

ACTIONAID NIGERIA TRIANNUAL NEWSLETTER

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Nana (right) is among the 2560 women who benefitted from ActionAid Nigeria's emergency response to conflict affected communities in Konshisha Local Government (LGA) Area of Benue State.

Credit: ActionAid Nigeria | Peace Eneja

act:onaid

WHAT'S NEW?



On 13th May 2021, history was made when the policy document abolishing harmful traditional norms (including female genital mutilation) in Olaukwu community and Oforola ancient kingdom was presented in an open declaration by the traditional rulers of both communities at the Oforola Women Civic Centre, Owerri West Local Government Area of Imo State. This was achieved following consistent advocacy by ActionAid Nigeria's subgrantee, Honour Birth Foundation, as part of the implementation of the Strengthening Local Women's Right Organisations Towards Combating Violence Against Women and Girls (SLOCVAWG) Project.



As parts of efforts to tackle violent extremism in the northcentral, ActionAid Nigeria empowered 1,500 young women and men from 24 communities in Kogi and Nasarawa States with livelihood skills such as Hair Dressing, Poultry, Barbing, Fashion Design, Welding, Carpentry, Graphics Design and ICT, Fish Farming, Shoe and Bag Production and Catering. The beneficiaries received their business start-up kit and rented shops worth a total of 79 million Naira (219,443.5 USD) in June after successful completion of a 3–6-month extensive training in their field of interest. This initiative is funded by the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF).



ActionAid Nigeria is collaborating with Beer Sectoral Group to provide empowerment and survival support to 500 victims and survivors of human rights violations in Nigeria. The response is prioritizing the survivors and victims of the EndSARS protest hijack or their families (if the victim is dead). Beneficiaries also include security officials impacted negatively by the protest. This is a significant stride as Nigerians rebuild and draw lessons from the aftermath of the most coordinated youth-led activism in its history.



Also in the news, ActionAid Nigeria is responding to the cholera outbreak in Bauchi State through the provision of cholera prevention kits to 1500 households. 100 hygiene promoters, 20 house-to-house disinfection volunteers, and 500 water vendors have also been trained and equipped to combat the deadly endemic. The intervention which is funded by Start Fund and locally implemented by Fahimta is ongoing in four Local Government Areas: Bauchi, Toro, Dass, and Ningi in collaboration with Bauchi State Primary Healthcare Agency, Bauchi State Rural Water and Sanitation Agency, and Bauchi State Emergency Management Agency.

Welcome to another exciting edition of SWIFT!

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B.A.D: Shaping Peace Through Mentorship

On the 12th of February 2013, a major crisis between herders and farmers hit hard on B.A.D community and left many homes destroyed. Barikin Abdullahi community popularly called B.A.D by the people of Nasarawa State is a large community located on the outskirts of the state capital, Lafia. The crisis left remnants of anger and youth restiveness; reoccurrence of conflicts among young people became the new normal.

For 27 years old Silars, life was not any different from what it has become for many youths in B.A.D. He did not always make trouble but would fight with every power in him once anyone pushes him to the wall. He was not quick to forgive and would swiftly retaliate any wrong done to him. This was his nature and lifestyle.

Silars had lost his father as a teenager. As the first child of his parents, he has been the father figure to his siblings. He knew he had to support his mother whose sole source of income was farming, so he began nursing the ambition of owning his business early on. Upon graduation from Nasarawa State University with a BSc in Geography Education in 2016, Silars had gone ahead to complete the compulsory National Youth Service in Ebonyi State and during this period he saved some money from his monthly stipend.

Brainstorming on business ideas after searching for white-collar jobs to no avail, Silars recalled that only a few good barbers successfully rebuilt their business following the 2013 crisis. He engaged one of the barbers named Hakeem and indicated interest in becoming a good barber. Silars understudied Hakeem and soon became a pro at popular haircut styles for both young and older men in the community, including

children. As soon as he was set to kick off the business, he took N78,000 (189.31 USD) from his savings to rent a shop and purchased some basic work tools. As an established barber, Silars makes an average of N1,800 (4.37 USD) as profit daily; despite his budding business, his aggressive nature remained.

Fortunately, Silars had an attitudinal change after participating at the 2020 Youth Peace Camp organised by ActionAid Nigeria in Nasarawa State. He learned that dialogue is a better approach to conflict rather than retaliation. On returning home, Silars saw the need to kick out idleness among youths in his community and decided to enrol 9 young people as interns to learn the haircut trade at no cost. One of his mentees popularly known as Movement, used to be a notorious troublemaker in the community and was always seen where there is conflict. Now through Silars's constant mentorship, Movement has totally changed from being an addicted smoker and troublemaker to a calm and productive member of the community.

