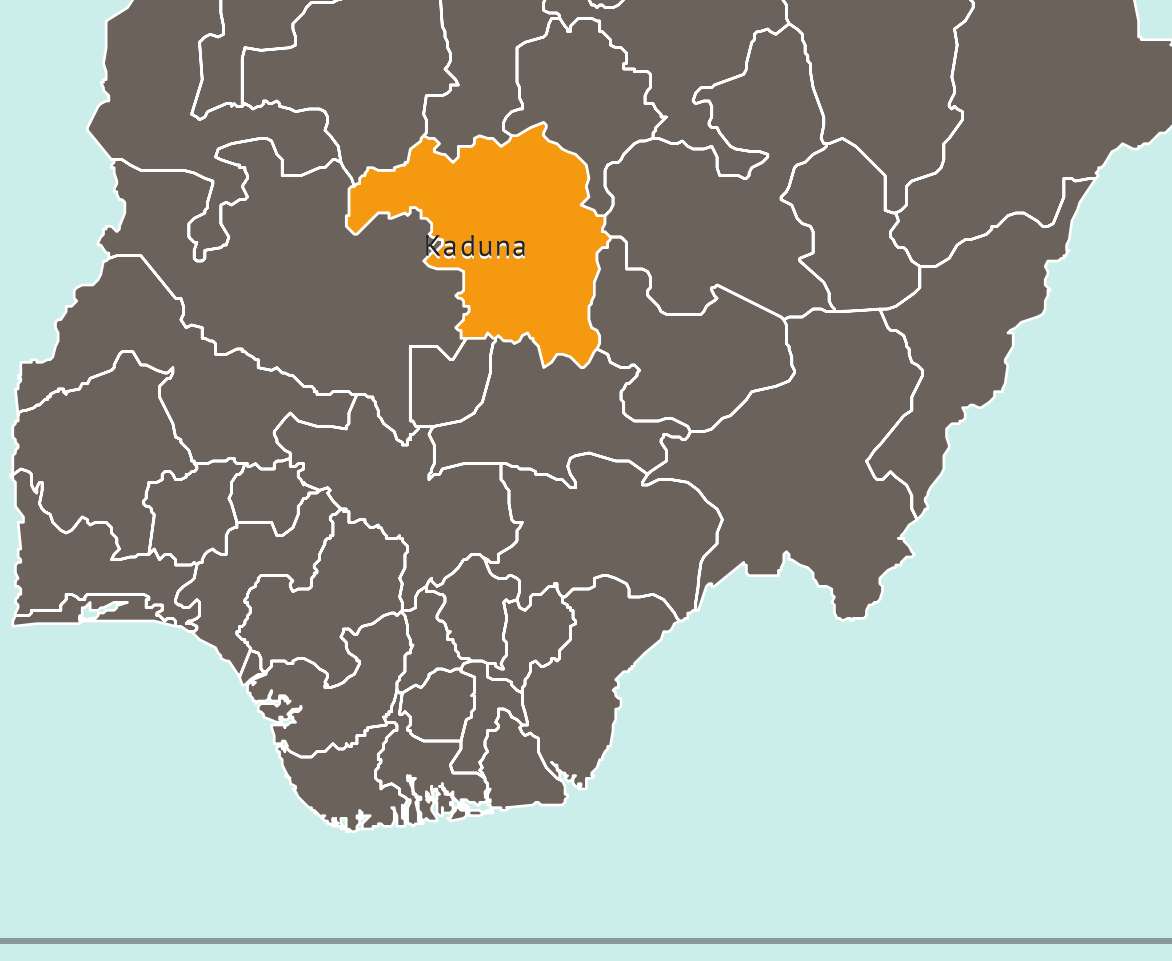


Religion and the Adolescent Girl: A formative study in Kaduna State, Nigeria

Key Findings



Introduction

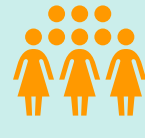
This formative study aimed to understand and document how religious and traditional leaders and institutions are influencing and reinforcing both positive and negative attitudes and behaviours towards adolescent girls' issues in Kaduna state, Nigeria.

Focused on Kaduna state, the study was conducted among Christian and Muslim faith actors at community and state levels, as well as traditional and community leaders and community members; inclusive of men, women, adolescent boys and girls. The study focused on three areas critical to the development of adolescent girls - **education**, **economic empowerment** and **time of marriage**.

The study design took on a quasi-experimental approach, while adopting a mixed method based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques. 1,134 survey questionnaires were administered in 15 communities across six LGAs - Chikun, Ikara, Kachia, Makarfi, Igabi and Zangon Kataf – spread across the three senatorial districts of Kaduna state. The male-female respondent ratio constituted of a percentage of 49.5% to 50.5% with a slightly even representation across age groups. In addition, 57 Key Informant Interviews (KII) and 47 Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were administered.

The study is part of the Collective Action for Adolescent Girls Initiative (CAAGI); a two-year pilot funded by Christian Aid, and jointly implemented by Development and Peace Initiative (DPI) and Gender Awareness Trust (GAT). The project aims to improve significantly the choices and opportunities for adolescent girls in Kaduna state to live productive and meaningful lives.

General Findings



adolescent girls' choices and opportunities are determined by societal perceptions of roles

this negatively influences their ability to make decisions about marriage, education or economic empowerment



35%



27.6%



22.4%

● Religious teachings
● Culture/tradition ● Family values

Religion, culture and family values are the most identified factors that influence societal perceptions of the value and roles of adolescent girls



Key Insight

The study identified that faith leaders are challenged by multiple barriers that reduce their capacity to respond to adolescent girls issues, including institutional, cultural and financial barriers, as well as inadequate government response and provision of public services. The most commonly mentioned challenge was a conflict between faith teachings and culture or tradition.

Education



86.2%

of people believe that access to education for **all** is supported by both religions



Some communities perceive educating a girl child as a waste of resources due to the societal perception of the role of the girl

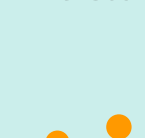


Key Insight

Information from respondents in the study showed that the societal value placed on an unmarried girl diminishes as she gets older, leading families to deny girls access to education as she may be considered too old to find a suitor by the time she has completed her education.

Child and Adolescent Marriage

The study showed that neither Islam or Christianity supports forced marriage, however,

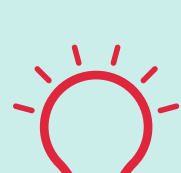


34.8%

of Muslims interviewed affirm that Islam supports early marriage



Unplanned pregnancies are also a key factor in early marriage of girls, but adolescent girls fear to seek sexual and reproductive health services to avoid being labelled as immoral or wayward



Key Insight

Responses from the study showed that despite the aversion of communities to discussing issues of sexual and reproductive health for girls, faith leaders can mobilise for an increase in uptake of sexual and reproductive health services. This is important for adolescent girls given that pregnancy is one of the factor in promoting early marriage, and the effect of early marriage on their health.

Economic Empowerment

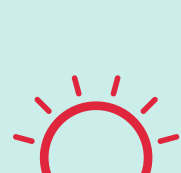


75.6% of respondents

believe that religion supports economic empowerment of the adolescent girl



Economic empowerment of an adolescent girl is influenced by different factors including the family situation and the perception of the role of the girl-child.



Key Insight

Access to economic empowerment for the adolescent girl was found to be influenced by family situations. It showed that economic hardships within a household affect the girl child more adversely than a boy child. This is influenced by the perception of the role of adolescent girls as being only "useful for domestic chores" which extends to supporting with income generation.

To read the full report, please visit christianaid.org.uk/nigeria

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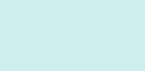
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