

# PEACE BREEDERS

System and Structure Strengthening Approach Against Radicalisation to Violent Extremism (SARVE II PROJECT)

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*Photo Caption: Meeting of CART members in Ofuloko during one of ActionAid monitoring team visit to the community.*

## Rebuilding Communal Relationship in Osaragada

Over time, youths in Osaragada community have borne the pains of insecurity. Osaragada, located along the expressway, about 40km from Lokoja, Kogi State capital and 30km to Okene a neighbouring town, has had its fair share of security challenges and threats; ranging from herdsmen attacks, to armed robbery invasion and false arrest by the police searching for escapee robbers.

Okpapata particularly was in a state of insecurity, some of which were pioneered by idle youths in the community. Through the SARVE project, ActionAid Nigeria (AAN) in partnership with Participation Initiative for Behavioural Change in Development (PIBCID) supported the establishment of the Community Action and Response Team (CART), a nine (9) member committee comprising of representatives of Community leaders, Women, Men, Youths and Herdsmen, who are residents in the community. CART had the mandate to create a platform for reporting early warning signs of violence and act as linkages between the community, security agencies and relevant stakeholders. AAN and PIBCID through funding from GCERF also trained CART members on Conflict Sensitivity, Participatory Vulnerability Analysis amongst others..

Communities were supported to map stakeholders and develop action-plan towards resolving identified security issues in their areas. For Osaragada community, this action was led by the established CART who went on advocacy visit to the State Headquarters of the Nigeria Security Civil Defence Corp (NSCDC) in Lokoja with a sole demand of setting up a civil defence post in the community. After several follow up visits, the Osaragada security post of the Defence Corp was finally established in February 2019. This has ultimately resolved the lingering security threats in the community as the youth and women no longer take laws into their hands in self-defence and can now go about their normal daily businesses without fear. Also, through the construction of block moulding machine and skill acquisition training by the SARVE Project, the youth have also been engaged as they now have a source of livelihood that has taken them off the streets.

“ As a farmer I can now go to the farm to cultivate and harvest without the fear of being robbed, beaten or having the herdsmen destroy my crops. We no longer take justice into our hands again. We are grateful. **THANK YOU ACTIONAID/PIBCID and GCERF for the SARVE Project in my community** ”

*Denise, Osaragada community member.*





**Photo Caption:** A view of Osara women processing cassava flakes factory built by ActionAid in partnership with PIBCID.

## The Rise of a Business Hub: New Engine for Okpakpata

“ Before SARVE Project, the money I make to assist my husband from my farming activities was very little. When ActionAid Nigeria and PIBCID swung into action with the SARVE Project through the livelihood support programme, I began to make more money to assist my husband and the family. Now I am working at the factory alongside my farming activity which keeps me productively busy ”

*Mercy, a beneficiary of SARVE project.*

In the past, Okpakpata women would travel over 10km to the closest town, Idah, to mill their grains such as maize, millet and guinea corn, as these are the staple food consumed in the community. The long journey to Idah is considered stressful for women in addition to exposing them to the risk of robbery, road accidents and abduction.

To minimize the impact of conflict on Okpakpata women, AAN in collaboration with PIBCID set up an income generating mechanism for Okpakpata Women Cooperative, which included the provision of grain milling machine, a winnower, an 8KVA diesel powered engine and a grater. Six months after the presentation of the grain processing facility to the women, they began to record an increase in production as a result of improved turnover time from crops to processed grains. In addition, it has also created job opportunities for Okpakpata women at the factory. A minimum of five women work daily at the factory and have been able to generate revenues for the women cooperative. With this, they were able to purchase an additional 13kva diesel generator to meet their increasing market demands.

# MARKET FOR CASSAVA FLAKES (GARRI)

## IS BEYOND OUR EXPECTATION

**O**sara Women Cassava Processing Cooperative was formed with the support of ActionAid Nigeria in partnership with PIBCID in 2017. Two months later, the cooperative was provided with standard sets of cassava processing equipment to enable women in the community earn more income through sale of processed cassava.

Asides the regular sales of processed cassava, garri in the community market, Osara Women Cooperative has also supplied hundreds of 50kg bag of Garri to the wife of

the Governor which was fully paid for. They have continued to make more sales and are often always smiling home with large profits.

“We appreciate ActionAid, PIBCID and GCERF for funding this initiative of empowering our community women. Members of the cooperative now own their individual petty businesses from the profits distributed. They can now take better care of their families”

*John, Community member*

**Photo Caption:** Osara women processing cassava flakes at their newly equipped livelihood centre built by ActionAid in partnership with PIBCID.





Hon. Ahmed Mohammed At the Kogi House of Assembly during the Public hearing of the Kogi Youth Development Commission Bill.

# Kogi Youth Development Commission Bill:

A Tale of Young People Organizing Around Power

Law making and policy influencing under the Federal Republic of Nigeria's constitutional system is rigorous. The amendment process as prescribed in the constitution is cumbersome. It requires substantial efforts, time and resources to delete a word or insert a clause in the constitution. Despite this obstacles, Kogi State Government passed into law the Kogi State Youth Development Commission bill, after only ten months of its conception.

