

# PEACE BREEDERS

System and Structure Strengthening Approach against Radicalisation to Violent Extremism in Kogi State (SARVE Project)

Bi-Annual Newsletter – July 2018

Vol. 1 Issue 2

**actionaid**



Anicetus Atakpu, ActionAid Nigeria Programme Officer takes The Chief of Staff to Kogi State Governor, Edward Onoja through the uses of various equipment in the livelihood factories donated by ActionAid SARVE project to Women and Youths in the state. Factories handed over includes; cassava processing, block moulding, maize milling, rice milling factories and a bakery, amounting to a total of N35.5 Million Naira.

The SARVE project is an innovation of ActionAid Nigeria (AAN) aimed at supporting communities to build resilience against violent extremism through enhanced capacity and structures to utilise available resources in preventing radicalisation, respond to, withstand and overcome impact of adverse violence extremism should it occur. The two year programme which targets youths and women in 2 LGAs (Adavi & Igalamela/Odolu) and 5 communities (Ofuloko, Okpakpata, Osara, Aku/Osaragada & Fulani) is slated to close-out and pass the baton to the communities and state government by December 2018.

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**Okpakpata youths jubilate during the commissioning ceremony of their rice milling factory built by ActionAid and handed over to them under the supervision of the state government.**

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*Gift training community women on leadership.*

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Women think that it is the absolute responsibility of the man to provide for the household, but now they are learning that they have a part to play, they now make contributions and also encourage their wards to get education.  
Gift Omoniwa  
”

## **Amplifying Peace, Expunging Terrorism**

Field experiences has shown that It takes more than the hard booths to counter terrorism, Gift Omoniwa, the Executive Director of Participatory Initiative for Behavioral Change in Development (PIBCID), sheds light on how inclusive community participation can promote cohesion, create prosperity and prevent terrorism.

Studies have shown the real underline between poverty and crime; both are inseparable. But field experiences are providing more insights. The Participatory Initiative for Behavioral Change in Development, a key partner of ActionAid Nigeria is engaging

comprehensive social and economic interventions to address the rising incidences of restiveness brewing in communities across Nigeria.

Kogi State, the case in point, presents a security challenge, the instruments of force were used to suppress the crisis but it appeared to even escalate. ActionAid and PIBCID had a different strategy. It was a soft but clinical approach to deal with violent extremism in communities identified as crisis flashpoints in the State.

It began with a baseline study, which revealed crime

demographics and the root causes. “We discovered that the main actors in extreme violence were young people between 18 to 35 years” Omoniwa said. The study also identified economic issues and illiteracy as major drivers of violent extremism. “We also discovered that women and children bear the brunt of acts of violence” said PIBCID Executive Director.

ActionAid and PIBCID pulled through an initiative to end all forms of violence in communities, even though crime may not be totally eradicated in any society, the social interventions in communities has

shown tremendous progress. The initiative has 3 pillars: The Youth and Peace Development; Women Inspirator Programme and Community Livelihood Support component.

The youth initiative pulled youths together in the communities, the initiative was aimed at identifying their needs and helping them form cooperatives, providing livelihood supports and generally giving young people a sense of hope.

This has recorded resounding success, numerous youth groups, community based organisations and youth led movements have been birthed through this process. A youth summit attended by more than 6,000 young people from different communities in the State was a game-changer, the 6,000 youths signed up as peace volunteers; they took oath

to become peace ambassadors in their communities.

The women inspirators initiative is a mentorship model that empowers women with skills and capacity to become self-reliant and in turn mentor younger women to be their best in their communities. "Women think that it is the absolute responsibility of the man to provide for the household, but now they are learning that they have a part to play, they now make contributions and also encourage their wards to get education" Omoniwa said.

The impact of the women inspirator initiative is transforming behaviour too. Favour Daudu before now, does not know how to resolve simple domestic issues with neighbours, she picks fight at the slightest opportunity, but now she is a testimonial for peace-building: she is a champion of conflict resolution in her community.

As ActionAid and PIBCID community engagement has shown that enforcing livelihood mechanism in communities appears more result oriented than militarized force, the livelihood component has also achieved communal cohesion and evident crime reduction in many communities.

This unique strategy has integrated the Fulani persons, who most times are wrongly tagged violent. "We discovered that one of the issues is the non-inclusion of the Fulani people, they feel no one cared for them, so we ensure that they are integrated into our livelihood programmes. And that has helped to drastically reduce violence in the most violence prone communities" said PIBCID Executive Director.



*Rebecca at the cassava milling factory.*

## Earning Easily

Rebecca Samuel is the chairperson of the Okpapat Women Maize Milling Multipurpose Cooperative. The cooperative is a group of 40 women farmers. It was formed after ActionAid trained her group on the Basic Accounting for Cooperatives.

Rebecca Samuel had no formal education, she could only recall her age through description of the 1967 Nigeria civil war, she 'thinks' she was born 15years before the war.



Her first taste to learning was the exposure she got from the training sponsored by ActionAid Nigeria and she is applying it to herself and her group.

