



Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response: **What Has Changed?**



With the support of
Ford Foundation



Anambra State

Light of the Nation

Ogbunike Cave

Anambra State

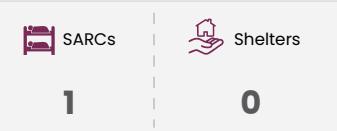
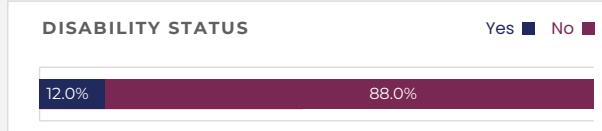
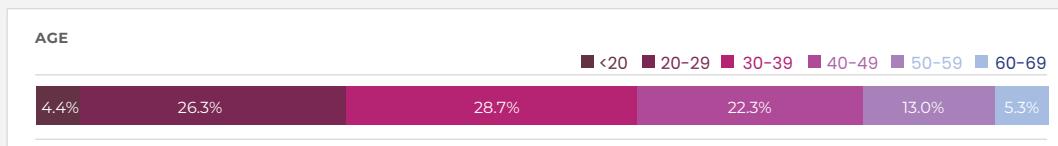
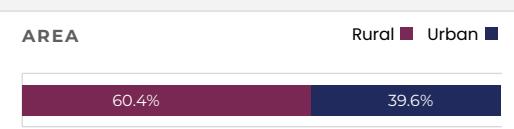
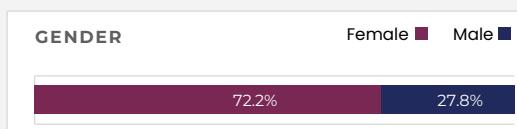
Population: 6,915,681

50.1% Female 49.9% Male

Overall Grade

53.3%

Respondents Demography (n = 1,375)



Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development

BUDGET ALLOCATION

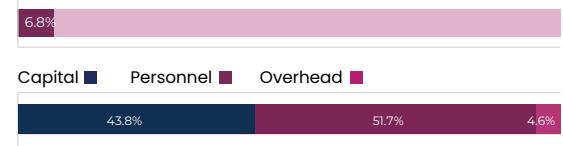
₦2.37bn

(This accounts for 0.6% of the total state budget)

BUDGET PERFORMANCE

₦160.86m

(This accounts for 6.8% of total allocation to the ministry)



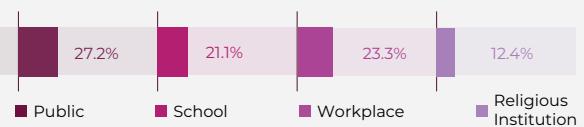
Indexes	Indicators	Total Grades
Laws and Policies	LP ₁ LP ₂ LP ₃	—
Access to Legal Justice	ALJ ₁ ALJ ₂ ALJ ₃	ALJ ₄
Support Services	SS ₁ SS ₂ SS ₃	SS ₄
Information and Awareness	IA ₁ IA ₂ IA ₃	IA ₄
Budget and Spending	BS ₁ BS ₂ BS ₃	—

GBV Context 2025

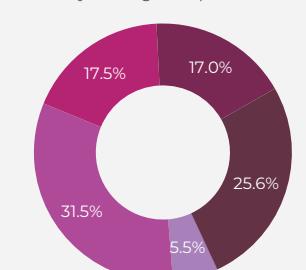
Have you or anyone you know experienced any form of gender-based violence in the last five years?



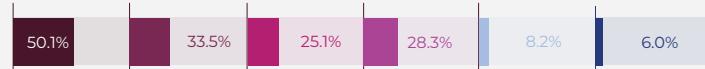
Where did you or the person experience the GBV?



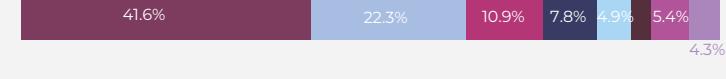
Why did you or the person choose where you sought help?

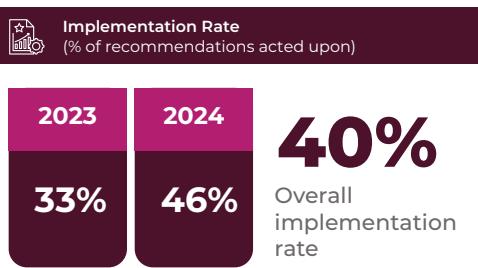


What form of GBV did you or the person experience?