Supported by ActionAid Nigeria under the System and Structure Strengthening Approach against Radicalisation to Violent Extremism (SARVE) Project in Kogi State, the Youth Development Commission Bill is the first privately sponsored bill ever assented to by an Executive Governor in Kogi State. After an arduous law-making process, Kogi State House of Assembly passed the bill into law on the 14th of November 2018, reportedly all 25 members of the Assembly voted in favour of the bill. Five months after the passage of the bill, history was made on the 24th April 2019 when the Executive Governor, Alhaji Adoza Yahaya Bello, after extensive consultations with his cabinet members and advisers signed the bill into law and affirmed the bill as laudable and timely for transiting the Kogi Youth from “vice prone” activities to value-adding activities such as technical work, agriculture, and information technology.

Hon. Ahmed Mohammed who sponsored the bill described the newly enacted law as a necessary tool for youth development. According to him, “the journey of the bill was not an easy one as we had to lobby all my colleagues for support. Today, I am happy

because we made history as this bill is the first private bill to be signed into law in Kogi State.” The road to the successful passage of the bill into law required good planning and determination. The SARVE Project provided the road map for success as it was designed to unearth the fundamental drivers of violent extremism in Kogi State, create practical community-driven solutions to address these drivers, and create an enabling environment to build community resilience to violent extremism.

The successful passage of the Youth Development Commission Law hinged on the definition of a clear goal and well planned and inclusive activities that addressed the drivers of violent extremism for youth (a history of hostility between communities, a lack of social cohesion, high youth unemployment, illiteracy, extreme poverty, and a perceived lack of opportunities be they political, economic, or social, and a reduced sense of purpose), while also creating an enabling environment for future Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) action. As part of the SARVE Project, the AAN consortium formed the youth advocacy clusters, which brought youth focused organisations together to develop their advocacy skills. The Consortium provided capacity building for these organisations including helping them to identify key stakeholders, power holders, and gate-keepers who may have influence over youth centred issues.

The youth focus organisations supporting the bill became known as “the Kogi Youth Advocacy Cluster” and was a key element of success.

The Youth Cluster adopted a strategic young-people led approach with its own leadership team, established values, and recruited constituents/supporters and identified its opposition and competitors. Another group was promoting a similar youth bill, but the Youth Cluster did not believe that it adequately addressed youth empowerment and other youth specific issues. As part of their plan, the Youth Cluster recruited competent young people to build the movement at the Local Government Area and State levels, and they established monitoring mechanisms and evaluated efforts made at every step of the journey.

Another key element of success is the way the Youth Advocacy Cluster addressed power dynamics. The Youth Cluster organised its actions around two categories of power: 'power with' and 'power over'. The 'power with' groups identified other communities of interest that were relevant to the bill or whose support were required to push this bill, including the media, state assembly members, and community leaders. While some youth advocates within the clusters were involved in engaging their Constituency Assembly members and elected officials at the local government levels, the State leadership of the Youth Cluster interfaced with relevant commissioners of line ministries, special advisers to the Executive Governor, and the Chief of Staff to the Governor. In all interactions, the Youth Cluster representatives were consistent and clear in building awareness about the importance of the bill and in making their demands of “the establishment of a commission to cater for their needs.” To build public support, the Advocacy Cluster organized a series of road walks, town hall meetings, advocacy visits, and round-tables to build awareness about their needs and possible solutions.

According to the coordinator of the Kogi Youth Advocacy Cluster, Okwutepa Aminu Oseni, “The passage of the bill by members of Kogi state House of Assembly and subsequently assented by the governor, Alhaji Yahaya Bello, is a welcome development. This is a notable milestone in

the quest to drastically cut down high levels of youth unemployment which has greatly contributed to several social vices among the youth in Kogi state.”“The bill will also create opportunities for youth in the state to discover their capabilities, build capacities to be self-sufficient and contribute positively to the revenue base of the state,” he said.

The Commission's work will empower youth through the creation of more opportunities. It will promote youth inclusion and improve their sense of purpose while laying the ground work for the creation of a sustainable enabling environment for building resilience to violent extremism amongst youths in Kogi State.

Currently, the cluster has started gathering momentum towards advocating for the implementation of the law as only the full implementation of the law will give room for the much needed youth development in Kogi State.





*Photo Caption: Ibanga Isine engaging Journalists during the Training on Conflict Sensitive Reportage in Goshen, Nasarawa State.*

## No More Working in Silos: Placing The Media At The Center of Ending Violent Extremism.

Following the incessant insecurity outrage in Nigeria caused by radical conflicts and violence, ActionAid Nigeria in partnership with Participation Initiative for Behavioural Change (PIBCID) and Global Peace Development (GPD) trained thirty (30) journalists from Kogi and Nasarawa states on Advanced Conflict Sensitive Reportage. This was aimed at enlightening Journalists on ways of reporting matters arising from conflict prone areas, including early warning signs of radicalization and threats to peace and life.

It is true that through agenda setting, the media can shape the society and affect the lives of the people. The method in which conflicts are reported can also affect its resolution or exacerbation. Many times, conflicts occur due to lack of accurate information about the parties involved and how this information is reported. Journalists can clearly play an important role by providing parties with accurate information that they

can trust in making informed decisions.

Participants were made to understand clearly that false information can trigger chaos, therefore there is need for journalists to properly investigate and fact-check stories before disseminating to the public. Furthermore Journalists were encouraged to project stories that promote peace and unity in the society instead of amplifying messages of war and conflict.

At the end of the training, a communique on Advanced Conflict-Sensitive Reportage showing the roles journalists must play in curbing violence extremism in Nigeria was developed by the participants and circulated. The participants also came up with story ideas and jingles to promote peace in Kogi and Nasarawa States, including driving an online campaign tagged #TogetherForPeace.



System and Structure Strengthening Approach  
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