"If I had not met ActionAid, Global Peace Development, and Beacon Youth Initiative, I wouldn't have thought about some of these decisions I have made to help build other young people like me in my community. I would have remained in my selfish and nonchalant shell. Now I am happy for the changes I see in myself, in my friend, Movement, and in my community. From here on, everything will get better". Silars said with a big smile on his cheek as he shows off his haircut skills.



Halima

Displaced But Not Deterred: **HALIMA'S STORY**

Halima's family was forced to leave Konduga 5 years ago with just the clothes they had on. Her family's story is like many others from Konduga who were forcibly displaced when insurgents invaded the community, setting houses ablaze and killing anyone attempting to stop them.

For 14 years old Halima and her family, it was farewell to the community they called home and the beginning of a new life at an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp. However, three years ago, her family decided it was time to rebuild their lives, so they relocated to Shuari community and have been living with a host family ever since.

On how the displacement affected her education, Halima said "When we left Konduga, my hopes to continue my education was dashed. I have always been a bright student and I am just one of the lucky girls whose parents are passionate about girl-child education. Sadly, I had to quit school at primary 5 due to the displacement."

Halima's story is not uncommon. The impact of the northeast crisis on the education system has been severe, leaving generations of children without opportunities to learn and even more vulnerable. Between 2009 and 2015, 611 teachers were killed, 19,000 teachers displaced, 910 schools destroyed, and more than 1,500 schools forced to close. As a result, an estimated 900,000 children have lost access to learning while 75 per cent of children in IDP camps do not attend school.

Its against this backdrop that ActionAid Nigeria began the implementation of the Achieving Continuous Education in Secondary Schools in Borno State (AcCESS PRO). The project aimed to support children's access to formal education by supporting non-formal education which gives leeway for teaching additional subjects and missed classes before children are re-integrated into the formal education classes and curriculum.

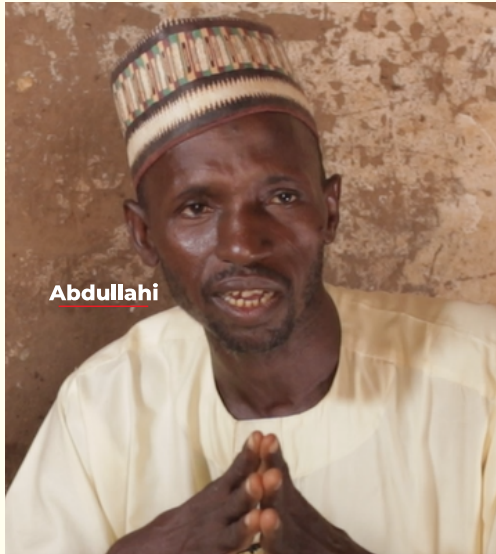
Halima's dream of becoming a doctor was revived in 2020 when she was selected with 239 other children for re-integration into the formal education system through an initial 9-month non-formal education in one of ActionAid's study centres in Maiduguri which was operated in collaboration with the Borno State Agency for Mass Literacy and Agency and State Universal Basic Education (SUBEB).

Narrating her experience "I count myself as extremely privileged to be one of the children selected for the programme. We were taught 5 subjects: Mathematics, English, Basic Science, Social Studies and Civic Education. English is my best subject. We were also provided with learning materials and snacks throughout the duration of the programme. The lessons organised were a great refresher for me since I had been out of school for 5years".

Beaming with smile, Halima said she had good news to share.

"Whilst we were rounding up the non-formal education programme, my father heard about the entrance exam for unity schools and asked if I could take it. I was not sure of my capability to take such a national exam, but he encouraged me. I revised all the lessons we had been taught and studied extra hard. I sat for the unity schools entrance examination, and I passed. For having one of the best results in Borno State, I have been admitted into Junior Secondary School 2 instead of 1 at the Federal Government Girls College, Munguno, Borno State. I could not have done this without the support from ActionAid Nigeria. My father is committed to supporting me through my secondary education and I am excited that I am on the right path to becoming a doctor".

The Access Pro project was funded by ActionAid UK and was implemented from October 2019 to June 2021. ActionAid Nigeria continues to mobilise resources in support of children affected by the northeast crisis.



Abdullahi

POWER-IN-PEOPLE:

Mobilising for Change One Community at a Time

Residents of Lomin Fulani community have mastered the art of advocacy. Realising the place of advocacy to development, the community's first response to any challenge is through advocacy.

