



ASALI PILOT PROJECT



2024 Annual Project Report

“ **Skin Health Advocacy Geared Towards Creating Awareness On The Health Risk Associated With SKIN BLEACHING Among Africans.** ”

Table of Contents

Table of Content	i
Foreword	ii
State of Oil Production in the Communities	iii
Accreditation and Contact Information	iiii
Acknowledgements & Appreciation	1
About the Project	2
Pre-Implementation Phase	3
• <i>Highlights of the Advocacy Visits</i>	3
Implementation Phase	5
• <i>Sensitization of 500 Students</i>	6
• <i>Health Education Segment</i>	7
Comprehensive Support System	9
In-School Activities	10
• <i>Visits to Schools and Sensitization of Students</i>	14
• <i>Intercontinental School</i>	15
Workshop Impact	16
• <i>Intercontinental School</i>	18
Testimonies of Participants	23
Collaborations and Partnerships	29
Project Numbers	



Foreword

Embarking on the **ASALI** campaign as a pioneer project for DermaRx and BYEI Africa (Bashir Yau Empowerment Initiative) has been an amazing experience. Through this project, we have changed the concept of colourism through various platforms by educating and creating awareness around the health risks associated with skin-bleaching products. We also promoted culture and peace building by embracing our unique colour and identity.

But the underlying story has a longer pedigree. As a young girl growing up, I noticed that people would look darker one time, and completely become lighter the next time you saw them. My curious little mind, oblivious to the concept of skin bleaching at the time, was fascinated by the idea of choosing your skin shade to suit different functions. That particular curiosity made me interested in learning about the skin, and it was exactly what got me into the fields of aesthetics and dermatology. With over a decade of practice as a medical aesthetician, I have consulted thousands of patients across the globe, some of whom have engaged in using skin-lightening products, knowingly or accidentally, to treat or enhance their skin.

After adopting several approaches to advocacy, which yielded positive outcomes, I realized that a multi-faceted approach will be needed to effectively combat the issue of colorism and skin bleaching amongst women from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

With the increased accessibility of these products, underage girls engage in skin bleaching, and the trend amongst mothers bleaching their infants, taking injections and pills to bleach their unborn child. The need to tackle the issue of skin bleaching from the grassroots up became imminently necessary. I felt the need to address the root cause of skin bleaching by creating awareness around the topic and ensuring that more people knew about the risks associated with its usage. They should also understand the best contact point when it comes to skincare and treatment. At the same time, push to advocate against self-medication and push for stronger policies on importation, manufacturing, sales and usage of these harmful products.

Zainab Bashir Yau
Founder/Director DermaRx
Global lead, BYEI Africa

State of Oil Production in the Communities

Seeds Processed Daily

4 types (Moringa, Castor, Sesame, Neem)



Daily Oil Yield

10 liters (maximum of 50kg seeds processed in 6 hours)



Price of Seeds (per 50kg)



- Moringa: ₦150,000
- Castor: ₦225,000
- Sesame: ₦350,000
- Neem: ₦55,000

Seeds Processed Daily



- Moringa: ₦250,000
- Castor: ₦280,000
- Sesame: ₦380,000
- Neem: ₦100,000

Monthly Yield (150kg processed)



Monthly Yield (150kg processed)

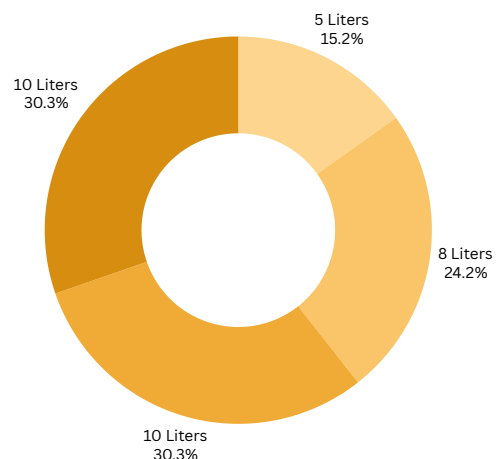
- Moringa: 15 liters
- Castor: 24 liters
- Sesame: 30 liters
- Neem: 30 liters

Monthly Wholesale Revenue (150kg processed)



- Moringa: ₦750,000
- Castor: ₦840,000
- Sesame: ₦1,140,000
- Neem: ₦300,000

Yield in Liters per Day

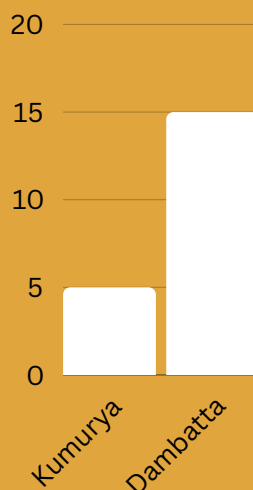


Community Investments

Dambatta
₦1,500,000



100kg seeds, 6-hour processing, 3 times a week



Kumurya
₦500,000



100kg seeds processed once per cycle



Accreditation

ASALI is a trademark of the **Bashir Yau Empowerment Initiative (BYEI)**, registered with **Cooperate Affairs Commission (CAC)**, and the **Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare** as an **NGO** dedicated to advancing health initiatives in Nigeria. **(RC Number: 7306014)**

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Acknowledgements & Appreciations

We were fortunate to have had an incredible and hard-working team who believed in our vision and always had ASALI on the agenda to ensure we stayed true to our goals. Our collective enthusiasm and commitment to the project made it a huge success and was instrumental in taking it beyond the project's original scope of pet-project.

We would like to extend our gratitude to our partners at both the state, national, and international levels for being a part of this journey, behind the scenes or at the forefront. DermaRx Aesthetics and Dermatology, BetterMe Hub, Proteach Consults, Kano State Ministry of Health, the Kano State Ministry of Education, the Kano State Senior Secondary Board, the National Institute for Cancer Research and Treatment, and Hamu Legal. We would also like to extend our appreciation to our experts for dedicating time and giving us professional insights; H.E. Dr. Zainab Shinkafi Bagudu, Dr. Hilda Titiloye, Dr. Zainab Yaro, Dr. Zainab Babba, Zainab Bashir Yau.