***“I have learnt how to do things together with others, we have been thought about the power of togetherness and the culture of savings”*** she said.

Processing farm produce can be backbreaking. It is one of the challenges of the women farmers. “We travel nine miles on motor bike to the nearest Processing Mill, on a patched road” She said. Aside the stress of travelling long road to Mill Cassava, the cost also add up to the overall market price. “It cost 1,500 Naira to transport one bag of cassava. The journey is long and exhausting” she said through an interpreter.

At the inception of ActionAid peace building initiative in the community, like other communities, a baseline survey showed the link between poverty and violence; hence the need to include a livelihood component. The women requested for a Maize Milling Machine, so that the stress of traveling miles for processing and the cost can be cut.

With the installed Milling Machine fully operational, there is less stress for the women farmers, their productivity has improved and they earn more revenue. Now, Rebecca is happy that she can feed her 3 adopted children and pay for their education.

## Clearing the Clutter, Organising for Change



Simon admonishing Okpakapta women during their weekly meeting.

Simon Ikani, 50, has lived in Okpakapta all his life. He grew up in a very restive community, where no one listened to the other. Although headed by a Madaki, the traditional leader of the community, there was apparent breakdown of law and order.

Crime was high, domestic violence against women was not abnormal, the community moved on without order. Ikani said: “Things began to change, when ActionAid came into our community. They began to educate the people and bring them together”. Today, the community is more cohesive. There is a youth group, where young people meet once a week to discuss their challenges and channel them to ActionAid through an appointed community youth leader. There is also the women group, where everything is discussed; domestic, economic and personal issues are discussed and resolved.

The communal cooperation has also helped them engage the local and state government. The community has planned advocacy visits to the chairman of the local government; they have a community

*“Our strategy is to have all members of each family in any of the community groups. In the group, there is a written rule which everyone must abide. If a husband beat his wife, there is a price to pay, if a wife abuses the husband, there is a price to pay” Ikani*

secretary appointed to write letters to state government and request for essential amenities. “This time around, we are going to engage politicians when they come canvassing for votes, we do not want them to give us money, we want a communal interest to serve the community and we will get them to sign a deal before we can vote for them” Ikani affirmatively said.

“

ActionAid has helped us to see life in a different perspective. We cannot thank them enough.

”



Godwin and wife packing and packaging their grains for sales.

## Idleness, a thing of the past

Godwin Alhassan is a 35 year old teacher. His dreams are noble; he wants to give the best of life to his family. “I live for my family and I want to give them the best” he speaks of his wife and two children.

Alhassan is an active member of the youth group; he teaches at the community primary school, he is also a farmer. He is one of the beneficiaries of numerous capacity development programmes organised by ActionAid.

The Participatory Vulnerability Analysis and the Computer Literacy Training seem to make the most impact on him and the community. He said: “The participatory vulnerability training taught us how to critically analyse the groups that can be vulnerable to epidemic situation”.

*Through this training, he identified dominant behaviour in the community that can trigger violence; such as drug addiction, high rate of substance abuse, idleness and social exclusion, these are the contributory factors to civil unrest in the community. At the end of the training session, he and a few young people formed a youth group and integrated 60 young persons in the community. The group was established to improve social interaction among young people and make them voice out their challenges.*

It worked. Young people who were unemployed are now enrolled into several skill building activities. “We asked them what they want to do, some said, they want to learn carpentry, mechanic, some want to work as construction workers and others got enrolled into secondary schools in town” he said.

While the programme in Vulnerability Analysis has helped to identify conflict issues and how it can be prevented or managed, the computer literacy programme has created a world

view mindset to the young people here. Many of them are now eager to purchase computers and get connected to the internet.

Although only few persons were selected for the ActionAid facilitated training, Alhassan conducts step down training for young people of the other six sub-communities. And the impact appears visible **“our youths are no longer idle”** Alhassan said with a glee.

## A New Breed of Women



Hadiza

At 55 Hadizat Muhammed could not walk across a crowd of men. She had no courage to speak up where men gathered. Men were revered as such and feared in Ofuloko.

The job of a woman was cut out: get marry; give birth to children; and stay at home.

It is no longer so. Hadizat is now a social mobiliser.

***“We were blind, before ActionAid came to our community and opened our eyes” she speaks of self-awareness, not of physical blindness. “They began to engage us through gender based outreaches, we were learning a lot of skills and some of us for the first time travelled to other cities in Nigeria. It was the exposure that enlightened us and brought change to me and other women” said Hadiza with contagious confidence.***

Hadiza is the women leader of the Olubo-Ojo Women Meeting. Women from all households are part of the meeting because of the economic and social benefit. When the women gather at their meetings, there is a set agenda, they have written rules and regulations. Part of the rule is to compel women not to physically abuse each other; the rule stipulates respect for their spouses too. The meetings have gained the cooperation of the men, who

have observed positive behavioural changes from their wives because of membership of the women meeting. A fine is slammed on women who engaged in domestic violence, such penalties include withdrawal of opportunity to receive small business loan.