Abdullahi Lomi, 51, a facilitator and a member of the community development committee received training and capacity building on various areas; like Human Right, Child Right, Women Right, how to balance your income and expenditure.

The outcome is tellingly evidenced in the community.

Residents of Lomin Fulani has taken its advocacy beyond the local governments, they caught the attention of the World Bank: "World Bank came to our aid because of our advocacy, they constructed a culvert for us, as a community we gave a counterpart funding of 10% as community effort and they gave us 90% at about One Million Four Hundred and Seventy Thousand Naira" said Lomi. He emphasized that the knowledge gained from engagement with ActionAid and Fahimta also helped in attracting electricity in a

community that was not connected to the national electricity grid, through engagement with State's Ministry of Rural Development.

Overwhelmed by the results of the well-coordinated community advocacy in Lomin Fulani, ActionAid Nigeria and Fahimta team journeyed to Tubule community, about an hour drive from Lomin Fulani.

Sule Danmadami, sits quietly as he listened and occasionally makes a point about the impact of the Local Rights Programme (LRP) in Tubule community. When asked about how the LRP has enhanced the living standard of the people, he pulled a pinch of smile, observed a deep thought and said: "I personally received training from ActionAid through Fahimta; my capacity was built on advocacy. The first advocacy visit we did was very fruitful, and it resulted in the construction of two blocks of classrooms, the headmaster's office and staff room".

Danmadami mobilised a team of community members to visit the office of the Bauchi State Universal Basic Education Commission along with the Education Secretary of Kirfi Local Government Area in Bauchi State. The team was unrelenting in their demand to fix the dilapidated community school; they approached the chairman of State Universal Basic Education Board, SUBEB who promised to send engineers to find out the level of dilapidation. Exactly one week after that advocacy visit, the renovation commenced.

"We cannot thank ActionAid and Fahimta enough, they have really enlightened us, changed our mentality and built our capacity, we will forever be grateful" said Danmadami.

The main objective of the LRP is to improve the socio-economic status of poor women, men and children in the programme states by mobilizing communities and building their capacities to implement people centered development programmes using the Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) to programming. The LRP is currently implemented in 14 states: Kaduna, Gombe, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Delta, Ebonyi, Lagos, Yobe, Cross-Rivers, Niger, Jigawa, Ekiti, Enugu and the FCT following the close out from Bauchi, Ondo and Akwa-Ibom in June 2021. ActionAid hopes that the communities will continue to leverage on the capacity strengthening interventions provided throughout the life-cycle of the project to create the change they want to see and transform their lives and communities.



Charity

HUMAN SECURITY IN EMERGENCIES: A Tale from Konshisha

Six years ago, Charity relocated from Nsukka, Enugu State with her husband and children to start a new life in Gungul- a rich, large, and peaceful community in Konshisha LGA of Benue State. As soon as they settled, they established a beverage store in Gungul market, the biggest local market in the community. The business was doing well, and it was not long before they moved from a single shop to a double shop within the market; the family later added another detached store. They had upgraded from retailers to wholesalers. They lived a little above an average life in the community and could comfortably cater for their needs.

But things got a little sour for Charity after her husband died in 2020 following the doctor's report of food poison. She was not only charged with the responsibility of solely managing the business they had grown together but also catering for their five children without any lag in sponsoring their academics. Two of her children, John and Nene are now in the university while the other three are in secondary and primary schools, respectively. Charity was pulling it off all by herself while being grateful for her thriving business.

In April 2021, Charity's challenging situation became worsened. She was in her shop that fateful day when she heard distant distress noises. Soon the noise increased and was accompanied with fast footsteps. "They are burning shops oh! run!", came a sonorous voice from the background while she was still trying to figure out what was happening. She pulled her slippers and ran for safety. The military attack had hit Gungul.

All she saw from where she hid was a tall smothering smoke. The burning continued until 4pm in the evening and by the time she returned to Gungul market and saw the extent of the devastation in all her 3 shops, she was in tears. Her only means of survival has been burnt beyond recognition. She stood blankly in the middle of her shop, feeling the hotness from fresh flames on her feet, sad and confused.

That evening she informed her extended family of the incident and after 2 weeks, she received N20,000 (\$48) from her uncle Taade. She used the money to purchase some provisions to display in front of her damaged store. She knew that if she would continue to keep her children in school, she needed to start again, but she needed all the help she can get.