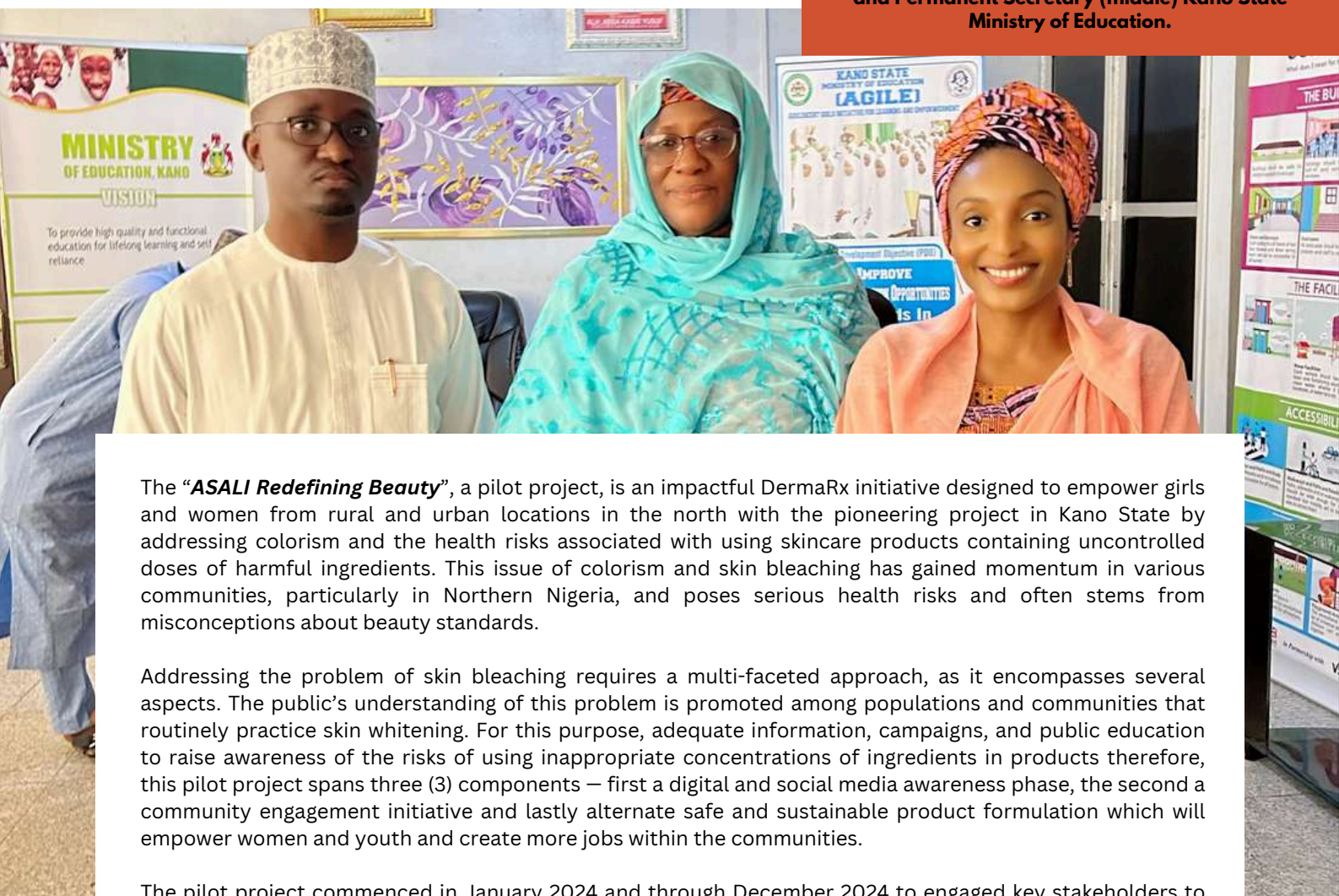
Many other people have supported and are still supporting the ASALI Project, notably Fahad Aliyu, Saadatu Falila Hamu, Fakhriyyah Hashim, Adewunmi Emeruwa, Nafisa Murtala Ahmad, Umar Muhammad, Habiba Waziri, Angela Murulli, and many more names that can't fit into one list.



Team bonding and training meeting for facilitator outreach exercise

About the Project

Left to right, Aliyu Lawan, Zainab Yau BYEI Founder and Permanent Secretary (middle) Kano State Ministry of Education.



The “**ASALI Redefining Beauty**”, a pilot project, is an impactful DermaRx initiative designed to empower girls and women from rural and urban locations in the north with the pioneering project in Kano State by addressing colorism and the health risks associated with using skincare products containing uncontrolled doses of harmful ingredients. This issue of colorism and skin bleaching has gained momentum in various communities, particularly in Northern Nigeria, and poses serious health risks and often stems from misconceptions about beauty standards.

Addressing the problem of skin bleaching requires a multi-faceted approach, as it encompasses several aspects. The public’s understanding of this problem is promoted among populations and communities that routinely practice skin whitening. For this purpose, adequate information, campaigns, and public education to raise awareness of the risks of using inappropriate concentrations of ingredients in products therefore, this pilot project spans three (3) components – first a digital and social media awareness phase, the second a community engagement initiative and lastly alternate safe and sustainable product formulation which will empower women and youth and create more jobs within the communities.

The pilot project commenced in January 2024 and through December 2024 to engaged key stakeholders to promote healthy skin and inclusive concepts of beauty in our society, especially for children, women, and young girls. Digital, social media, and community engagement campaigns are the first steps toward changing attitudes about the harmful effects of bleaching, and DermaRx Founder as an expert in the field is ensuring to raise public health awareness.

Broadening Reach to Community

Women and girls have increased self-reliance and income-generating skills in production and promotion of safe locally sourced natural skincare alternatives.

Strengthening Government Laws & Policies

Government and decision-makers strengthen laws and policies to end indiscriminate skin bleaching.

Increasing Communications Outreach

Communities reduce their practice of skin bleaching and are better informed of the harmful effects and health risks associated with skin bleaching agents.

Continuous Engagement

Communities speak up more against skin bleaching and harmful social norms around colourism.

Comprehensive Support System

Educational Outreach

The health education component is crucial for community well-being. By spreading awareness about the dangers of skin bleaching, the initiative aims to foster healthier practices.

Teaching oil extraction from moringa, sesame, castor, and neem seeds empowers women with valuable skills that are in demand.

