

ACTIONAID NIGERIA TRIANNUAL NEWSLETTER

SWIFT

APRIL - NOVEMBER 2023

SWIFT ISSUE 18



You are welcome to another exciting edition of SWIFT!

It is a pleasure sharing updates on ActionAid Nigeria's activities within the last few months with you. I am thrilled to share the successful conclusion of ActionAid Nigeria's Enhancing Logistics Performance for Effective Electoral Processes in Nigeria (ENLOGIC) project. Over the past four years, ENLOGIC strategically addressed the challenges faced in Nigeria's general elections since 1999 through research, capacity-building, advocacy, and technology development.

The project brought together key stakeholders, including the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), security agencies, transport unions, civil society organizations, NGOs, election observers, and data analysts, to enhance logistics delivery, accountability, and inclusivity in the electoral process. Through valuable partnerships and evidence-based strategies, ENLOGIC aimed to foster more transparent and credible electoral processes in Nigeria.

Additionally, we celebrate the achievements of the Local Rights Programme (LRP) in Kaduna, Combe, and Kwara States as ActionAid Nigeria officially closes out of these States. Although we have mixed feelings exiting these states after over 16 years of partnership and community engagement, we are happy to leave them better and more empowered than we met them. We are also excited about the new locations where we will be deploying the local rights programme, and we can only hope to touch the lives of people in these new locations as we did in Kaduna, Combe, and Kwara states.

As we bid farewell to these remarkable projects, their impact and legacies will continue to shape the path towards a more sustainable, inclusive, and empowered Nigeria. We are grateful to all our partners, supporters, and beneficiaries for their unwavering commitment to positive change, even as we welcome new projects like SPAC, which will help improve food and nutrition security and enhance agro-ecological skills among 120,000 Smallholder Women Farmers (SHWF) and Young People in Nigeria. This is in addition to the launch of the CLEAP Justice project which seeks to increase civic consciousness, participation, and engagement in monitoring and following up with judicial interventions and justice deliveries on the 2023 Presidential and Gubernatorial elections.

I hope you enjoy reading this e-newsletter as much as I loved reading about the successes. I look forward to writing to you again soon!

Best regards,

Andrew Mamedu
Country Director
ActionAid Nigeria

WHAT'S NEW!





■ Editorial Board

Andrew Mamedu - Country Director |
Funmi Olukeye - Director,
Organisational Effectiveness | **Adewale
Adeduntan** - Social Mobilisation
Manager | **Amina Aliyu-Adamu** -
Manager, Impact Assessment and
Shared Learning | **Charles Petu** - Digital
Technology Manager | **Oluwakemi
Akinremi-Segun** - Communications
Coordinator

■ Contributors

Kemi Akinremi-Segun | **Bernard
Ibelih** | **Ugochukwu Onuoha** | **Victory
Idogho** | **Ayomide Olanipekun** |
Anatasia Duru | **Queen Asue** | **Teresa
Usman** | **Hadiza Usman** | **Demola
Adeniran** | **Emmanuel Opara**



GRACE'S TRIUMPH: A TALE OF GENDER EQUITY AND LAND RIGHTS

In the quiet town of Emonu Orogun in Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State, Grace Osadjoku's life took an unexpected turn. After losing both her parents, she found herself facing a deeply entrenched cultural tradition that denied women their rightful share of inheritance. The family meeting convened to distribute her deceased parents' estate allocated the 7 pieces of land exclusively to her male siblings, leaving Grace and her sisters without any consideration. Despite Grace's contributions to caring for her parents during their illness and active involvement in their burial rites, she was treated as an outsider simply because of her gender.

Determined to challenge this unjust tradition, Grace drew strength from the empowering training she received through the Women Peer Education group, supported by ENVIRUMEDIC under the Local Rights Programme of ActionAid Nigeria. With newfound knowledge on human rights, organising, and mobilising women's groups, she courageously confronted her male siblings. When her efforts to reason with them proved futile, Grace took her case to the community chief, where she sought justice.

Standing firm on the principles she learnt, Grace organised her sisters and reported the matter to the oldest women's palace in the community. The process was arduous, lasting over three months, but eventually, the community recognised the injustice and called for the equal distribution of the lands. Each sister, including Grace, received a rightful plot of land.

Grace's triumphant stand not only secured her own rights but also inspired other women in similar situations to reclaim what rightfully belonged to them. Through her bravery and the support of ActionAid Nigeria's initiatives, Grace became a beacon of change, challenging gender norms and advocating for justice in her community.



BANNA'S STRUGGLE TO SUCCESS

Banna, a 30-year-old mother of five, has faced significant challenges during her childbirth journey due to recurring eclampsia. She has experienced multiple hospital admissions during pregnancies, with some severe cases necessitating intensive care unit stays. Tragically, she has lost two pregnancies due to this condition. Reflecting on her struggles, Banna shared:



"I began my cap-making business after getting married at the age of 17. Initially, I wasn't engaged in any income-generating activity for about two years into our marriage. It was during this time that my husband's business began to decline. I decided to put to use the cap-making skills I had learned when I was younger. The income from this venture allowed me to meet our basic needs. However, everything changed when I became pregnant. I could no longer continue making caps and lost my source of personal income. I ended up using both my capital and profits to cover medical expenses, with the support of my husband. Every pregnancy over a fifteen-year span presented significant challenges for me. I felt like all hope was lost until I had an encounter with HALI and ActionAid."