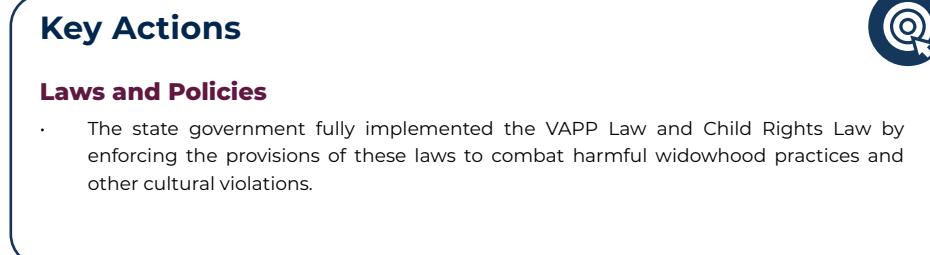


Where did you or the person first seek help?





Index	2023	2024	2025
Laws and Policies	LP 48.3%	LP 41.7%	+1 ▲ LP 66.7%
Access to Legal Justice	ALJ 86.3%	-1 ▼ ALJ 56.3%	-1 ▼ ALJ 43.8%
Support Services	SS 61.3%	SS 50.0%	-1 ▼ SS 43.8%
Information and Awareness	IA 86.3%	-1 ▼ IA 50.0%	IA 62.5%
Budget and Spending	BS 25.0%	+1 ▲ BS 50.0%	BS 50.0%



Access to Legal Justice

- The government initiated weekly GBV mediation sessions on Wednesdays and Thursdays at the Ministry of Women Affairs, allowing survivors and alleged offenders to resolve disputes through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) before going to court.

Support Services

- Collaborated with CSOs to provide essential counseling, mentorship, and economic empowerment programs for survivors, addressing gaps in state response

Information and Awareness

- Utilize diverse media channels by leveraging social media, radio, and television as primary platforms to raise awareness about GBV, ensuring messages effectively reach a broad audience.
- Collaborated with WACOL and WRAPA to implement "Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls (PVAWG)"s campaigns in schools and communities to educate on GBV and promote gender equality.

Change Spotlight

Anambra State achieved a remarkable transformation in its formal justice system for GBV survivors, demonstrating measurable impact through both institutional reform and community response. The state established specialized GBV courts at magistrate and high court levels, alongside dedicated Family/GBV Support Units and gender desks in police stations, creating a comprehensive prosecution pathway from reporting through conviction. This structural innovation yielded concrete results: the Attorney-General reported securing "nothing less than 20 convictions" within 12 months—a tremendous improvement confirmed by FIDA as "far better than before." The impact extended beyond courtroom outcomes to shift community behaviour, with public preference for formal legal avenues rising from 66% in 2024 to 73.7% in 2025, while those unwilling to seek justice dropped dramatically from 7% to just 1.7%



Anambra State GBV Assessment Survey

Overall Grade

53.3

LAWS AND POLICIES



Are you aware of existing laws and/or policies that address gender-based violence (GBV) in the state?

Yes ■ No ■



Do you think customary or religious laws and/or practices are sufficient in preventing and responding to GBV in the state?

Yes ■ No ■



Do you know of anyone who has been convicted for GBV-related offenses?

Yes ■ No ■



SUPPORT SERVICES



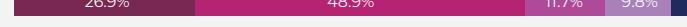
Do you know of, or have you visited, any active shelters and/or Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) for GBV victims/survivors in the state?

Yes ■ No ■



Do you believe that these shelters and/or SARCs are effectively functional, adequately equipped, properly maintained, and sustainable over time?

Yes ■ No ■



■ Agree ■ Strongly agree ■ Indifferent ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree



Which of these processes and procedures for reporting GBV-related incidents are you aware of? (Referral Pathways)

Yes ■ No ■



■ Police ■ Hospital ■ Support group ■ Legal ■ None



Do you think informal support systems such as family, friends, religious centres, community groups, etc., are helpful to GBV victims/survivors?