Skill Development

Financial Independence

The seed capital and opened bank accounts lay the foundation for financial independence and entrepreneurial growth.

Linking participants with buyers for both primary and secondary products (oils and by-products) ensures that the women's efforts translate into sustainable income.

Market Integration

Team during outreach in Kumurya for the 3 communities



Pre-implementation Phase

Highlights of Advocacy Visits

**Global Lead BYEI Africa, and Emir of Rano
Amb. Kabiru Muhammad Inuwa at the emir
palace in Rano LGA**



As part of the inception phase of the ASALI pilot project and stakeholders' engagement, the founder of Bashir Yau Empowerment Initiative (BYEI) and the team paid a courtesy visit to the Kano State Ministry of Education. They met with the Permanent Secretary to discuss the importance of the ASALI pilot project and advocate for buy-in from the state government. The team proposed a long-term partnership and discussed the "Redefining Beauty", ASALI project, which aims to educate and create awareness on the health risks of skin bleaching among women, especially young girls and pregnant/lactating mothers.

The project also aims to empower 150 women from each community visited on how to extract oils from locally sourced ingredients, hence improving livelihoods and creating more jobs thereby promoting peacebuilding and reducing crime rates due to unemployment the reasons behind targeting predominantly young girls in secondary school age.

In her response, the permanent secretary also pledged the state government support to ensure that they are duly involved and represented by their staff during the sensitization workshops.

Similarly, the founder of BYEI, along with other team members, visited the Emir of Rano in Kano State to introduce the foundation's pilot project, ASALI, and seek the Emir's blessings and support. The Emir warmly welcomed the team, emphasizing the importance of sustainable projects like ASALI in educating grassroots communities, creating job opportunities, improving livelihoods, and promoting peacebuilding.

The Emir of Rano assured the team of his full support and assistance wherever needed. The Emir also introduced the team to the district head and local leader (Sarki) and offered the abandoned women's centre in Kumurya for the BYEI project. BYEI Africa is committed to rehabilitating the centre and converting it into a women's skills acquisition centre for the ASALI project and future workshops.

The founder and team also visited the Galadima of Rano, (Hakimin Bunkure) to discuss the project and seek his guidance and blessings.

"We are delighted to welcome the BYEI Africa team and are especially pleased to see that it is a women-led organization, demonstrating that our women are changing the narrative. It is always a pleasure to witness our women succeeding and paving the way for others. Grassroots communities are often overlooked in terms of project continuity, the project's concept, and its commitment to sustainability. We will provide all necessary support and guidance and encourage our women to fully embrace this rare opportunity to learn and improve themselves" according to the Galadima of Rano.



(Top) Community Women in Agalawa
(Bottom) Girl-child participants



In-School Activities

High level engagement with Education Managers and Chief Executives



Executive Engagement



BYEI Africa program coordinator Precious Eze, KSSSMB staff, BYEI ASALI team lead Kano Zenab Adam, KSSSMB Director.



During the initial phase of the in-school BYEI intervention, our representatives met with the Executive Director of the Kano State Senior School Management Board (KSSSMB) to discuss the ASALI pilot project and select schools for engagement. The KSSSMB approved four public secondary schools across diverse communities to ensure broad participation in the intervention:

- Government Girls Arabic Secondary School (GGASS), Kawaji
- Government Girls Secondary School (GGSS), Yakasai
- Government Girls Secondary School (GGSS), Dukawuya
- Government Girls Secondary School (GGSS), Dorayi Karama

The KSSSMB expressed their commitment to support and actively participate in the sensitization workshop.

Implementation Phase

BYEI team member interviewing one of the participants during the workshop.



HIGHLIGHTS OF INTERVENTIONS AND ENGAGEMENTS

The BYEI team visited Kumurya as the first community selected for the implementation of ASALI pilot intervention. The primary focus of the visit was to educate the community on the health risks associated with skin bleaching, highlighting how it can adversely affect various organs in the body. Additionally, a meeting was held with the traditional leader to discuss strategies for involving women in the community more effectively. The goal is to ensure that the women fully benefit from the opportunities the ASALI program offers.

The traditional ruler, along with local youth champions, expressed their strong support for the initiative. They committed to actively engaging the women of Dususu to facilitate a smooth and successful implementation of the program. This collaborative effort aims to empower women and enhance community health and well-being.



Community Outreach

The participants were informed about the health risks associated with skin bleaching, emphasizing how this harmful practice can negatively affect various organs in the body. This segment was conducted in hausa and facilitated by the community lead, Hajiya Nafisa Murtala to ensure comprehensive understanding and accessibility. Pamphlets containing detailed information on the risks of skin bleaching were distributed, enabling the women to share this vital knowledge within their community.

Educational workshop for community women of Agalawa, Dususu and Kumurya of Bunkure local government at the new women center acquired and renovated by BYEI Africa.