Banna is among the 100 women in Jere LGA, Borno state, who received skills training. This programme equipped them with skills in henna making, fashion design, and cap-making, along with valuable start-up kits worth 39 million Naira.

"Since I lacked the funds to restart my cap-making business, I decided to acquire a new skill that required minimal capital. I learned henna making through the skills acquisition training organised by ActionAid and HALI. The training came with start-up kits. Learning this new skill was exciting for me. During festive seasons, I used to pay for henna services for myself and my children, which could be quite expensive. Now, I create henna designs for my children, and my henna business thrives, especially during special celebrations like weddings, Eid festivals amongst others. Thanks to my savings from the henna business, I managed to procure materials to revive my cap-making venture. Now, I successfully run both businesses. I earn a monthly profit of around 6,000 Naira from cap making and well over 6,000 Naira from my henna business, particularly during festive periods. It feels empowering to earn my own income and have the freedom to use it as I see fit. I used my savings to buy new hijabs for myself and my children, provide them with school shoes, repair their school bags, and purchase their books and stationery."

Banna's journey reflects the transformative impact of acquiring new skills and entrepreneurial opportunities, providing her with financial independence and the ability to provide for her family's needs.



THE SWIFT WOMAN SA'ADATU'S JOURNEY TO LEADERSHIP

Sa'adatu Abdullahi Aliero, a timid and introverted young woman and a student at Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, has always harbored dreams of becoming a leader. However, her aspirations were held back by self-doubt and fear of public speaking. Despite her passion for leadership, she couldn't muster the courage to take the first step.

One fateful day, Sa'adatu's life took a remarkable turn when she was chosen as a mentee for the prestigious Women's Voice and Leadership Nigeria (WVL-N) Young Women Leaders Mentorship Programme organised by KTMDI with funding from Global Affairs Canada (GAC). Realising the incredible opportunity before her, she embraced it with enthusiasm and determination.

Throughout the six-month mentorship journey, Aliero underwent a profound transformation. Under the guidance of experienced mentors, she learned valuable life skills that were previously beyond her reach. From communication and public speaking to advocacy and lobbying, she grew into a confident and influential young woman.

Fate eventually presented Sa'adatu with an opportunity to put her newfound skills into action. A close friend confided in her about the harrowing experiences of domestic vio-

lence in her marriage. Empowered by her mentorship journey, Sa'adatu decided to take a stand. She fearlessly advocated for her friend, approaching her parents to seek support and intervention. The impact of her actions was profound. Her friend received the help she needed, and the cycle of abuse was broken, marking the beginning of Sa'adatu's journey towards transformational impact.

Fueled by her success in empowering her friend, Sa'adatu's hunger for personal development only grew stronger. She sought to expand her knowledge and skills, enrolling in various online programmes offered by prestigious institutions such as the UN Women, UNICEF, and the Academic of Women Entrepreneurs. With each certificate earned, she felt her confidence soar higher.

Her leadership journey did not end there. Sa'adatu was determined to create a lasting impact in her community. Collaborating with like-minded youth, she co-founded the Association for the Enlightenment, Empowerment, and Development of Youth, Women, and Children. This association became a platform for fostering leadership and empowering young voices in decision-making processes.

As the vice chairman of the association, she led by example, inspiring her peers to follow



suit. Their collective efforts led them to visit hospitals and orphanages, spreading hope and bringing smiles to the faces of the less privileged.

"Prior to the mentorship programme I was influenced by the opinion of others, but now I am courageous and can speak in public spaces. My leadership capacity has been built and I am inspiring other young female develop leadership ambition."

Today, Sa'adatu's success story continues to inspire countless young women in her community. Her journey from a shy, introverted student to a confident and influential leader serves as a beacon of hope for all. Through the power of mentorship and personal development, she has empowered others to find their voices and advocate for change. As her story continues to unfold, Sa'adatu's impact is a testament to the transformative power of self-belief, mentorship, and determination. With her leadership and advocacy skills, she continues to light up the path for a brighter future, proving that anyone, regardless of their background, can achieve greatness and make a lasting impact in the world.



MITIGATING YOUTH'S VULNERABILITY THROUGH PEACE CLUBS

“

There used to be brutal fight between senior and junior student in Bichi Education Foundation, but after the establishment of peace club in the school, senior and junior student have been living peacefully. - **Khalid Hussein**

Khalid Hussein expressed his delight at the establishment of a peace club at Bichi Educational Foundation Secondary School. The club serves as an instructive extracurricular activity aimed at instilling a culture of peace, fostering social cohesion, providing guidance, and discouraging habits that may lead to violent extremism.