Fortunately, Charity was among the 2,560 women headed households who benefitted from ActionAid Nigeria's emergency response to vulnerable households in Konshisha. She received N14,500 cash support and additional non-food items. She remains grateful for the assistance as she musters courage to rebuild her life. "I almost had a heart attack after my shops were burnt, but I am grateful for this assistance from ActionAid. This support will go a long way in meeting many of my family's current needs. Thank you for giving us hope" she said.

ActionAid Nigeria's emergency response in Konshisha was funded by Start Fund.



Salihu



Isa



Abdul-Azeez

FROM PAIN TO PURPOSE: Breaking Barriers to Inclusive Education

Salihu, Isa and Abdul-Azeez are passionately working on a common cause; inclusive education in Sokoto State. Salihu, a radio presenter, Isa a school teacher and Abdul-Azeez a civil servant have something in common; a purpose fueled by pain.

Salihu Ibrahim makes an uneasy climb to the 3rd floor of the Vision FM Station Sokoto almost daily. Salihu crawl his way through the poorly lighted stairways to his office, panting through the daily uncomfortable exercise, he finally takes a seat, turn on the microphone and begins his most listened-to radio programme in the state- Rayuwa Ayau, translated -Today's Situation. Salihu Ibrahim is the head of the Hausa Service of Vision FM, Sokoto. As someone who lives with disability, Salihu pitches on the right cord when anchoring the radio programme on taxation; for him, the sponsored series programme by ActionAid gives him a platform to have an open conversation on the correlation between fair-shared tax and inclusive education.

Hudu Isa Kebbe, has an exciting testimonial; his visual impairment was caused by a school teacher who smacked him on the face at childhood. Not deterred by his disability, Isa emerged the student with the best result at the West Africa Examination Council, WAEC exams in Sokoto State in 2005. He went on to study English Education at the Usman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto and is now the Vice Principal of A.A Raji Special Secondary School, Sokoto State.

A.A Raji Special Secondary School is an excellent template for a transition from an all-special need-based school to the first school in Nigeria to begin an all-inclusive school system. As soon as the school commenced an all-inclusive education system, the enrollment jumped from about 300 to 4000 students. "We observed that our school was being stigmatized, it was referred to as a school for the disabled, this is the reason why we introduced the inclusive education, to allow children – both able and disabled to study in the same class, in the same environment. I could not have functioned effectively especially with the inclusive education policy without the capacity building I got from ActionAid". Isa added that the advocacy and demand for inclusion inspired the creation of the office of the special adviser to the governor on disability.

Abdul-Azeez Ibrahim is the special adviser to Sokoto State governor on disability. Before his appointment, he was the chairman of the Spinal cord Injuries Association of Nigeria (SCIAN), a condition he lives with. Abdul as he is fondly called was inspired to shelve his initial proposal recommending the construction of 250 special schools for persons with disability across the state after participating in a stakeholders meeting facilitated by ActionAid. "It was not hard to convince me at that meeting to drop the idea of building special schools and focus on improving the condition of normal schools and make it accessible to learners with disability". Abdul-Azeez added that his office is now working to make the policy on inclusive education ready to address inherent challenges. According to him, the policy was conceptualized following engagements with ActionAid and all other stakeholders and partners.

Salihu, Isa and Abdul-Azeez are part of an active movement of strategic stakeholders that ActionAid Nigeria is engaging to effectively scrutinize education budgets and expenditure and hold government to account for the provision of free, quality, inclusive public education especially for girls and marginalized children. Salihu continues to campaign for accessible public buildings and schools, Isa remains energized to see that education for children with special needs is discrimination free, while Abdul-Azeez is actively engaging the governor not just on accessible schools, but the need to provide learning aids and qualified teachers. Indeed, he who wears the shoes knows where it pinches.

PHOTO STORY



National Dialogue on Nigeria's Rising Debt Profile

The National Dialogue provided an opportunity for government, the private sector, civil society, and the Nigerian public to x-ray the current debt situation of the country and get insights on the management of the country's debt profile, as well as put alternative public financing proposals that are responsive to the current socio-economic realities of the country and her people on the table for considerations.



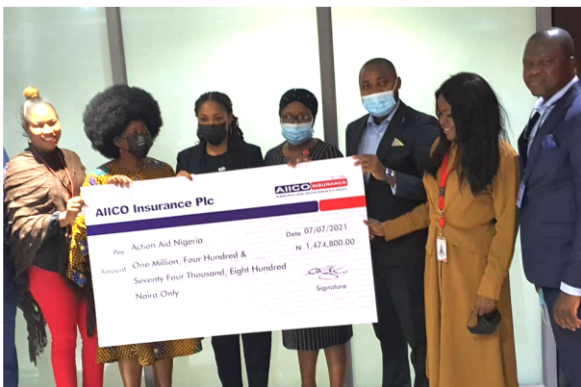
ActionAid Nigeria Signs New Ambassador.