Yes ■ No ■



ACCESS TO LEGAL JUSTICE



Where would you seek justice if you, or anyone you know, experience GBV?

73.7% ■ Formal justice: e.g., police, courts, etc. ■ Informal justice: e.g., traditional or religious heads, community groups, etc. ■ I will not seek justice 24.6% 1.7%



If you witness GBV, would you feel safe serving as a witness during the investigation and trial?

61.1% ■ Yes, I would ■ It depends on the robustness and effectiveness of the witness protection program ■ No, I would not 26.3% 12.6%



Are you aware of legal assistance and services provided by the State to GBV victim/survivors?

■ Yes ■ No 42.8% 57.2%

INFORMATION AND AWARENESS



Do you know of any GBV information and/or education programs or materials in the state?

■ Yes ■ No 41.7% 58.3%



How useful is/was the content of the GBV awareness material in educating you on GBV?

■ Mostly useful ■ Completely useful ■ A little bit useful ■ Not useful at all 49.2% 27.9% 18.3% 4.5%

■ Agree ■ Strongly agree ■ Indifferent ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree



Which GBV information and education materials are you aware of for persons with disabilities?

■ Audio ■ Visual ■ Sign ■ Picture ■ Simplified ■ Subtitle ■ Braille ■ None 31.6% 23.9% 38.8% 27.2% 18.4% 21.5% 15.1% 32.1%

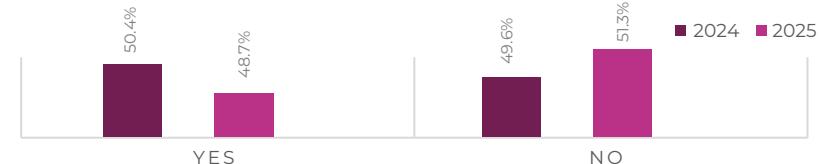
■ Agree ■ Strongly agree ■ Indifferent ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Anambra State GBV Context Trend (2024-2025)

Overall Grade

53.3%

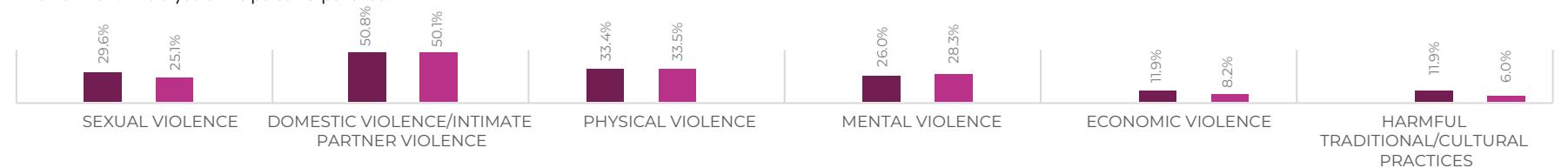
Have you or anyone you know experienced any form of gender-based violence in the last five years?



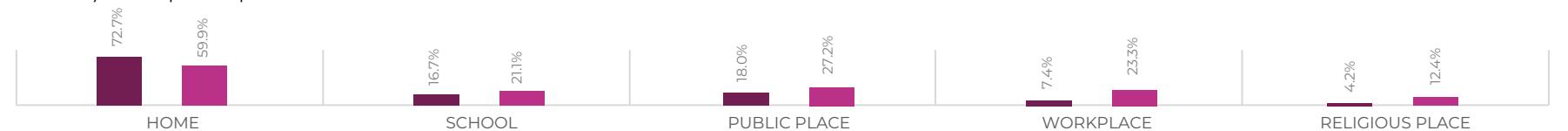
48.7%

of Anambra State population have either experienced GBV or knows someone who have experienced GBV

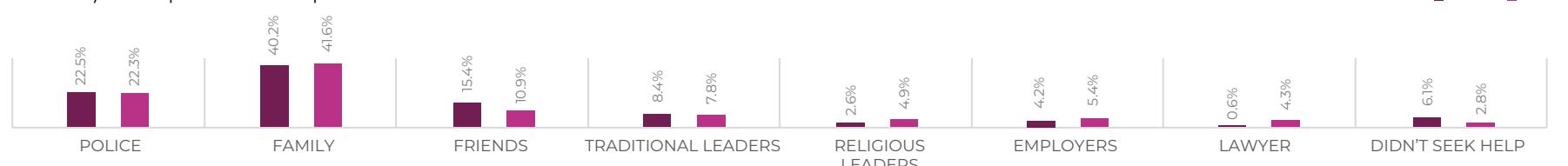
What form of GBV did you or the person experience?