A total of 36 Peace Clubs were established in SARVE III intervention communities, focusing on facilitating psychosocial and emotional healing for girls and boys. These clubs aim to counter the dehumanizing effects that lead to withdrawal and social disengagement based on exclusion and cultural impunity. By promoting inclusive empowerment, these clubs foster collaborative learning, constructive social change, and knowledge enhancement. The objective is to mitigate radicalisation and violent extremism, encouraging boys and girls to adopt education as a means to prevent violent extremism.

“

It is on this glaring success that Kano state government adopted and replicated Peace club across all the schools in the state. "Peace club has sharpened my mind and led me to embrace tolerance and understand diversity". **Hauwa Hafsat Abubakar from Government Girls Secondary School, Tudun Wada.**



STANDING OUT, SETTING THE PACE

Aisha Abdulwahab watched in utter disbelief how some of her friends and classmates from Igboroko dropped out of school either because they got pregnant or because they just could not cope with the stress of going to school in their distant neighboring community any more. Many also left school because their parents could no longer cope with the fees. It was looking all gloomy for Aisha and many others in Igboroko at the time.

"Before now, not many girls from Igboroko were interested in going to school because the secondary school was too far from us. Many of the girls just got pregnant and that was it. But now they have no excuses. We now have our own secondary school and everyone can go to school. Parents are also able to supervise what the girls are doing" she said.

Aisha is currently a student of the Kwara Polytechnic, Ilorin. She was inspired to further her studies after ActionAid Nigeria through her local rights partner, CCEPE helped to build a secondary school for her community in Igboroko. she added. Aisha also advised other girls back in Igboroko to learn from her example and stay focused in pursuing their academic dreams.



BUILDING RESILIENCE

Replication of CARTs across 17 communities in Bichi local Government of Kano state. A renaissance to stem violence

Government and community leaders are taking responsibility for keeping their neighbourhoods safe. Communities take a unified stand against disorder, extremism, conflict and violence. Security agencies and communities strive to build a system in which violence and disorder will not thrive.

Bichi local government is located in Kano state, the northwest region of Nigeria. It is the headquarters of Bichi Emirate and approximately 40KM away from the Kano metropolitan. The economic mainstay is agriculture, weaving, and crafting. The local government had a history of political violence and farmers herder's crisis. Bichi is one of the most elite local governments in the state that produced engineers, doctors, teachers, entrepreneurs, and many workforces to the development of the state and the country at large.

The local government has adopted a peace-focused approach through dialogue, consultations, and engaging with security actors to ensure enduring harmony among diverse groups. As part of SARVE III initiatives, the establishment of the Community Action and Response Team (CART) in Bichi and Danzabuwa communities was facilitated.

Sequel to success of CART in Bichi and Danzabuwa. The Local Conflict Management Alliance (LOCMA) under the auspices of Bichi Local Government trained 153 CART members across 17 communities.

The purpose of Community Action Response Team (CART) is to act as community watch group in respect to the peace and security by relating with other security agencies, Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of government on issues that contributes to the development of their community.

“We have replicated CART model in the local government to strengthen security and avert crimes in the local government. We look forward to more collaboration and synergy with Organisations like ActionAid for the development of our communities.” **Dr Yusuf Muhammad Sabo - Chairman Bichi Local Government**



SURVIVING 2023 FLOODS: ACTIONAID CONSTRUCTS SHELTERS FOR DISPLACED PERSONS

“

My family lost all our clothes, kitchen items, furniture to the flood. Our house was also destroyed. This made us incapable of feeding as we lost our livestock and farmlands to the floods. Life as we knew it became tougher and unbearable for me and my family. Things changed when the team from ActionAid visited our community, Miga for an intervention. ActionAid supported us with mats, rapper, plates, spoons, nets, detergent, soaps and lots of food items e.t.c. Unexpectedly so, ActionAid with support from IHART visited our community again in March 2023, this time, they renovated the roofs, windows and doors of three of our rooms. We are very grateful to ActionAid for making our lives better and easier, Thank you very much” - **Hassan Samiala**

In response to the devastating floods in 2022 and in anticipation of potential flooding in Nigeria by 2023, ActionAid Nigeria has been actively providing support to those severely affected in Jigawa State. Working in collaboration with the local rights partner, Baba Azimi Foundation, and with funding from IHART and Local Rights Programme, ActionAid has undertaken various programmes to mitigate the effects of the flood on the Survivors

Thirty representatives from different communities in Jigawa State have received training on emergency preparedness and response, enhancing their ability to effectively address such disasters. Furthermore, 21 young individuals from selected states have been connected with relevant stakeholders to ensure a coordinated and timely response in the event of floods.

To aid the relief efforts, the capacity of the community action response team in five states has been strengthened, enabling them to act swiftly and efficiently when floods occur. Additionally, ActionAid Nigeria has undertaken the reconstruction of houses for 13 severely affected individuals across three communities, providing them with a safe and secure living environment amidst these challenging circumstances.



TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNERSHIPS: CLOSING THE CHAPTERS IN GOMBE, KWARA AND KADUNA

In the early 2000s, two states in Nigeria, Kaduna and Nassarawa, embarked on a journey that would eventually change the lives of thousands of people. It all began with the transformative Partnership Against Poverty (PAP), an initiative led by ActionAid Nigeria (AAN) to tackle the pressing issues of poverty and inequality in these regions.

