Workshop**

CARA's Program Director, Eni Oko Elechi, attended the Cassava Seed Entrepreneurs (CSE) Certification Workshop held in Asaba, Delta State, organized by the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) in collaboration with key partners, including the National Agricultural Seed Council (NASC) and the National Root Crops Research Institute (NRCRI).

The workshop aimed to enhance agricultural productivity, increase farmers' incomes, and promote food security in the Niger Delta. Anas Mustafa, PIND's Market Systems Development Advisor, emphasized the workshop's significance in strengthening cassava production, highlighting that equipping seed entrepreneurs with essential skills would boost production and contribute to the region's economic growth.



The event gathered 25 certified cassava seed entrepreneurs, government officials, and agro-dealers, all committed to applying their newfound knowledge to improve cassava seed production and distribution systems. The program addressed challenges related to low-yielding and disease-susceptible cassava varieties by empowering smallholder farmers with access to high-quality, disease-resistant cassava stems. This initiative represents a critical step toward unlocking new entrepreneurial opportunities and improving cassava yields in the region.

### Scale Legacy Summit: Celebrating Impact & Opening New Doors



CARA Development Foundation proudly participated in the Strengthening Civic Advocacy and Local Engagement (SCALE) Legacy Summit, celebrating the remarkable impact of the project as it concludes. Supported by USAID, the Palladium SCALE project empowered numerous local civil society organizations, enabling them to become positive change agents across Nigeria. We are honored to be among the beneficiaries of this transformative initiative.

Over the past four years, the project has focused on enhancing public accountability, transparency, and sustainable service delivery nationwide. As the Anchor of the Agric Budget plus Cluster, CARA Development Foundation, in collaboration with four other organizations, successfully advocated for an increase in agricultural budgetary allocations from 2% to 5% in several southeastern states. We take pride in our role in fostering a stronger and more accountable Nigeria.

Notably, in attendance is Nnennaya Enyinna-Eneremadu, Executive Director of CARA Development Foundation. We were also honored by the presence of Chief Cosmas Madugba, Hon. Commissioner of Agriculture for Imo State, and Mrs. Williamson Mfon, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. We appreciate the SCALE Project for the rare opportunity

### Ongoing Cassava Value Chain Intervention Activity (July-Sept, 2024)

The ongoing Cassava Value Chain Intervention aims to enhance cassava production and improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers by involving community leaders and various farmer groups. This initiative mobilizes cassava farmers for capacity building on Good Agronomic Practices (GAP) and trains those interested in stem multiplication to produce quality cassava seed for easier access. Demonstration farms are also established to showcase the best planting methods.



This quarter, the CARA team supported service providers' outreach activities, training a total of 4,149 new farmers (1,756 males and 2,393 females) on cassava GAP across 72 locations in the Niger Delta. Additionally, CARA encouraged farmers to incorporate other crops into their farming practices and provided market access and linkages. The team also supported the establishment of 10 demonstration farms to illustrate the benefits of best practices and trained 72 new Agro/FSPs across the region. Monitoring efforts revealed that previously trained certified seed entrepreneurs sold 2,140 bundles of stem cuttings. However, challenges such as high transportation costs, expectations of incentives from farmers, and poor weather conditions were encountered during the implementation.

### Co-Creation Workshop on FLHE and School Violence Prevention



From September 23 to 27, 2024, Community and Youth Development Initiatives, in collaboration with UNESCO's "Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future" (O3) project, held a 5-day co-creation workshop in Owerri, Imo State. The goal was to enhance the capacity of the Imo State Ministry of Education to implement education programs focused on health and well-being. A total of 34 participants with CARA's Officer, Gloria Ezike in attendance, including primary and secondary school teachers and stakeholders from various sectors, worked together to design high-quality digital and non-digital communication materials on Family Life and Health Education (FLHE) and school violence prevention for adolescents and young persons (AYPs) aged 5-24 years.

The workshop addressed key themes such as adolescent sexual and reproductive health, violence prevention, and strategies for social and behavioral change communication. Participants developed campaign messages and communication strategies targeting issues such as school violence, early and unintended pregnancy, mental health, and gender-based violence. The event concluded with the successful creation of FLHE learning materials, setting the stage for improved implementation of health and education initiatives. Lessons learned emphasized the importance of clear, age-appropriate messaging and understanding the target audience. Going forward, participants are expected to apply these insights to real-time project implementation.

## Quarter 4

### West Africa Civil Society Week (WACSW) 2024



CARA Development Foundation's Programs Director, Eni Oko Elechi, represented the organization at the West Africa Civil Society Week (WACSW) 2024 in Abuja. The conference, themed "Leveraging Technology for Civic Engagement and Social Change in West Africa," brought together experts from diverse sectors across Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal. Discussions focused on critical issues ranging from digital security and ethical AI to protecting civic spaces – all vital for fostering resilient communities in a region where civil society faces increasing challenges.