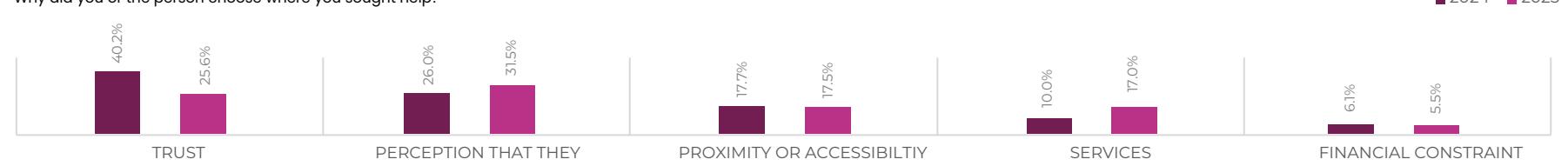
Where did you or the person experience the GBV?



Where did you or the person first seek help?



Why did you or the person choose where you sought help?



State Data Trend (2023-2025)

Overall Grade 53.3%





KEY INSIGHTS

Laws and Policies

Current State in 2025

Anambra State has a domesticated and comprehensive VAPP Law, aligned with the federal Act and used to prosecute GBV offenses. Stakeholders confirm that the State has added enabling structure, gender-specific courts at the magistrate and high court levels, and prosecutions and convictions have increased within the past year. The Attorney-General reports that the state has secured "nothing less than 20 convictions" in 12 months and that every SGBV file is assigned to lawyers for prosecution. FIDA also confirms a tremendous conviction rate, far better than before. Despite these reforms, public awareness remains weak: 53.9% of respondents are unaware of GBV-related laws, and only 31.6% know someone convicted. Limited visibility of justice outcomes fuels the perception that laws are ineffective.

Customary and religious systems continue to influence how cases are handled. Traditional and religious leaders sometimes attempt to settle cases privately or obstruct reporting which aligns with survey results showing 60.7% of respondents perceiving informal systems as effective. Yet, these systems lack criminal authority, and cases often collapse due to family resistance or pressure to "settle" rather than pursue prosecution. Legal actors note ongoing training for police, magistrates, judges, and CSOs to address harmful practices and improve consistent enforcement of formal law.

Changes Over Time (2023–2025)

Between 2023 and 2025, awareness of GBV-related laws in Anambra State experienced a significant decline, dropping from 75% to 46.1%. This drop indicates a weakening in community sensitization efforts and a lack of effective grassroots engagement. Stakeholders have pointed to inconsistent advocacy efforts and limited male participation in awareness campaigns as key factors contributing to this decline. For instance, the Attorney General of the state stressed the importance of having men take the lead in discussions surrounding issues like rape and defilement, underscoring that broader community involvement is essential for achieving a lasting impact.

Additionally, belief in the adequacy of customary and religious laws showed considerable fluctuation during this period. It declined from 65% in 2023 to 31% in 2024, before making a comeback to 72.4% in 2025. This trend suggests a shift back to reliance on traditional systems as confidence in formal legal mechanisms diminishes. However, the Chairperson of the Federation of Women Lawyers

(FIDA) noted that progress has been made under the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) (VAPP) Law, particularly regarding the reduction of harmful widowhood practices due to the imposition of stricter penalties.

Access to Legal Justice

Current State in 2025

Anambra State has strengthened access to legal justice through specialized GBV courts at both magistrate and high-court levels and the establishment of Family/GBV Support Units, gender desks in police stations, and dedicated prosecutors within the Ministry of Justice. Survivors now follow a defined reporting pathway, from community vigilantes or police to the State CID gender desk, SARC for medical/forensic evidence, and onward to prosecution in the GBV court. Legal assistance is available through FIDA and the Legal Aid Council, both offering pro-bono representation, mediation, and court accompaniment across the state. Funding has also improved, and witness protection measures now include discreet statement-taking and home-based evidence recording. These mechanisms are reflected in community responses; as 73.7% of respondents are willing to engage formal legal channels, indicating rising confidence in institutional justice.