In the vast and resource-rich state of Kaduna, the PAP set its sights on Southern Kaduna, an area burdened by socio-economic challenges. The lack of basic amenities like clean water, healthcare facilities, and proper roads weighed heavily on the community. Moreover, denying education to young girls, child labor, and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS added to their woes. It seemed like an insurmountable mountain of problems.

But hope was not lost. The PAP Programme was driven by two dedicated partners, Youth Team in Action Supporting Community Initiated Development (YOTASCID) and Hope for the Village Child Foundation (HFVCF). Their determination to empower the community and spark progress was unwavering. As they joined hands, their impact grew exponentially, shining a light on the path to positive change.

In 2006, the Partnership Against Poverty (PAP) transitioned into the Local Rights Programme in Kaduna State, with Hope for the Village Child Foundation (HFVCF) becoming the driving force behind the initiative. Their commitment to empowering women and fostering community-driven initiatives brought about a notable shift in power dynamics. Women, who were previously denied participation in governance and decision-making, now had a say in their future. The Local Rights Programme's effectiveness depended on addressing the specific needs of each community. Empowering the communities to be active participants in decision-making processes was crucial. Dilapidated schools and healthcare centers were replaced or built anew. Improved livelihoods were imparted through training and sustainable agricultural practices, empowering local farmers, especially women.

One of the programme's most remarkable achievements was the significant reduction of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in the Rafin Kara community. Through intensive training, sensitization campaigns, and advocacy for women's rights, the programme successfully challenged harmful cultural practices.

In Gombe State, the LRP started in 2006 with a comprehensive baseline survey. Vulnerable and hard-to-reach communities yearned for empowerment and the chance to participate in decision-making. The LRP responded to their needs, building their capacity to demand essential services from political and institutional structures.

Communities received much-needed infrastructure, from schools to healthcare centers and motorised boreholes. Training in sustainable agriculture enabled local farmers, especially women, to embrace environmentally-friendly practices. The ripple effect of these interventions was evident, fostering inclusivity, engagement, and a sense of ownership among community members.

Meanwhile, in Kwara State, ActionAid Nigeria partnered with the Center for Community Empowerment and Poverty Eradication (CCEPE) for the Local Rights Programme. Over the last 16 years, this partnership blossomed into a catalyst for change. Hospitals, health centers, schools, and motorised boreholes were built or renovated. Women were empowered to advocate for their rights and partake in community development.

Today, the story of the Local Rights Programme stands as a testament to the power of transformative partnerships. ActionAid Nigeria, YOTASCID, HFVCF, HFTL and CCEPE have shown that real change is possible when communities are empowered and engaged. Through collaboration, innovation, and inclusivity, we have paved the way for a more sustainable and equitable world.

16 years later, the Local Rights Programme has reached her climax in these three states. The closing events, held in July 2023 were moments of celebration and reflection, marking the end of a transformative chapter. However, this close out is not a farewell because ActionAid Nigeria will continue to work in these states, pursuing various projects and initiatives beyond the LRP.

With heads held high and hearts filled with gratitude, the teams bid farewell to the communities they had served. The achievements were immense, the challenges were overcome, and the impact was undeniable. The LRP had sowed the seeds of positive change, leaving a legacy of empowerment and hope that would continue to grow and blossom.



EMPOWERING CHANGE, INSPIRING HOPE: THE SLOC-VAWG SUCCESS

History was made on the 7th day of May 2022 as Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), an age-long tradition, was publicly abolished in Ozuh Community, Oru-East LGA, Imo State.

Before this declaration, the act of cutting the genitals of female children is widely acknowledged by both men and women in the community as a vital tool for curbing promiscuity at adulthood. Despite the domestication of the Child Rights law which abolished Female Genital mutilation/cutting in Imo State, the business continued to flourish as maternity homes and traditional birth attendants keep at it, while some people revert to numbing or massaging the female genitals with petroleum gel to achieve the same aim.

In February 2021, Communal Care Center (CCC) introduced the SLOC-VAWG project to Ozuh Community, identified critical stakeholders and duty-bearers within the community and engaged them on the ills of (FGM/C) through intensive sensitization, training workshops, and townhall meetings. Leveraging on existing community structure, a VAWG Response Committee referred to as 'Ogene Committee' was set up comprising members of the Igwe's Council, the women group, men group, church group, community vigilante and youth group. The committee was saddled with the responsibility of formulating strategies to be used in addressing harmful cultural norms and practices fuelling violence against women and girls, especially Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, with a view to ending them.

The committee swung into action, engaging the Igwe and his cabinet, community village heads and women groups in the community. They conducted outreaches round the community targeting churches, markets, maternity homes, and traditional birth attendants, intimating them of the risk involved in FGM/C both to the victim, family, and the community. They also made it known to the populace that FGM/C is a criminal offence and has been abolished in the state; anyone caught in the act will be prosecuted in accordance with the law.