ActionAid Nigeria recently signed Actor, Filmmaker and Producer, Femi Adebayo-Salami as Ambassador.



Stakeholders Consultative Forum on PCVE in Nigeria

ActionAid Nigeria in collaboration with the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) organised a Stakeholders' Consultative Forum on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) Implementation in Nigeria, with the aim of providing a platform for multi-stakeholders' appraisal of the current Policy Framework and National Action Plan for preventing and countering violent extremism in Nigeria.



Expanding Public Private Partnerships to End Infanticide

AIICO Insurance Plc is partnering with ActionAid Nigeria in its ongoing fight against infanticide in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory. AIICO Insurance had earlier donated N3.1 million and presented an additional cheque of N1,474,800 in July following its commitment to give N100 for every auto and travellers insurance policy sold towards ending infanticide.



Youth Digital Engagement (YDE) Dissemination of Findings

Young activists join ActionAid team for a press conference to disseminate findings from the YDE project. The project sought to use technology to support the work of young people in holding duty bearers to account; young people were supported and empowered to access information, analyse data, present evidence, and lead their communities in taking action through the use of digital tools.



Veronica

SWIFT WOMAN

Spotlight on a women's rights champion

Veronica Okon Ekong, 52 recounts “about 2 decades ago, women from Nkana community were restricted in all matters concerning inclusion and participation; we were like people imprisoned”. On a particular festival of the masquerades, women were not allowed to come outside the whole day; they restricted the movement of all the women and the girls to their houses. Also, if a woman offends her husband, the man can suspend the woman for 3 months; you will have to send people to beg him before he takes you back. It was like everything was against us” Veronica said, looking begrudged.

In the community's council, where important decisions are made, no woman was appointed to membership of the council, it is made up of men and one male youth representative, the women and the girls were not represented.

This practice continued unchallenged until sometime in 2007 when ActionAid launched the Local Rights Programmes (LRP), executed through its partner in Akwa Ibom State; the African Human Development Centre, AHDC.

The programme triggered an awakening in the women of Nkana community. Veronica who had been a survivor of domestic violence, mobilised other women in the community to make demands for inclusion and an end to all forms of gender discrimination meted against women in the community. Veronica and the women applied their first lesson on advocacy, and it

worked: “We approached the men in the village council and told them we want to be part of development in the community, we told them we want to be represented in the council, we made several other demands, and they were all granted” she enthused.

The women pressed on to form the Nkana Women Association with clusters on each of the 9 streets of the community. About 20 to 25 women were represented in each cluster. “At these meetings we educate women on all the contents of the manual ActionAid developed for us, we talk about hygiene, sanitation, how to dress, and how to communicate with people. Even the men are proud of what we do now” said Veronica who is the leader of the group.

“I never believed I could speak boldly, I never believed I can reach this level, now I can speak in the presence of the Governor.

Veronica is the first female ward leader in her political party, a position she said would not have been possible without her capacity been built through the LRP: “I am today the first ward women leader in Etinan Local Government, it is something that would not have been possible without the training and exposure we received from ActionAid and the African Human Development Centre” Veronica affirms.

For her boldness and resilience, Veronica earned the accolade of Swift Woman for this edition of SWIFT.



One More Thing!

ActionAid Nigeria's Country Director, Ene Obi emerged as the convener of the Civil Society Situation Room. The Situation Room is made up of over seventy Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working in support of credible and transparent elections in Nigeria. Congratulations Ene!

CALL FOR SUPPORTERS.

Community Sponsors kit 50 children for school

In March 2021, ahead of school resumption, ActionAid Nigeria's Community Sponsors kitted 50 primary and secondary school children across Wesere and Aivoji communities, Badagry West local government area of Lagos State for school.

Each child received a kit containing a school bag, 1 dozen of exercise books, stationery (pen, pencils, erasers, and ruler), a water bottle, a pair of socks, and a pair of sandals. 24 Secondary school students across both communities also received dictionary and mathematical set-in addition to their kit.

With **N12,000**, you can kit a child for school. If you'd like to donate in support of ActionAid's work, or partner with us on delivering your organisation's Corporate Social Responsibility,

please visit www.actionaid-ngr.org
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or call **07007070700**.



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