However, equal access is still constrained by financial limitations, bureaucratic delays, and survivor fatigue. Although 73.7% are willing to engage, confidence in testifying is conditional, driven by fear of retaliation and inadequate long-term protection. Informal systems, traditional rulers or religious institutions, remain widely used, yet nearly half of respondents doubt their fairness, as they often pressure survivors to settle privately, enabling perpetrators to evade accountability. Thus, while reforms have strengthened formal justice delivery, gaps in protection, affordability, and sustained case follow-through still hinder full, equitable access.

Changes Over Time (2023–2025)

The landscape of access to justice for GBV survivors in Anambra State demonstrated fluctuations between 2023 and 2025. Initially, the preference for formal justice systems declined from 77.5% in 2023 to 66% in 2024. However, this trend reversed in 2025, rising to 73.7%, indicative of a resurgence in trust toward formal mechanisms after a brief inclination towards informal systems. Moreover, the number of individuals unwilling to seek justice decreased significantly, dropping from 7% in 2024 to only 1.7% in 2025. This shift suggests that there is increasing confidence in available redress mechanisms.

In terms of community involvement, the willingness to serve as witnesses showed a gradual increase,

from 57.5% in 2023 to 61.1% in 2025. Despite this positive trend, concerns regarding effective witness protection remain high, highlighting ongoing safety issues for potential witnesses. Awareness of state-provided legal assistance, however, experienced a decline, dropping from 52% in 2024 to 42.8% in 2025.

Support Services

Current State in 2025

Access to holistic support for GBV survivors in Anambra State remains uneven. The state currently operates only one SARC, located at Enugwu-Ukwu, serving the entire state and providing medical care, psychosocial counselling, forensic documentation, and linkage to prosecution. Functional referral pathways exist; survivors may report to vigilantes or police, who then transfer cases to the State CID gender desk, SARC, and subsequently to the GBV court. However, only 27.3% of respondents are aware of the SARC, and awareness of holistic services (medical, legal, psychosocial, economic) remains low at 36.9%.

Shelter services are inadequate and inconsistent. The state has no permanent shelter; survivors, especially women and children, are housed temporarily in children's homes or with relatives due to a lack of government-owned facilities. Survivors in remote LGAs face long travel distances to the single SARC, increasing reliance on informal family/community support systems. Stakeholders acknowledge this gap and report that additional shelters and SARCs are being requested for other senatorial zones. While the service framework is structurally defined, resource constraints, low public awareness, and geographic inequality limit true accessibility. Strengthening referral systems, expanding shelters, and increasing community-level sensitization are necessary to ensure equitable survivor-centered support.

Changes Over Time (2023–2025)

Between 2023 and 2025, awareness of active shelters and the SARC in Anambra State declined from 37.5% to 27.3%. Confidence in these centers also dropped, with only 26.9% believing they are adequately equipped compared to 30% in 2023. Awareness of referral pathways showed significant reductions; police referral recognition fell from 79.2% in 2023 to 58.8% in 2024, though it slightly increased to 62.6% in 2025. Conversely, awareness of healthcare dropped from 43.3% in 2023 to 27.3% in 2025, and legal referrals from 42.5% to 17%. These trends reflect a declining understanding of reporting options for survivors.

In contrast, reliance on informal support systems, such as families and community groups, remained relatively stable at approximately 45%. This consistency suggests that, despite the presence of some institutional structures, survivors continue to depend on informal networks due to ongoing gaps in accessibility, awareness, and public confidence in state-managed GBV response services.

Information and Awareness

Current State in 2025

Dissemination of GBV information in Anambra State occurs through posters, community sensitization, radio programs, school outreaches, and campaigns led by the Ministry of Women Affairs, Education, CSOs, and task-force networks. IEC materials include posters and T-shirts with messages like "Say No to Violence" and sensitization is conducted across schools, churches, markets, and communities. However, over half of residents report not receiving GBV information, showing that dissemination is still not universal. Schools increasingly teach GBV and child-protection topics from primary to tertiary levels, supported by civic education content in the national curriculum.