The efforts of CCC and Ogene Committee yielded positive results. After many sensitisations and deliberations with community members, the Traditional Ruling Council of

Ozuh-Omuma community, under the leadership of His Royal Highness, Eze Philip Uzodimma, the Ononehi 1 of Ozuh community and Chairman of the Traditional Council in Oru-East LGA publicly abolished Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting in the community. A letter to that effect was made public and circulated to all the churches, villages, maternities, schools, health centres and hospitals in the community, while the town-crier went round the whole of Ozuh community to herald the new law passed by the Igwe and his cabinet.

The Strengthening Capacities of Local Women's Right Organisation to Address Violence Against Women and Girls (SLOC-VAWG) project, funded by the Ford Foundation, has achieved remarkable success in its 3-year journey. This transformative initiative aimed to empower Local Women's Rights Organisations (LWROs) and enhance the effectiveness of Women's Rights Organisations in combating gender-based violence (GBV) and driving social change. Operating in 14 Local Government Areas across Imo State, Combe State, and the FCT, the project has positively impacted the lives of 13,576 women and girls.

St. Patrick's Mission School, Ogbeh Ahaizu, Mbaise LGA in Imo State also had a long-standing tradition where male students dominated the school's leadership positions, while only a few girls were given the chance to assist them. This trend prevailed due to a deeply ingrained assumption that boys were more suitable for leadership roles than girls.

This situation seemed normal until Virgin Heart Foundation (VHF) chose the school as one of its project schools on the SLOC-VAWG project. VHF focused on addressing socio-cultural norms that powers VAWG in school environment, and this led to the establishment and inauguration of girls' rights club comprising 79 Peer Educators in the school.

Using an Adolescent Peer Education Manual, members of the club were equipped with knowledge and skills to facilitate monthly meetings, trainings, and organize peer sessions with fellow students through in-and-out of school activities which include dramas, quiz competition, and presentations on issues of VAWG. These were corroborated with the establishment of Boys' Peer Educator's club consisting of 40 male students who educate other boys against negative masculinity and the effect of patriarchy.

A resultant effect of these activities is the enlightenment of girls on their rights which

translated into increased outspokenness and boldness to challenge practices that violate such rights within the school environment such as the use of corporal punishment targeting girls' buttocks. This changed when a young girl, Vivian A. Onwukwe, a brave 12-year-old in JSS 3, decided to take a stand. She fearlessly raised her voice against this unjust practice, rallying her fellow students to join her cause. Their collective efforts caught the attention of the school management, forcing them to address the issue seriously. Students, especially girls are now challenging this norm as an infringement on their bodily integrity and a form of sexual harassment. VHF is working with the school to ensure proper documentation and institutionalisation of this.

The viability of the girls and their solution-oriented mind-set became productive as it earned them a place in the school's leadership space. For the first time ever, the school appointed 15 female students, who are mainly peer educators, as school prefects. This is historic because for the first time, the school has more female prefects (15) than males (10).

The school reiterated that the decision to appoint more girls was necessitated by VHF's intervention and is also part of the school's efforts towards promoting gender equality. As the SLOC-VAWG project's lifespan comes to an end, its legacy lives on. The strengthened and united women's rights organisations will continue their vital work with newfound passion and determination. The community, having experienced positive change, are also committed to upholding the values of equality and respect.



DARE TO HOPE: THE BEGINNING OF AN END

The Migration II "Dare to Hope" project has officially ended! The three-year project sought to create alternatives to migration through the socio-economic empowerment of youths in Edo State. It was implemented in three local government areas of Edo State, namely Auchi, Uromi, and Benin City, in partnership with Ideal Development and Resource Centre and Kairos Youth Empowerment Initiatives.

The Migration II project empowered a total of 2,000 youths, consisting of 500 returned migrants and 1,500 potential migrants, with vocational and technical skills in various fields such as fashion, hair styling, poultry, fishery, aluminum fabrication, graphics design, catering, shoe and bag production, cosmetology, makeover, and bead making alongside startup equipment such as Generators, Makeupkits, Hair Dryers, Industrial sewing machines, freezer and lots more to over 100 Cooperatives. In addition to this, four (4) young Nigerian female fashion designers were also sponsored to a 3-month internship course on Fashion Designing at Progetto QUID in Milan, Italy.

“

“The successes of the Migration II Dare to Hope project goes beyond the mere acquisition of skills and resources. It lies in the transformation ActionAid Nigeria witnessed among the beneficiaries, their resilience, determination, and dedication to building a brighter future for themselves and their communities that we witnessed. These empowered youths are now equipped to contribute significantly to the economic growth of Edo State, thereby creating a ripple effect that will benefit society at large.”

-Suwaiba Mohammed-Dankabo

This remarkable endeavor was made possible through funding provided by the Italian Agencies for Development Cooperation (AICS) in collaboration with ActionAid Italy.

THE LAST CHAPTER: ENLOGIC

ActionAid Nigeria successfully concluded the four-year Enhancing Logistics Performance for Effective Electoral Processes in Nigeria (ENLOGIC) project with a closeout and sensitisation meeting involving key stakeholders, including INEC and other parties involved in election logistics in Nigeria. The project aimed to strategically tackle logistics challenges faced in Nigeria's general elections since 1999 through research, capacity-building, advocacy, and technology development. It sought to improve logistics delivery, coordination, and transparency in the electoral process, ultimately fostering more effective logistics management and citizen participation in elections.