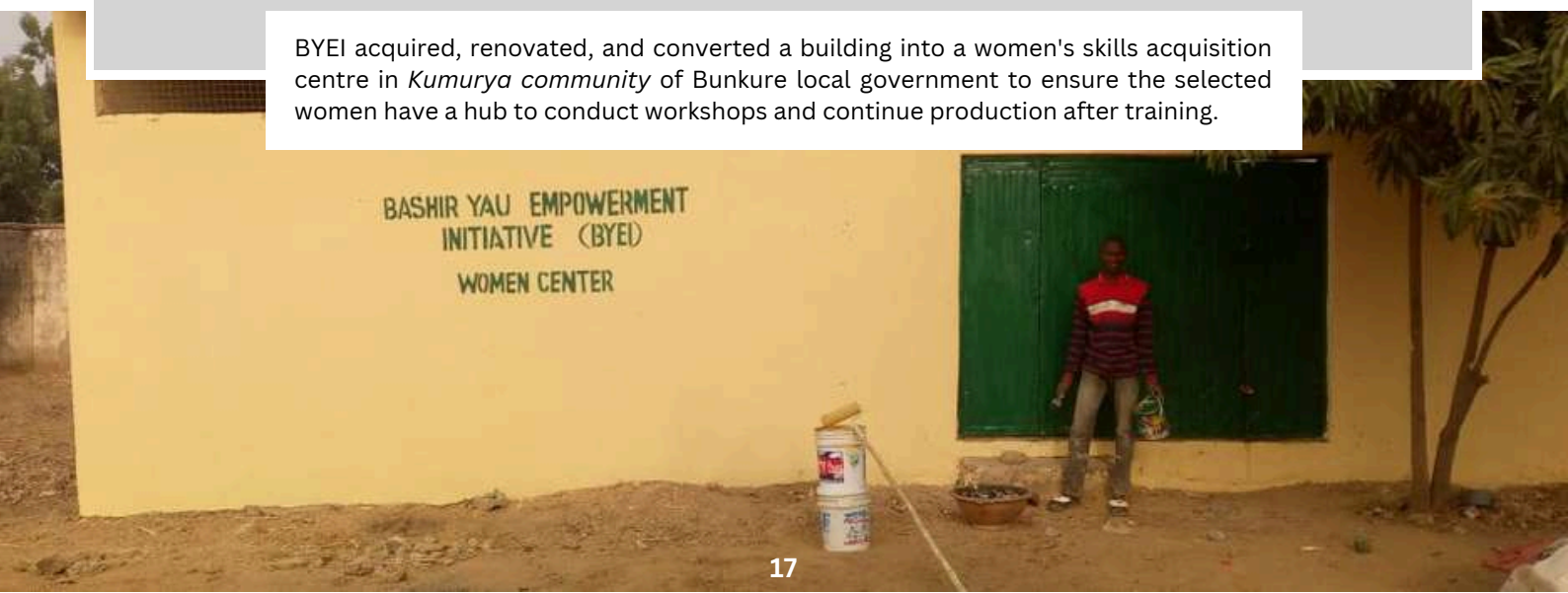


The team proceeded further to commence the training and educate the women on the dangers of skin bleaching, the health risks, and its association with reproductive health and skin cancer. It was an engaging session, and sadly, more than 90% of the young girls and women present at the training were actively bleaching their skin. After so much engagement, we had a few of them share why they started bleaching their skin, and other responses were gathered through the questionnaire shared. The majority of the young girls have been bleaching at a very young age—14 years and others at 17 years. From our discussions, these girls started bleaching due to peer pressure, and misconceptions about health and beauty within the community, they mentioned once their skin looked dull or got darker when they were in school, the comments people made were attributed to suffering and them thinking they were going through a terminal health challenge. Others confirmed that they started bleaching to treat teenage acne and continued because each time they stopped using the products, which were mainly triple action creams they buy at local shops, which they call "chemis," they couldn't stop because it kept getting worse when they stopped. Eventually, they found themselves with burned skin from long-term bleaching, and some of them had very red faces from excessive usage. After series of conversations, it was realized that bleaching within the community is a norm and a long-term trend. Girls and women who refuse to bleach their skin can't be part of some groups and are discriminated against, this forces a lot of the girls to start and encourages them not to stop. Also, they confirmed that the men mostly prefer to marry light-skinned ladies, leaving the dark-skinned ones to second-class men, as they refer to them. This trend has pushed almost all the young girls within the community into the practice of skin bleaching, with more than 80% of them joining at a very young age.

After the educational workshop, the women were paired into a group of 50 women per group and were trained on the oil extraction process. Four seeds were demonstrated, and the training was seamless, as the women were very attentive and very enthusiastic. Sesame, Maringá, Castor, and Neem oils were extracted from the seeds accordingly. The community women were given more seeds to practice on their while we await the completion of the account opening to facilitate payment and commencement of production within the community.

Women from Kumurya Bunkure local government from the previous workshop in Kumurya facilitated the training and were paid for it. This has also created another stream of income for the community women, as they are now equipped with the knowledge and technical skills to train others and make money from it.

BYEI acquired, renovated, and converted a building into a women's skills acquisition centre in *Kumurya community* of Bunkure local government to ensure the selected women have a hub to conduct workshops and continue production after training.



Secondary Schools Outreach

The founder and team of BYEI paid a visit to the first secondary school, GSS Kawaji in Nasarrawa LGA, and engaged with the principal and teachers. The principal welcomed the idea and pledged their support to the ASALI pilot project. In addition, the principal was excited and mentioned their constant disagreement with students bleaching their skin. “He mentioned how some students were suspended and asked to bring their parents because they were extremely bleaching their skin and started using the school avenue to market those products”. He sadly also mentioned that the majority of the students in the school have bleached their skin at one point or another, while currently, more than half are supposedly bleaching their skin.

The team also conducted the first sensitization session with approximately 500 students selected from the school. These students were drawn from different classes to participate in the program. During the session, it was discovered that most girls are below 18 years old and have been bleaching their skin for over two years.

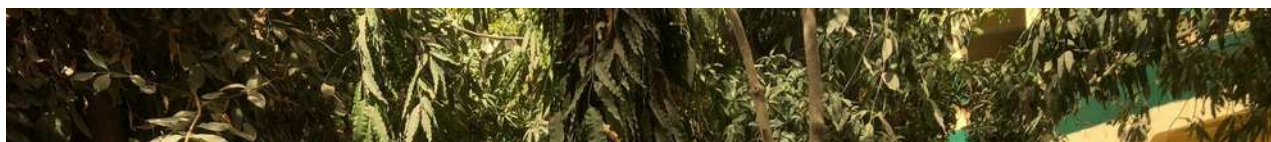
The session was highly engaging, with the girls discussing the reasons behind their skin-bleaching practices. Some girls admitted to bleaching their skin to fit into society and attract suitable suitors. Or in the quest to treat the acne on their faces and the first medication given to them at the pharmacies or stores, we call the triple action creams. Others pointed to the influence of their mothers, who would buy these products for them to use before family gatherings, believing it would make them appear more beautiful. Additionally, some students mentioned saving money from activities like braiding people's hair or using their transport or break money to purchase these creams, feeling pressured to do so because some of their classmates, who are considered “cool,” also use these products.

After listening to the lecture, a lot of them understood for the first time that beyond the implication on the skin, they are also exposed to risks affecting their internal organs. A lot of them agreed to discontinue using the products and had a general consultation with DermaRx representatives on safe products available in the market that they can use. The BYEI team agreed to follow up with these girls during the Workshop and connect them to service providers to help boost their confidence.