Survey results show 90.4% of respondents support incorporating GBV education in schools, indicating high public demand. Anambra has also begun disability-inclusive communication: GBV awareness sessions involve the Joint Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD), and sign-language interpreters and social workers are assigned to support cases at the SARC. Yet, awareness of disability-friendly IEC formats (braille, audio, sign-language versions) remains low.

Although state campaigns are frequent, respondents note limited reach to rural and marginalized groups. A shift toward community-based and user-friendly IEC, beyond social media, is needed to guarantee universal access to information.

Changes Over Time (2023–2025)

In Anambra State, between 2023 and 2025, awareness of GBV information and education programs declined notably from 58.3% to 41.7%. This shows weakened outreach and limited visibility of state-led sensitization efforts. However, perceptions of the usefulness of GBV materials improved significantly, with those finding them completely useful rising from 9.2% in 2023 to 27.9% in 2025, suggesting better quality and relevance of materials among those reached. Awareness of disability-inclusive GBV materials dropped sharply, with knowledge of audio or spoken content declining from 60.8% in 2023 to just 15.1% in 2025. This indicates that while the general quality of GBV materials improved, accessibility for persons with disabilities has deteriorated, underscoring the need for renewed focus on inclusive communication strategies and equitable information dissemination across all population groups.

Budget and Spending

Budget Analysis 2024

Anambra shows a significant gap between GBV budget allocation and actual implementation. The state allocated ₦2.4 billion to GBV initiatives, representing 0.58% of its total budget, but achieved only a 6.7% execution rate with actual spending of just ₦161.6 million (0.06% of total actual expenditure). This poor implementation resulted in a per capita GBV spend of only ₦46.63, among the lowest in the country, indicating severe underutilization of allocated funds despite having a specific GBV budget line.

Changes Over Time (2022–2025)

Over the last three years, Anambra has included several GBV-specific budget lines, including "Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence (SARCs)" under the State Ministry of Justice. This line item was allocated ₦50 million in 2023 but recorded no actual spending. In 2024, it received an allocation of ₦20 million, and an actual spend of ₦720,000, representing 3.6%. The "Anti-Child Abuse and Neglect Programme" received an allocation of ₦36 million with an actual spend of ₦4.65 million, amounting to 12.9%. These items are part of a broader pattern in which many GBV-related allocations received no spending and no implementation.

The low execution rate is reflected across the Ministry of Women Affairs as well as relevant components of other ministries, resulting in a combined budget performance of 6.7%. Per capita spending remained extremely low, with Anambra State recording ₦46.63 in 2024, ₦45.10 in 2023, and ₦79.62 in 2022. The decline from 2022 to 2024 highlights a downward trend in prioritization despite consistently low baseline investment. However, the 2024 figure is the lowest in the South East region and the second-lowest nationally, after Rivers State

Human Angle Stories

Chinwendu, a mother of two, endured prolonged abuse but avoided legal action for fear of exposing her children to stigma. She shared, "I was avoiding going to court so that people would not say I went too far." Her story illustrates how cultural perceptions and fear of social backlash directly shape survivors' decisions, even when legal remedies exist.