During the meeting, participants engaged in strategic discussions, identified gaps, and documented best practices to enhance logistics delivery in future elections. An Endline Assessment was conducted to evaluate the progress made, and an action plan was developed to ensure the sustainability and adoption of project outcomes. Strategic engagements were held with INEC and other stakeholders to share project findings, document policy recommendations, and forge partnerships to address logistics management challenges.

Throughout the project implementation, lessons learnt, and best practices were documented to serve as valuable resources for future endeavors in improving logistics performance. The dissemination of the project's baseline and endline study reports, along with factsheets on the 2023 general election, further enriched the meeting and provided valuable insights for future initiatives in enhancing logistics and accountability in Nigeria's elections.



YOUTH DIGITAL ADVOCACY BOOTCAMP: LEADING FOR CHANGE

The SPA II Project (Global Platform) in collaboration with the Local Rights Programme (LRP) organised the second phase of the Digital Tools for Engagement bootcamp.

The bootcamp which trained a total of 100 young people, especially ladies, was organised in Abuja to enhance the digital skills of young people. 45 young people attended physically, and 55 others participated virtually. The physical participants were representatives of youth groups, aged 18-35, across the SPA II and LRP states who will use their learnings from the training to drive digital transformation in their respective communities.

The bootcamp which extensively built the technical capacity and knowledge of young people from Akwa Ibom, Enugu, FCT, Lagos, Niger, and Borno state on advocacy, organising, and engagement on digital platforms to improve their digital literacy skills, enabling them to effectively navigate digital tools and platforms for advocacy purposes. The training also encouraged innovations and stimulated creativity of participants towards making digital solutions for sustainable development and foster networking and collaboration among young people.



DRUMS ROLL..... A NEW ERA IS UPON US



In the aftermath of Ene Obi's dedicated five-year tenure as ActionAid Nigeria's former Country Director, Andrew Mamedu assumes the role as the new Country Director, officially taking office on September 1, 2023.

Andrew brings extensive experience, with a 23-year career in project management, resource mobilisation, and strategic advocacy within the development sector. Prior to his current role, he served as the Director of Resource Mobilisation and Innovation, showcasing his commitment to ActionAid's vision of eradicating poverty and promoting social justice.



FROM PAINS TO GAINS



Nestled along the Owode-Apa road, connecting to the Republic of Benin border, the small community of Wesere, home to over 1,000 residents, faced formidable challenges every time rain fell. The aftermath disrupted daily life, hindering children's access to education and making it difficult for pregnant women to reach healthcare services. During this period, pregnant women would travel to neighbouring Benin Republic due to the poor state of health facilities in their council.

In 2023, positive changes have begun to unfold in Wesere community through the collaborative efforts of the Inclusive Forum for Accountable Society (IFAS), an initiative by ActionAid Nigeria, with the support of its local rights programme partner - HUFFPED. The community, empowered through community town hall meetings and capacity development initiatives by IFAS gained a heightened sense of rights consciousness and embarked on various advocacy visits to the Lagos State Health Agency, Lagos State Primary Healthcare Board, and the Badagry LG council authority to demand for the needs of the community.

The results were nothing short of remarkable. Today, an emergency ambulance is stationed at the primary health facility near Wesere, offering critical support to pregnant women, accident victims, and others in need of emergency healthcare. Five health facilities within the council area received a supply of drugs, improving residents' access to essential medications. Staff strength increased with the deployment of new community health extension workers, and an ultra-modern building facility was constructed and commissioned.

The impact is palpable. No longer burdened with the challenges of traveling to Benin Republic for childbirth, community members have witnessed a positive transformation in their local health facility.