In continuation of BYEI visits to schools, the founder and the team also paid a courtesy visit to the second school GGSS Dukawuya Kano Municipal to discuss the project and conclude an approved date for the main educational workshop. The team was warmly welcomed by the Vice-principal, and he thanked the BYEI team for giving the girls the opportunity to be part of the initiative

Students asking questions





The ASALI team sensitized 250 GGSS Dorayi Karama and 150 students of GGSS Dakawuya and distributed over 400 educational materials and pamphlets for students and teachers.





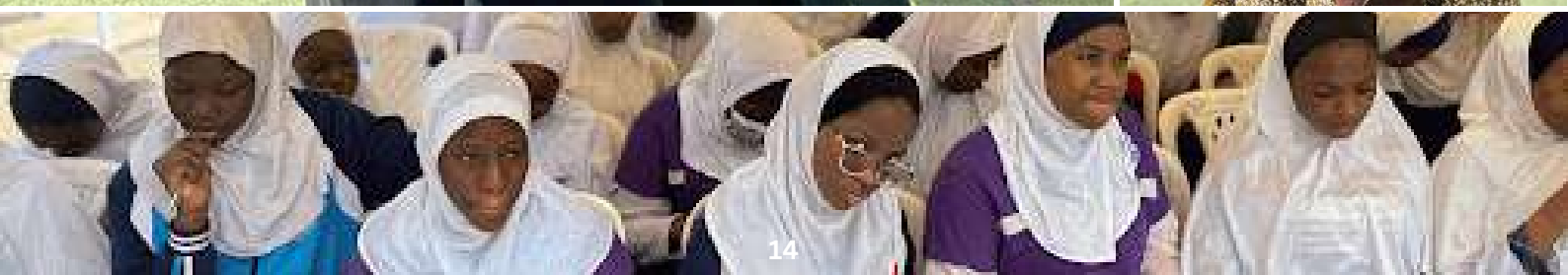
BYEI Visits to Public Schools



Intercontinental School



The BYEI team also conducted another educational workshop at Intercontinental Schools in Kano State, with 180 students in attendance. During the sessions, the students were enlightened about the health risks of using skin bleaching products, not just how it affects their skin but also how it affects other body organs. Most of the students were bleaching their skin as a form of medication against pimples, while others were due to low self-esteem. The students were engaged in a self-development and confidence-boosting workshop after the lecture.



Workshop Impact

By addressing both health and economic aspects, the BYEI team's workshop has provided a holistic support system for the 50 women participants. The initiative is designed to have a lasting positive impact on the community, fostering a culture of health awareness and economic self-sufficiency. The combination of education, skill development, financial support, and market integration forms a robust framework for sustainable development.



BYEI Founder and participants at the educational workshop and skills acquisition training



(L) Participants group picture, (R) Training session





Follow-up Engagements with Women in Dambata LGA

150 women were educated in Dambatta LGA. The workshop was held at the local government secretariat with 150 community women in attendance. Sarkin Fulanin Dambatta was present to commission the project. The team first visited sarkin Fulani at His palace, they introduced the project to him and discussed the impact it will make. The Sarkin fulani was present along with the Local government Chairman of Dambatta. After the meeting at the palace, the team proceeded to the secretariat where the workshop will take place. The king was present alongside the Local government chairman, The commissioner for Rural development, The Special Adviser to the Governor on media and other top members in the Dambatta community. The team presented the aim of the workshop and presented the cheque of three million naira which is sponsored by BYEI Africa to go towards the training facilitation and also start-up capital of 10,000 each to each participant. All participants will receive payment via bank transfer which the organization has facilitated opening an account for all participants to ensure full payment is received to the right participants.

Follow-up Engagements with Visited Schools

Follow-up visits to all four schools and counselling sessions with students. The team visited students from the schools where we conducted educational workshops to follow up on students and counsel more students who have discontinued skin bleaching. From the record, several students have discontinued since our first workshop. Discussing with the students, they confirmed that they stopped because they now knew the implications of skin bleaching, especially the issue of skin cancer and fertility problems as they all confirmed wanting to have children in the future and living a healthy lifestyle. They also confirmed that they don't feel the pressure to bleach their skin since most of their friends in class have also stopped bleaching. They also confirmed taking the fliers home to show their parents, especially the ones being pressured by their mothers to bleach their skin. We also held a meeting with the teachers in charge of guidance and counselling to get their feedback. They confirmed that more students are willing to speak about skin bleaching with them and also open up to other aspects of their struggles at home and in school. They confirmed that generally the students are more confident in speaking and this has improved their engagement in the classroom.

Speaking with the the lead at GGASS kawaji, the vice principal confirmed that some students who rejoined the school for the SSCE have also been having engagements with the students, applauding the students for setting a standard for a skin-bleaching free environment within the premises. he was excited to say that in the long run, the school will be a healthier environment with more students not thinking light skin in in trend and even making others understand that bleaching is not a thing to be proud of.

Testimonies of Participants

Ummi's Mum

"I had the experience with my daughter Ummi, since my husband died, I've had no means of livelihood. A lady from the city came seeking domestic staff to help her with house chores for a monthly payment. Out of desperation, I offered my daughter. Instead of housework, the lady bought bleaching creams for my daughter

in the city to start using, she told her that she would get a husband for her there and men in the city preferred light-skinned women. My young daughter who was 12yrs at that time agreed and started using this product, she narrated that she became lighter in a week, and immediately the woman started introducing her to older men mostly with grey hair which she assumed were above 45. It was an agonizing experience for my daughter as these men will have sex with her and give her money, which usually her madam will collect deceiving her that she is saving up for her marriage. The young girl opened up to us and disclosed that these men would forcefully have sex with her, and mostly she had to be treated by one of the staff of the woman who is a nurse for a week before she could be introduced to another man. She was with the woman for 3 years until she turned 15yrs, she was never allowed out of the house unless the driver was taking her to see her man for the week. One day she got the chance to sneak out of the house when the house was under renovation, she sneaked out behind a truck that brought cement to the compound and when they got to the factory, the men took her to the police station, and she was brought back to her family. There was no further investigation on the case as the woman narrated, they didn't have any money to cover the expenses the policemen were asking, and even the policemen had warned them that it is not wise to stand up against women like that."

