



YOUNG  
LEADERS  
NETWORK

## POLICY BRIEF ON

# THE STATE OF CHILD PROTECTION IN BAUCHI STATE.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**G**lobally, 2.2 billion children represent the largest vulnerable group, facing multiple forms of violence, physical, emotional, sexual abuse, and neglect—across homes, schools, communities, and online spaces, with adolescent girls particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence, early marriage, and exploitation. In Nigeria, one in four children experiences sexual violence before the age of 18, while increasing internet access exposes them to risks like cyberbullying and trafficking.

This violence inflicts both immediate and long-term harm, threatening children's mental health, education, self-esteem, and relationships, with adolescent girls particularly at risk of gender-based violence, early marriage, and exploitation. In Bauchi State, practices such as child labor, early marriage, and corporal punishment persist despite the enactment of the Child Protection Law (2022).

Although the government, in partnership with NGOs, has made strides by adopting the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law, establishing Child Protection Committees, and conducting awareness campaigns, gaps in enforcement and public awareness remain. Achieving SDG 16.2, which aims to end violence against children by 2030, requires collaborative efforts from the government, civil society, law enforcement, and traditional leaders to create safe environments where children are protected and empowered.



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## PROBLEM STATEMENT



Child protection in Nigeria faces significant socio-economic, cultural, and institutional challenges, with approximately 40% of Nigerians living in poverty, often pushing families into child labor for survival. Nationally, one in four children experiences violence before age 18, including physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, and girls are particularly vulnerable to early marriage and exploitation. While laws like the Child Rights Act (2003) exist, enforcement is weak due to inadequate awareness, under-resourced agencies like NAPTIP, and cultural norms that condone harsh discipline and gender inequality (Felix Olaniyi Sanni +7 more 01 Apr 2024).

In Bauchi State, these challenges are even more severe. With 70% of the population living in poverty, many families rely on child labor rather than education. Child marriage remains prevalent, with 43% of girls married before 18, jeopardizing their health, education, and future prospects. Bauchi has 1.5 million out-of-school children, representing 25% of school-age children, and over 30% of children under five suffer from stunting due to malnutrition. Despite the passage of the Bauchi State Child Protection Law in 2023, enforcement is weak, with over 80% of reported child abuse cases going unpunished. Insufficient social services further limit support for vulnerable children. ((Sadiq et al., 2024).

Additionally, public awareness of child rights is low, with only 30% of parents understanding their children's rights, and gender disparities exacerbate the situation. About 29% of women aged 15-49 in Bauchi report experiencing physical or sexual violence. Violence, conflict, and the presence of over 100,000 internally displaced persons heighten the risks of child exploitation.

Addressing these issues requires a multi-stakeholder approach involving government agencies, law enforcement, religious and traditional leaders, and civil society to ensure the enforcement of child protection laws, increase awareness, and build a safer environment for children in Bauchi ([Maxwell Obubu +8 more 13 Mar 2023](#)).

## POLICY ALTERNATIVE

The Bauchi State Government is actively implementing measures to mitigate child abuse through various initiatives aimed at enhancing child protection and welfare.

The government has enacted the Bauchi State Child Protection Law (2023) to establish a legal framework for safeguarding children's rights and ensuring the prosecution of offenders. Additionally, the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law enacted in 2022 also strengthens the legal landscape by addressing various forms of violence and abuse against children and women, ensuring that all forms of violence are met with strict legal consequences. In collaboration with local and international NGOs, the government conducts awareness campaigns to educate communities about children's rights and the harmful effects of child abuse, particularly focusing on issues like child marriage and labor. Furthermore, the state has set up child protection committees at the community level to monitor and report cases of abuse while also strengthening health and educational services to provide vulnerable children with access to essential resources.



The Bauchi State government is also working to improve the coordination of multi-agency response teams to ensure that reported cases of abuse are addressed promptly and effectively, committing to train law

enforcement and social workers in child protection practices to enhance their capacity to respond to incidents of abuse

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:



### 1 **The Bauchi State Government should lead relevant MDAs to develop Implementation Framework for the Bauchi State Child Protection Law (2023):**

The Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Development to lead and collaborate with the Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Health, National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Person, Internal Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) and Ministry of Justice and Non-governmental Organizations like PLAN-International and Young Leaders Network to establish a comprehensive implementation framework for the Child Protection Law (2023) that outlines specific roles, responsibilities, and timelines for stakeholders, ensuring effective execution, monitoring, and evaluation of all child protection initiatives.

### 2 **The Nigerian Police Force (NPF) should collaborate with Bauchi State Child Protection Network to strengthen Law Enforcement and Community Accountability:**

- The relevant Unit to partner with CSOs and Ministry of Justice and other relevant partners to conduct capacity building for Police staff on the provisions and enforcements of the Bauchi State Child Protection Law and the VAPP law.
- The Commissioner of Police to mandate the Gender Officer and other dedicated Units to enforce strict adherence to the Child Protection Law and VAPP Law and ensure that violators of these laws are legally prosecuted.
- Maintain updated database of cases of violations of the Child Protection Law and the VAPP Law.

### 3 **The State Government and CSOs Should implement comprehensive awareness campaigns to educate communities about children's rights, the impacts of abuse, and available legal protections, targeting parents, youth, and community leaders.**

- Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Development to partner with media houses to expand sensitization campaigns on the provisions of the Bauchi State Child protection Law and VAPP Law.
- Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Development to partner with the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs to engage traditional title holders for grassroots awareness on children's rights, the impacts of abuse, and available legal protections, targeting parents, youth, and community leaders.

### 4 **The Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Development and other relevant MDAs should Develop Reporting Mechanisms and Community Engagement on the Child Protection Act and VAPP Laws.**

- The Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Development to partner with CSOs to create user-friendly reporting mechanisms for child abuse, such as anonymous hotlines, and strengthen community-based child protection committees to facilitate local monitoring and support for at-risk children and ensure that it is captured in the 2025 budget appropriations and



## CONCLUSION

Strengthening child protection in Bauchi requires collective action from the government, NGOs, traditional leaders, and law enforcement. A focus on education, legal enforcement, and community engagement will be critical in reducing vulnerabilities and building a safe environment for children.

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# Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for Girls and Women in Bauchi and Sokoto States.

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