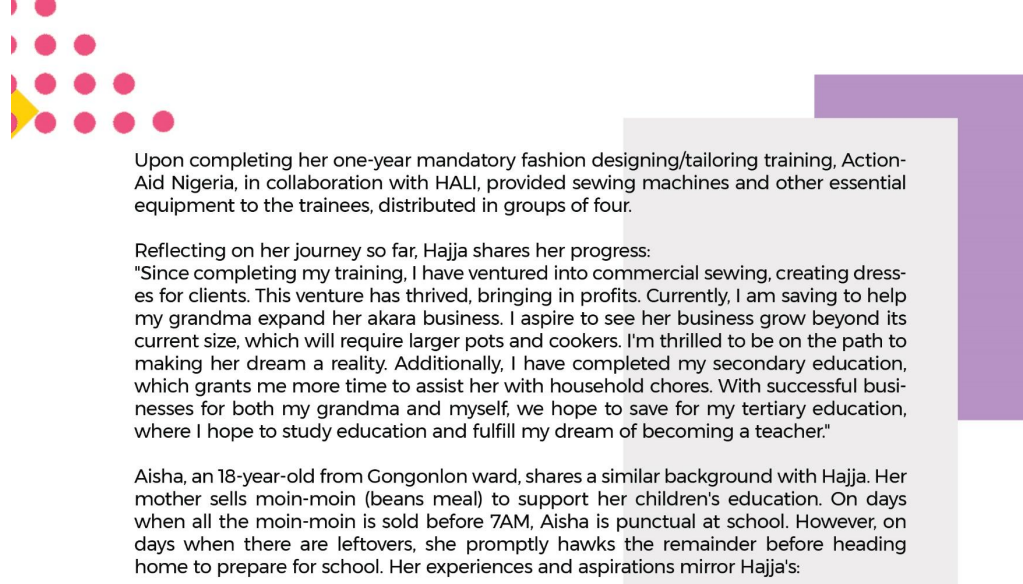
ASPIRING DREAMS

Hajja, at the age of 19, has spent most of her life living with her beloved grandmother. Tragically, she lost her mother when she was just a toddler, and her father relocated to neighboring Cameroon. In this narrative, Hajja shares her life experiences alongside her devoted grandmother.

"Living with my grandma has been an incredible journey filled with love and determination. She has always wanted the best for me, which is why she ensured I received an education. Recently, I completed my senior year in secondary school. However, the path to graduation was far from easy for both my grandma and me. To support us and pay our bills, my grandma sells akara (bean cakes). Our days start at 4 AM as we prepare the beans for akara. By 6 AM, the akara is ready for sale, and my grandma tirelessly fries it to serve our customers. While she manages the akara business, I prepare for school. She insists on my punctuality, knowing that the school marks lateness at 7:30 AM, which results in minor punishments like cleaning up around the school."

Although Hajja aspires to become a teacher, she also became a proud graduate of a fashion designing programme organised by ActionAid Nigeria. She shares the reason behind her decision to explore fashion designing:

"I first heard about ActionAid and HALI's skills acquisition programme through our community leader, who encouraged young women to apply. My motivation was simple; if I could secure temporary employment as a tailor after the training, I could financially support my grandma and alleviate her burdens. So, I enrolled. At the time, I had no idea we would receive start-up kits. The one-year training began but juggling it with school wasn't without challenges. My school was located outside our community, adding to the financial burden as my grandma had to provide my daily transport fare. Despite these challenges, I persisted in attending my tailoring classes."



Upon completing her one-year mandatory fashion designing/tailoring training, ActionAid Nigeria, in collaboration with HALI, provided sewing machines and other essential equipment to the trainees, distributed in groups of four.

Reflecting on her journey so far, Hajja shares her progress:

"Since completing my training, I have ventured into commercial sewing, creating dresses for clients. This venture has thrived, bringing in profits. Currently, I am saving to help my grandma expand her akara business. I aspire to see her business grow beyond its current size, which will require larger pots and cookers. I'm thrilled to be on the path to making her dream a reality. Additionally, I have completed my secondary education, which grants me more time to assist her with household chores. With successful businesses for both my grandma and myself, we hope to save for my tertiary education, where I hope to study education and fulfill my dream of becoming a teacher."

Aisha, an 18-year-old from Gongonlon ward, shares a similar background with Hajja. Her mother sells moin-moin (beans meal) to support her children's education. On days when all the moin-moin is sold before 7AM, Aisha is punctual at school. However, on days when there are leftovers, she promptly hawks the remainder before heading home to prepare for school. Her experiences and aspirations mirror Hajja's:

"I understand the importance of supporting my mother with her moin-moin business. Without my assistance, she would struggle to afford my schoolbooks and support my education. In our community, many young girls are forced into early marriages. I have seen peers younger than me get married, but I refuse to become a victim of early marriage. Instead, I will contribute to my parents' business to ensure I can continue my education. I want to be able to speak English like the district head and ultimately pursue a career in civil service."





**EMPOWERED
THROUGH THE WOMEN
SAFE SPACE**

"I was given N3000 to support my business from the money we contributed weekly during women safe space session in my community. I used the money to produce car washing soaps and hand washing soaps, air freshener during Edil Kabir. I have gained significant benefits from the profit, received back the initial capital, and I aspire to extend this support to other women, enabling them to experience the same positive outcomes as I have" Asiya Muhammad Tagarji Community.

It is worthy to mention that the Women Safe Space (WSS) programme introduced by ActionAid Nigeria SARVE III project in partnership with Dispute Resolution and Development Initiative and this has reshaped the narratives of women in Tagarji community. Women are not just only peace ambassadors in their community but also agents of socio-economic empowerment.

The Women Safe Space in Tagarji Community facilitated the rehabilitation of 30 drug addicted youths and established Women Safe Space in Zango Community which started with 10 members and now they have 26 members. They also supported 10 members with N3000 each from the weekly contribution and facilitated the training of 76 women in collaboration with ANDI vocational skills training on soap making and tailoring. For accountability, the Women Safe Space network developed membership registration form with the aim of screening their members.

The Women Safe Space in Tagarji Community have indeed pulled down extremist barriers and provided financial freedom for her members.

PHOTO REEL



• ActionAid Nigeria's General Assembly at the 13 Assembly meeting held in Abuja in August 2023



• Fund our future art contest



• ActionAid Nigeria's staff training on first aid response.