The woman explained how this initiative will help her tremendously to cater to her family and ensure that they have the means to survive. *"I never knew skin bleaching had this adverse effects, not only was my daughter exposed to skin bleaching at a very young age, it was used as a tool to drive the sex business. And because of the stigma around this, my daughter who is now 21 still hasn't found a husband. At least I can teach her this business to use as a means to take care of herself and if it goes even better, she will be able to go to school. I am extremely honored and glad to be part of this initiative, and I will also teach my daughter how to do oil extractions."*

"My name is Suzan and I am 51yrs old. I started skin bleaching when I was 12yrs. I started because, at that time in school, my friends wouldn't let anyone join their group if they were not bleaching their skin. It was the cool group in school and everybody wanted to join. After school, I stopped bleaching since I didn't have to see the girls anymore. Fast-forward 3 years later, my friend introduced me to someone to date, and he looked at my face and said he couldn't date a black ugly person. I was so hurt, and I decided to lighten my skin again. This time, I was so desperate and bought mixtures in the market which the man selling them called them the rapid miracle cream. It can lighten the skin in 3 days. Since then, I've been using different products on my skin. I noticed one time it was turning red, and it hurt when I went under the sun, I told my cream seller, and he gave me a different product. All this time, I was using these products all over my body, on my butt, inner tights and there was a particular cream I was using to also lighten my pubic area. I continued using it, but the pain on my face wouldn't stop, each time I was given a different product to use. I got married a few years later and luckily got pregnant. At the time of delivery, I couldn't deliver myself and had to undergo surgery. The baby came out fine, but my

Suzan



surgery area seemed very difficult for the doctors to stitch. My doctors informed me that it was because my skin had become super thin from all the bleaching products I was using over time. I was in the hospital for over a month because my stitches continuously opened and had to be re-stitched. My husband got frustrated and told them to discharge me. I returned home after 7 weeks and kept taking care of the stitches with herbs. Sadly my surgery area got infected, and it kept bringing out puss and smelly fluid, but my husband refused to take me to the hospital and claimed he had no money. I had to sell my furniture, clothes, and shoes to raise small funds. I was admitted again to the hospital and kept receiving treatment. It got slightly better after 2 months, and I was discharged. However, the surgery area took more than a year to completely heal because even after I was discharged, I had to go to the hospital every week for dressing of the wound."

A mother

"I started bleaching my son when he was 2 months old, I did that because of my mom. My older sister is married to a biracial man, and her kids are generally light-skinned. Because of that, my mom seems to love her kids more than mine, which shows in my face. Sometimes she won't carry my kids and say, 'Ohhhhhh, let her carry her fine white children. This makes me sad and uncomfortable, and even my elder daughter would cry and say her grandmother called her 'Amuna duna baqa' which is a Hausa word for extremely black and ugly. I started using products from the pharmacy that were available, and I could afford them, I usually buy them for between 200 and 250 naira. When I go to the pharmacy, no one will ask me why I'm buying it or what I'm using it for. And sometimes the products in the pharmacy finish fast, so I stock up 10 at a time and keep restocking. I get the money from my little business of washing people's clothes, and they pay me for it.



Before the initiative, I didn't know there was any harm in using these products aside from the rashes my daughter and son get occasionally, especially when our products are finished and we don't buy another one. So, I ensure we always have this product in stock to avoid my kids being irritated by stoppage. But when I attended the workshop and learned about all the damage, I made up my mind to stop bleaching my 2 children. My son you're seeing now is 9 months old, and I have been using these products for him for the past 7 months. After learning all the harm I'm doing to my kids, I have promised myself to stop. I have been assigned to a medical aesthetician at DermaRx to do a consultation and guide me on what to do and what products to use moving forward.

After learning the oil extraction and understanding the benefits of these oils, I will now be using sesame oil for myself and my children. We had a psychologist and coach who had given us lectures on self-confidence and self-esteem, I have been given a free one-on-one session from BYEI Africa, and I will do it through phone calls with the experts. But so far, I have renewed hope for my children knowing that the discrimination they are facing is not unique to them and I am thankful to BYEI Africa for seeing this issue as a problem and taking it upon themselves to educate us on it. I will forever be grateful for this opportunity."

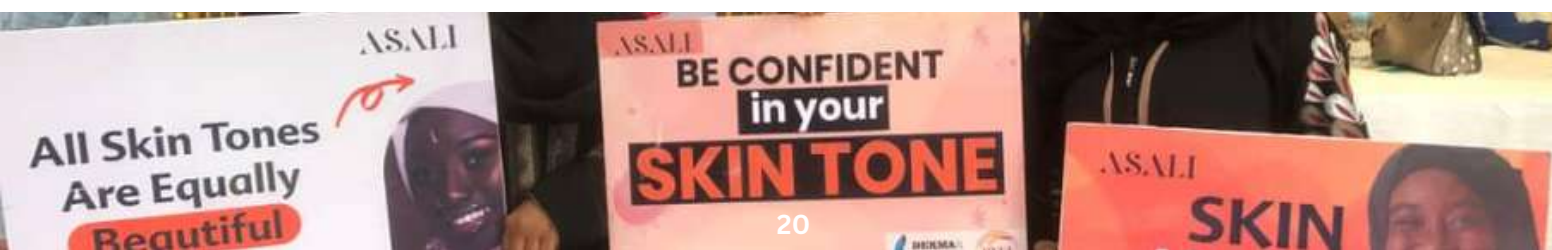
Saratu

"My name is Saratu, and I am 15 years old. I started bleaching when I was 11 years old because I was having pimples on my face. I went to our local medicine store, which we call "chemist," and I was given a product in a tube. Immediately after I started using it, the swelling on my pimples disappeared and within 4 days, they were all gone. I then used it for 3 more days. After that, I stopped, but the pimples started coming back 3 days later. I then started using the product again, and they disappeared within 3 days. This time, I decided that I would use it for 2 weeks maybe the longer, the better, and it would kill all the pimples in my stomach as they were coming out. By day 10, I noticed my skin was becoming very smooth, and I was glowing, even my boyfriend told me he liked my skin colour and I looked like those people from the city. I was so happy, so I continued for another two weeks. By then, honestly, I'd gone 2 shades lighter than my colour and I liked it. My skin was smooth and glowing like glass. My boyfriend collected the name of the tube and bought three more as a gift for me. And I continued using it for the next 6 months. But then I noticed my face was very white, but my body was very black, so I started using it all over my body. This time the cream would finish fast, so I needed a way to make more money."