KEY GAPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Index	Key Gaps	Recommendations
 Laws and Policies	Awareness of GBV laws in Anambra State declined from 75% in 2023 to 46.1% in 2025, indicating reduced community sensitization and limited male involvement in advocacy.	Strengthen community-based awareness campaigns. Also engage male champions and local influencers to promote understanding and enforcement of GBV laws at the grassroots level.
	Confidence in customary and religious systems rose to 60.7% in 2025, reflecting declining trust in formal legal mechanisms.	Improve effectiveness of formal laws and systems on GBV prevention and response. Integrate traditional and religious leaders into GBV prevention and response frameworks through targeted training on the VAPP Law and survivors' rights.
 Access to Legal Justice	Willingness to use formal justice systems increased from 66.5% in 2024 to 73.7% in 2025, showing growing trust in formal mechanisms.	Sustain the progress by expanding specialized GBV courts and continuous police capacity-building to ensure survivor-sensitive investigations and timely prosecutions.
	Awareness of state-provided legal assistance dropped from 52% in 2024 to 42.8% in 2025, showing declining visibility of free legal support.	Intensify public communication on available legal aid services through community radio, town halls, and collaboration with CSOs/NGOs including FIDA, and local media channels.
 Support Services	Awareness of the existing SARC and shelters decreased from 37.5% in 2023 to 27.3% in 2025, limiting survivor access to essential care.	Establish additional SARCs and shelters across senatorial zones, coupled with consistent community sensitization on available support services.
	Only 26.9% of respondents in 2025 believe the existing SARC is adequately equipped to serve survivors.	Increase state budgetary allocation and donor partnerships to strengthen SARC infrastructure, equipment, and multi-sectoral coordination.
 Information and Awareness	Awareness of GBV education programs declined from 58.3% in 2023 to 42.6% in 2025, despite improved content usefulness.	Expand outreach beyond social media by engaging schools, religious institutions, and community platforms to improve coverage in rural areas.
	Awareness of disability-inclusive GBV materials fell sharply from 60.8% in 2023 to 15.1% in 2025, limiting accessibility.	Develop and distribute GBV education materials in accessible formats such as braille, audio, and sign language, ensuring inclusion of persons with disabilities.
 Budget and Spending	Anambra has one of the lowest GBV budget execution rates in Nigeria, spending only 6.7% of its GBV allocation in 2024, resulting in extremely low per capita spending (₦46.63) despite multiple GBV-specific budget lines.	Improve budget performance by addressing administrative and coordination bottlenecks, ensuring timely fund release, stronger inter-MDAs oversight, and clear implementation accountability for GBV-specific budget lines.

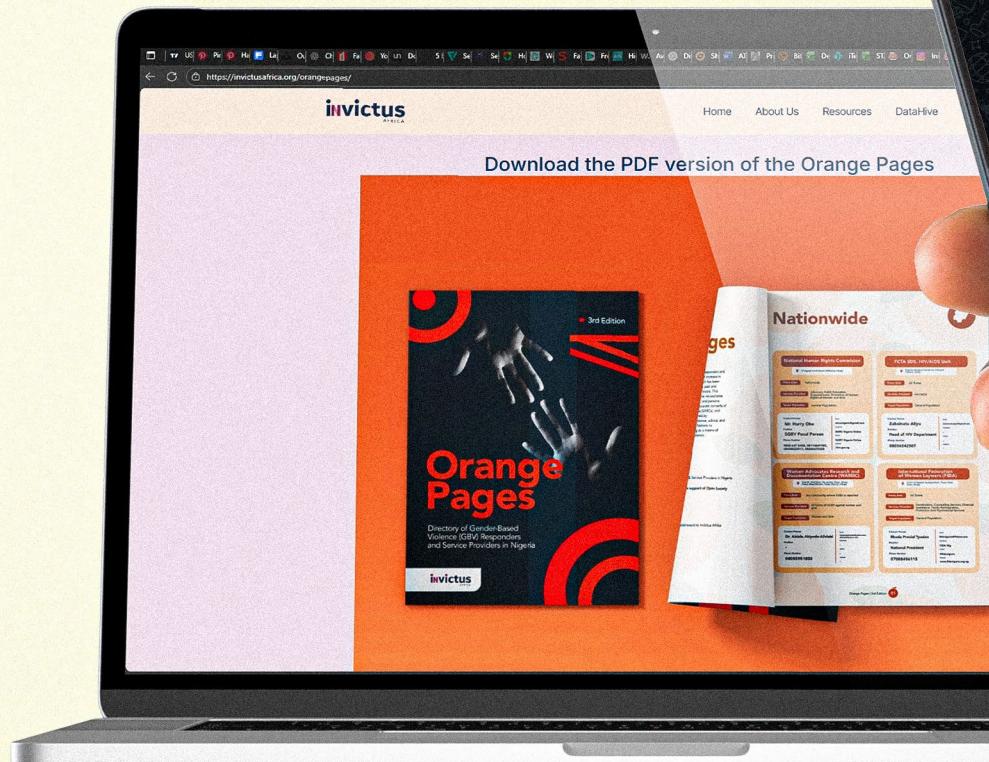


invictus
AFRICA

08033197588



www.invictusafrica.org



Let's interact
with the directory