A key highlight was the unveiling of a report on the proliferation of dual-use surveillance technologies in Nigeria. The event also provided insights into the work of the Civil Society Resource Hub, supported by Spaces for Change, the West Africa Civil Society Institute, and the Ford Foundation. The knowledge and innovative strategies gained at WACSW 2024 will directly inform CARA Development Foundation's mission of building healthier, more food-secure, and less impoverished communities.

### CSE Training

Addressing the critical need for improved cassava stem varieties in the Niger Delta, CARA Development Foundation, with the support of the PIND Foundation, has successfully trained 61 Certified Cassava Seed Entrepreneurs (CSEs). In collaboration with Umudike Seeds, Kolping Society, and NASC, we conducted two intensive training sessions in October and November.



The first session equipped 33 farmers from Delta, Imo, Edo, and Cross River States with essential knowledge and skills for cassava stem multiplication. Building on this success, we welcomed 28 new participants from all nine Niger Delta states in November. These dedicated farmers, selected for their commitment to Good Agronomic Practices (GAP), are now poised to become vital local access points for improved cassava varieties within their communities.

These 61 CSEs are not just farmers; they are now catalysts for change. They will play a critical role in boosting crop resilience and enhancing food security across the Niger Delta through sustainable cassava multiplication. We are incredibly excited to witness the positive impact they will bring to their communities and grateful to all our partners for making this possible.

## Strategic Planning on Board Government for HRCRC



CARA Development Foundation, a USAID-supported organization, recently led a transformative 3-day leadership and governance workshop for the Human Rights and Conflicts Resolution Centre (HRCRC) in Abakaliki, Ebonyi State. Led by our Program Director, Eni Oko Elechi, this strategic planning session, from November 11-13, 2024, focused on developing a comprehensive strategic plan for 2025-2029, a board governance manual, and a succession plan/policy. The process actively involved staff and stakeholders of the HRCRC.

HRCRC is a vital organization that champions human rights, the rule of law, and peaceful coexistence through advocacy, sensitization, mediation, and conciliation. This capacity-building initiative will significantly bolster their ability to drive change effectively. By strengthening their internal structures, CARA is empowering HRCRC to maximize its impact on the community. This initiative also reinforces our belief in civic advocacy and local engagement as cornerstones for achieving lasting societal progress. We firmly believe that collaboration and continuous development are key to empowering communities and strengthening the institutions that serve them.

## Reaching Niger-Delta Farmers with Cassava Value Chain Interventions

This quarter, CARA Development Foundation continued its impactful cassava value chain interventions across all nine Niger Delta states, supported by our dedicated farm service providers. We successfully trained a remarkable total of 4,252 farmers (1,468 males and 2,784 females) in Good Agronomic Practices, significantly enhancing their farming skills and knowledge. This includes the establishment of 16 demonstration farms across Edo, Abia, Ondo, Delta, Akwa-Ibom, and Imo states, serving as practical learning hubs for the community.



Furthermore, we collaborated with over 30 agro-dealers/FSPs to demonstrate the efficacy of their inputs (herbicides and fertilizers). This led to a substantial increase in sales for these providers, boosting local economic activity. We also facilitated vital linkages between smallholder farmers and commercial processors, ensuring a more efficient value chain and better rewards for our farmers.

Our actively trained Certified Cassava Seed Entrepreneurs (CSEs) continued to play a vital role, selling 3,159 bundles of improved cassava seed this quarter. As we support farmers to adopt crop diversification strategies, a total of 3,772 farmers across the region were recorded planting other crops alongside cassava. This integrated approach is a key step towards long-term sustainability and improved food security in the Niger Delta.



## CARA Annual Retreat



As 2024 draws to a close, CARA Development Foundation held its two-day annual retreat (December 9-10), providing a valuable opportunity to reflect on our journey, assess our progress, and strategically plan for the year ahead. We critically reviewed our operational plans, celebrating the milestones we achieved and learning from the challenges we encountered. This process allowed us to refine our strategies and lay a solid foundation for an impactful 2025. This year, we marked significant achievements, including:

- Trained over 15,000 farmers on Good Agronomic Practices, equipping them for better productivity.
- Redesigned their official website, enhancing visibility and accessibility.
- Engaged stakeholders through social media campaigns and quarterly newsletters.
- Built the capacity of over 500 individuals in life skills and maternal health.
- Conducted awareness campaigns, and advocacy visits, and participated in impactful workshops.




Stepping into 2025, our commitment to fostering healthy communities, reducing poverty, and ensuring food security remains unwavering. Excitingly, we plan to integrate a social enterprise model into our initiatives, further amplifying our impact.


## Appreciation

We extend heartfelt gratitude to our partners and supporters for standing with us through every step. Your contributions made our achievements possible. Together, let's aim higher and do even more in the year ahead!





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