"I started by helping young brides fetch water from the borehole, and when they paid me, I would use the money to restock my products, but the payment wasn't all the time. So, when I run out of stock, the pimples will come back, this time worse than before. The person I was buying from agreed to give me and I would pay him later when I couldn't pay. He said that he would forfeit the payment for a kiss from me which I didn't agree with but later on to. After about a year of this, I started noticing that I had very dark knuckles, my hands, and feet were wrinkling, the skin there was becoming thicker, my body was having stretch marks, and I was having a lot of spots, because each time I had an insect bite or wound, it will take a long time to heal and would always leave a spot. I went back to the seller with these complaints, and he told me my skin had graduated, and I needed to upgrade to something stronger. He mixed 2 products for me and gave them to me to use. These products even made me lighter, but I noticed I had a dark patch around my eyes, which we call 'gilas', and also on the sides of my face. My face started to hurt and turn red each time I went under the sun. I stopped for a while, but that was the most devastating moment for me because I became very black, even darker than my original color before I started bleaching. I had rashes all over my face, and my face was itching. Furthermore, I also had recurring rashes on my body, which itch very badly. When I went back to the seller, he told me it was too late to stop; otherwise, I would keep having those reactions. This time he gave me a concoction. He mixed about 5 different creams, one oil, which he said was hydroquinone and was magic. He even asked me to taste the oil, and it tasted sweet like sugar was added to it. He also added some powders, and pink and yellow liquids, opened some capsules, and added to them too. Not only that, but he told me to use it for a week and come back for an injection, which would lighten my entire body. I didn't go back for the injection because I was scared. But I bought the products and continued using them. It was not until after the ASALI lecture that I understood that I may have been struggling with steroidal addiction and withdrawal symptoms. I am very grateful for the opportunity to be part of this workshop because now I understand the dangers of skin bleaching beyond just the physical problems it has caused on my skin. I have consulted with DermaRx to take me through how to stop. Furthermore, I will be substituting these bleaching products with the Maringá oil which I now know how to extract, and it is very abundant and affordable in my village. Not only that, but I wish to continue this trade even after getting married to support myself and my husband and teach the women around me."

"I have been married to my husband for years now, I have a co-wife who is not Nigerian and very light-skinned, and we live in the same house. Each time we have a misunderstanding, no matter how little it is, my husband doesn't bother to hear my side of the story, he just goes ahead to insult me and calls me names, he says I am a black witch and the cause of all his problems in the house, he mostly gets frustrated and beats me up. I have been living with this for years now. When I spoke to my friend, she advised me to use some products to lighten my skin, maybe that way, I wouldn't be too black to take the blame from him. She gave me a little from the one she was using and told me to save up for my purchase. I started using the products and was gradually getting lighter and lighter, and to my shock, my husband complimented me for the first time in over 7 years of marriage. He asked me what I was doing, and I told him 'gyaran jiki' which means traditional spa treatments when I was using creams. He told me to confirm the price, and he will be paying for it. I confirmed with my friend, and she told me her supplier was in Sabon Gari market in the city of Kano. I collected the money, and I've used it for 6 months now. After the first sensitization with BYEI Africa, I heard all the damage it can do to your body, I decided to choose my health first and stop. I did not know of this prior, no one had ever warned me about it or knew it could harm you beyond making your skin light or giving you sunburn if you were under the sun a lot. Since my husband doesn't allow us to go out at all unless my mother is ill or someone very close dies, I didn't have to worry about that. We go out mostly on Sallah day with him in the evening to greet our families and his, and that's all or sometimes when close family members die or when they are very ill. I'm not allowed to go to my parent's or sister's house to visit except during Sallah, which means I don't need to worry about going under the sun or having sunburn. I attended the main workshop and oil extraction training, and I like the benefits I had from all the oils and since they are available in our communities, I will use the oils from the one I produce. Not only that, but I don't know how my husband will take the news of me discontinuing these products and how I will be able to continue my trade since we are not allowed to go out, but I know that I will produce this for my use and find a way to sell them by producing and sending the products to my mum and people can buy from her. If I am being honest, I only endured his abuse because I had no other means of survival, if I leave his house, I don't know what to do. My mother is

A Married Woman



old and can't support me, I also didn't go to school and don't have any capital to start a business and don't know which business to start with. This initiative has given me hope, it has not only trained me but given me a start of capital for my business. Now I have options, I feel like I have a new purpose in life and will not have to stay in an abusive marriage just to get daily food and clothes to wear. If I take my business seriously, I will be able to support myself and the 2 kids I have. My first son has finished primary school, but we can't afford to pay for his secondary since the primary was free, with my profit God's willing, I will be able to sponsor my children to school and support myself. "



Amina Abdu

"I am thrilled and thankful to have learned this skill. I have never had any form of vocative received to practice again on our own, and everything came out perfectly. I have been saving the profit I'm making from the little production I've started selling. Furthermore, I will use this profit to care for myself and my day-to-day needs that my husband doesn't cover. My husband only provides seasonally when he sells crops harvested from the previous planting season, other times we are left to fend for ourselves and the kids. I've always wanted to send my children to school, I will save up and use the savings to pay their school fees and also assist my husband with housekeeping, and training in my life. After the 3 training and practice sessions with the teacher, I fully understand the production process. I was happy when we came back to our community. We contributed N10,000 from the amount "

Aisha Isyaku

"For the first time in my life, I have held money of my own. I have honestly never held 10,000. It gave me so much joy to hold it and know it was mine that I didn't know when I started dancing. I don't have a father or a husband, and I have so many children. I was forced to send my daughter to the city to work as a housegirl; sadly, the woman used her for sex business and made her thoroughly bleach her skin, promising her that one of the men would marry her; if she refused, the woman would beat her up. My daughter narrated that most of these men will sexually abuse her and give her money. We have been surviving with profit from selling kuli kuli to the villagers and making a daily profit of 100 naira, which I use to feed myself and 3 of my children lunch every day with little help from the neighbours from time to time. This money will go a long way toward improving our livelihood, and I'm hoping that I will be able to save enough to send my children to school in the future. My daughter hasn't been able to get a husband in the village because they said she is a used commodity. I'm praying that when she goes to school, she will have a better life and get a good husband."