• Youth Digital Advocacy Bootcamp



• Fund our future art contest



• Fund our future art contest



ActionAid Nigeria has commenced a new project themed: CITIZENS' LED ENGAGEMENTS ON JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN POST-ELECTION JUSTICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIA - (CLEAP Justice Project) The project seeks to:

- Increase civic consciousness, participation, and engagement in monitoring and following up with judicial interventions and justice deliveries on the 2023 Presidential and Gubernatorial elections.
- Strengthen mechanisms and citizen-driven actions to hold tribunal judges accountable for transparent justice dispensations in the electoral process.

AAN has constituted a Technical Working Group (TWG) consisting of 11 members of an ad hoc team of renowned retired court judge(s), academia, election expert(s), and legal practitioners with a track record of transparent leadership in judicial matters, to conduct periodic technical reviews of electoral cases and develop advisories on ways to improve the electoral and post-election judicial process.

ONE MORE THING!



- **Launch of IFAS Committee in Taraba State** - Training and launch of the IFAS committee in Taraba state led to two women from LRP communities getting enlisted for small-scale business support by the National Directorate of Employment.



- **ActionAid Nigeria-CSJ and NLC-An Economic Agenda for both the Tinubu Administration and the 10th National Assembly** - Following the recent transition of a new President, Bola Ahmed Tinubu into power, AAN in collaboration with other organisations including the NLC organised an Economic Agenda setting for the Tinubu's Administration. The proposed economic agenda was presented to the House of representatives at the 10th House of Representative Agenda Setting meeting and to the government MDAs at a Technical Roundtable Forum held in July 2023. The agenda succinctly prioritised issues around Education, Health, Agriculture, Women Affairs, the Social Investment Programme (SIP) and Youth and Development.

- **Going Green and Beating Plastics** - ActionAid Nigeria commemorated World Environment Day on June 5th by spreading awareness on environmental issues. The event included a seminar on reducing plastic pollution, followed by the clean-up of Nyanya Motor-park and tree planting. Participants were encouraged to consider paper bag production as an eco-friendly alternative to plastic. The tree seedlings were also sent to Vine Heritage Home, a safe haven for children affected by infanticide for environmental benefit and to provide fruits for the children.



• **Advancing Agroecology and Climate Justice-** ActionAid Nigeria's Strategic Partnerships for Agroecology and Climate Justice in West Africa Project, funded by ActionAid International, was launched in Nigeria in June 2023 with the aim of enhancing food security and agroecological skills among Smallholder Women Farmers (SHWF) and Young People. Through early maturing seeds, livestock support, and model agroecological farms, the project seeks to promote sustainable practices and biodiversity preservation.



• **METAKETA: Liberation for Women-** A training workshop was organised for 75 supervisors and facilitators under the Metaketa Project to effectively implement the women and men's curriculum in 300 communities across Ogun, Oyo, and Osun states. The project aims to assess the impact of a training intervention on enhancing women's voice and agency in local political engagement, empowering women and men's groups within the communities.

• **Charting the Path to a Responsive 2024 Agriculture Budget-** ActionAid Nigeria collaborated with key stakeholders to organise a 2-day National Stakeholders Consultative Meeting on the 2024 Agriculture Budget in Lagos. Core issues identified include the impact of climate change and insecurity on agriculture, timely budget disbursement, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices. The meeting ensured stakeholders' active participation in policy and budget formulation, promoting inclusive agricultural development in Nigeria.



• **Democracy Convening-** The outcome of the collaboration between ActionAid Nigeria, Plan International, Activista Nigeria, and other youth groups, along with the Children's Parliament, resulted in the #SheVotesToo Campaign. Led by the Girls Get Equal Platform, the campaign aimed to amplify the voices of girls throughout the electoral process to ensure their issues were given priority in the development agenda. As part of this effort, the Girls, Young Women, and Youths conducted an analysis of political party manifestoes, focusing on critical matters affecting girls, young women, and youths. The key demands identified were intended to be reflected in the manifestoes, promoting a more inclusive and responsive approach to governance.

Board of Trustees of ActionAid Nigeria joyfully celebrates their shared birthday during the 49th Board Meeting in May.

act:onaid

WOMEN & GIRLS

are disproportionately affected by hunger. But due the social and economic roles they play within communities, they are also crucial actors in the fight against food insecurity.



ActionAid is promoting right to food.
www.nigeria.actionaid.org
+234(0) 812 8888 825-7



EDUCATION

act:onaid

...especially of women & girls, transforms lives and communities.

SPONSOR A COMMUNITY TODAY!

ActionAid believes a good quality, publicly-funded education should be available to all children.



Learn more www.nigeria.actionaid.org
www.feministhub.org

act:onaid

Abuja
ActionAid Nigeria
Plot 477, 41 Crescent,
off Sa'adu Zungur Avenue
Gwarimpa, Abuja.

+234 (0) 812 8888 825-7
ActionAidNigeria
nigeria.actionaid.org
ActionAidNigeria
@ActionAidNG

Your feedback is important to us. Please send comments or enquiries to
Communications.Nigeria@actionaid.org