



Center for the Advancement and Protection
of the Rights of the Vulnerable People
(CAPRIGHTS-VP)



From a Petty Pap Seller to Sewing Queen:

Mrs. Louisa Nkem's Inspiring Journey
to Reclaiming Her Future

Success Story of **Reclaim Your Future Project**
Implemented by **Center for the Advancement and Protection
of the Rights of Vulnerable People (CAPRIGHTS-VP)**
at Alimosho Local Government (Ikotun/Igando Community), Lagos State
Between 2022 to 2023

From A Petty Pap Seller to Sewing Queen: Mrs. Louisa Nkem's Inspiring Journey to Reclaiming Her Future

In the vibrant heart of Lagos, where dreams often collide with harsh realities, Mrs. Nwafor Louisa Nkem was a determined mother grappling with financial instability. Once the proud owner of a small sewing business, Louisa's aspirations had been thwarted by economic difficulties that forced her to shut down her shop. Her entrepreneurial spirit remained unbroken, but the road to recovery seemed steep and uncertain.

It was during this challenging time that Louisa discovered the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) program initiated by Center for the Advancement and Protection of the Rights of Vulnerable People (CAPRIGHTS-VP) through the Reclaim Your Future project funded by OXFAM and implemented by The Voice and Incognito between 2022 and 2023.

It became a glimmer of hope—a chance to regain her footing. Through the VSLA, she was introduced to financial literacy training that illuminated the path to managing her finances wisely. More than just a saving scheme, VSLA became a lifeline, offering her the tools to plan, save, and invest in her future, ***"I saved diligently, invested wisely, and restarted my sewing business, even though in a smaller way,"*** Louisa reiterated.

With renewed determination, Louisa started saving and decided to pivot from selling pap on the streets to revitalizing her sewing business. She started modestly, working from home, but her skills and the support from VSLA empowered her to dream bigger. As her business began to flourish, she rented a small space in a bustling market. The transformation was remarkable; her products, now of higher quality, attracted a growing customer base eager to experience her craftsmanship.

Louisa's success story was more than just a personal victory. With her improved financial stability, she was able to provide better for her family and reinvest in her business.

The income she generated from her sewing venture allowed her to achieve a level of financial security that had previously seemed out of reach.

Yet, the true measure of Louisa's triumph lay not only in her own success but in the ripple effect it created. Recognizing the power of community support, she began mentoring other aspiring entrepreneurs in her neighborhood. Her journey from a struggling pap seller to a thriving business owner became a beacon of hope for many. Louisa's story resonated deeply with those who saw in her not just a successful businesswoman but a symbol of resilience and empowerment.



Cognito, The learning and communication facilitator for the Voice Program in Nigeria, captured in a group picture during the interview session with Mrs. Nwafor Louisa



Mrs. Nwafor Louisa making a dress on her sewing machine

As her sewing business continued to thrive, Louisa's influence grew. Her achievements caught the attention of the VSLA program implementers CAPRIGHTS-VP, which saw her as the perfect representative of the program's impact. They nominated her to showcase her journey at the Voice closing ceremony (**MURYA**) a moment to celebrate not just her success but the transformative power of community and support.

When the day of the ceremony arrived, Louisa stood proudly to exhibit her well-crafted clothes which caught the eyes of participants who visited her exhibition stand, enabling her to sell all except one of her clothes.



Mrs. Nwafor Louisa at the Voice closing ceremony (MURYA) in Abuja

The Reclaim Your Future Project was not just a celebration of individual success but a testament to the collective power of initiatives like VSLA, which turn dreams into reality.

Louisa's story of perseverance, supported by VSLA and safe space meetings, was a vivid reminder that with the right resources and unwavering determination, even the most daunting challenges can be overcome. Her journey from pap seller to sewing queen was more than just a personal triumph; it was a powerful narrative of empowerment and hope that continues to inspire others to reclaim their futures and achieve their dreams.

Louisa, like other women who were part of the project gained confidence through other life changing interventions, being that the project's approach was holistic and multi-faceted.



Mrs. Nwafor Louisa with CAPRIGHTS TEAM Exhibiting her products at the Voice closing ceremony (MURYA) in Abuja