Amin Nasiru

"I am a widow, and I have so many kids. Honestly, we are currently surviving by the grace of God. My biggest dream is to send all my children to school. Also, I am certain that having more women join this training will reduce the rate of women and girls roaming on the streets due to joblessness, and it will also reduce crime rates. Imagine if all the mothers in this training used the money to send their children to school. Do you know how many children we will take off the streets? Most of these kids end up as petty thieves or go into drugs and cause problems within the communities. This initiative will help more women by creating jobs, improving livelihoods, and also helping more women send their children to school."



Collaboration and Partnership



(Top left) Engagement with the Vice-Chancellor (VC) Bayero University Kano (BUK) Professor Sagir Adamu Abbas. Group picture with Eden Venture Group (Top right) and The VC BUK and BYEI Founder (Bottom)



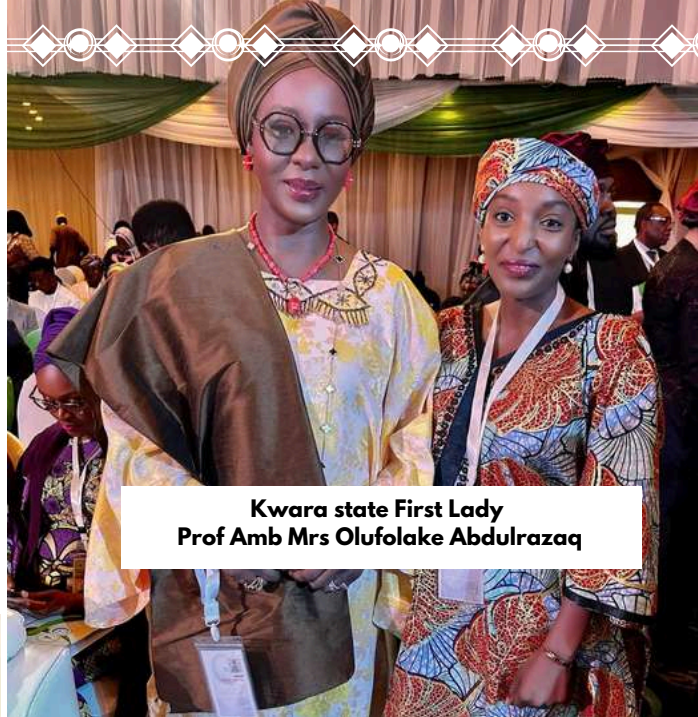
The BYEI team also made a courtesy visit to the Vice Chancellor of Bayero University Kano to discuss the ongoing project and seek his support for conducting similar sensitization workshops at the university.

The Vice-Chancellor was highly enthusiastic about the visit and commended the BYEI team for their initiative, particularly highlighting the importance of financial literacy for women. He emphasized the need to address the issue of skin bleaching, noting that many women engage in harmful practices to meet societal beauty standards.

Following this encouraging discussion, the team decided to expand the project's focus to include secondary school girls and women in the broader community. This phase aims to educate younger generations and ensure that the benefits of the initiative reach a wider audience. The Vice Chancellor's support signifies a promising partnership that could enhance the project's impact, further promoting health awareness and financial empowerment.



Minister of Health state Dr Tunji Alausa with member of the Women in Healthcare Network



**Kwara state First Lady
Prof Amb Mrs Olufolake Abdulrazaq**



**Dr Kelias Msyamboza
National Professional Officer For NCD's WHO**



First Lady Stakeholder events photos

**With Dr. Zainab Shinkafi Bagudu, Founder
Medicaid Cancer Foundation**



**Interacting with Katsina State First Lady
Hajiya Fatima Dikko Radda**

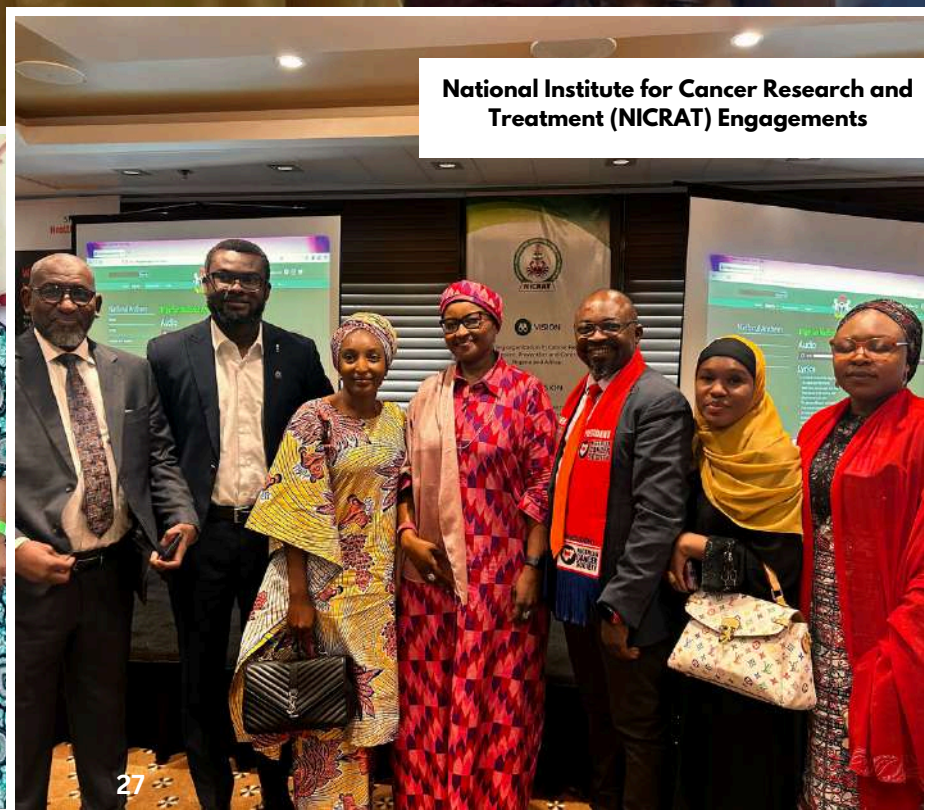


The First Lady Stakeholder Event



Turkish Embassy Photos





National Institute for Cancer Research and Treatment (NICRAT) Engagements

Participated in WIMBIZ International Women Day (IWD) 2024

Photo Album



Project Numbers

Number of People Reached