***“We would not know how to do all these without the intervention of ActionAid”*** she said.



Hadiza and members of her group.

The meeting has improved the economic life of the women; it has restored self-confidence and dignity. They jointly work on farm and sell the produce, contribute money, save some and lend to women requiring loan for doing petty business.

Women and girls from this community have come through long years of neglect. Girl child education is seen as a waste of resources. A child of 13years old use to be married to older men because she is considered as a liability. “One of the things

we encourage in our meeting is education of our children. Every one of our members has their children in school because we want them to be better than us.

We now know that illiteracy promotes early marriage and we discourage it” she said.



## Osaragada /Aku: **Kidnap hotspot turned agricultural hub**



Osaragada /Aku women processing cassava at their new factory.

Osaragada / Aku is about 100metres away from the express road connecting travelers from the North to the Eastern part of Nigeria. It is a constantly busy road and also a route for kidnapers and armed robbers.

Most of the high-profile kidnap and armed robbery cases reported especially in 2014, 2015 and 2016 occurred on the express road. So, it was always on security red alert, making the people to live constantly in fear.

The violence and armed criminalities crippled the agricultural exploit of the community, which once boast of high production of cassava value chain.

***“This used to be a den of kidnapers, when they kidnap people, they bring them into the nearby bush”*** said Sadiku Otaru, the leader of the community.

At a point many residents moved to other communities because of the incessant gun battle between state security personnel and armed –tight criminals.

This community was the real test of ActionAid System and Structure Strengthening Approach against Radicalisation to Violent Extremism project. All the signal of extreme radicalism was present, making it a security risk to site a development project.

Working in collaboration with security officials and other

stakeholders' ActionAid empowered the people with the skills to monitor, identify and report suspicious movement in their community.

The incidences of armed robbery and kidnapping have significantly reduced. The agricultural exploits too have returned and boosted by Cassava processing factory donated by ActionAid. The youths who usually were the ready thugs for desperate politicians also got a fully equipped block moulding shed.

## Pushing Inclusive Reform for Sustainable Youth Development



Oseni (first from the left on white), pose with other youths supporting the Kogi youth development commission bill.

Available records by the Youth Advocacy Cluster showed that more than 70 percent of all forms of violence in Kogi State were led by young people. In the State, political thug was fashionable; it was a thriving business for young people. This was admitted by Okwutepa Aminu Oseni, the coordinator of the Youth Advocacy Cluster.

Oseni, 30, began an issue based campaign after the politically charged 2015 election in Nigeria. His organisation monitored the election and observed the role young people played in the entire political process. ***“We observed that young people are used during election period and then thrashed after the election”*** Oseni said.

Determined to change that paradigm through massive youth enlightenment campaign,

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Young people were used as praise singers during election or political campaign. But since our campaign across the 21 local government areas, where we have volunteers and coordinators, we are experiencing relative peace in the State. About 32 members of our group were once political thugs and are now advocates against such actions” - **Oseni**

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the Youth Advocacy Cluster reached out to ActionAid and Participation Initiative for Behavioural Change in Development (PIBCID) for technical support to drive the campaign.

It initiated the Kogi Youth Development Commission Bill to address the challenges affecting youth development. ActionAid provided support for an advocacy round table on the bill which brought stakeholders together to fine-tune the content of the bill.

The bill gathered support from about eight youth focused groups (*Voice of Youth Initiative, National Youth Council of Nigeria Kogi State, YALI Initiative, Igalamela Youth Renaissance, Project YES, Justice, Development and Peace Commission Kogi State, Initiative for Grassroot Advancement in Nigeria, among others*) and has passed second reading in the State House of Assembly. The bill seeks to build capacity of the young people through its major pillars of: Agricultural, ICT, Sports Development; Entrepreneurship and Transition to work.



*Williams discussing with ActionAid Nigeria editorial crew at the Kogi state police command.*

*We believe that as an organisation which promotes service to humanity, ActionAid activities have assisted in making our work easier*

## **Building Safer Communities: Our Collective Responsibility**

From 2015 to 2017, the security situation in Kogi State reached a disturbing dimension. It was a national concern. The rate of kidnapping, armed robbery, homicide and rape soared. Like the police would say; Policing is not only for the police: inputs and intelligent sharing among stakeholders and the communities were enhanced and the strategy has yielded better result.

William Aya, 36, is the Police Public Relations Officer, in Kogi State. He speaks about the strategies of building partnerships with relevant stakeholders to improve policing. The Kogi division of the police is known for promotion of community policing approach and its collaboration with appropriate stakeholders has recorded a reduction in the incidences of crime in the State. Available records by the police showed that young people between the ages of 20 to 35 forms the cluster of people arrested for various forms of crimes.

The Police PRO said: “As we move into communities to stop crime, we also observe some

drivers of criminalities in our society; such as high rate of illiteracy, most of the people are not educated, unemployment also, we believe that if some of these issues are addressed there would be reduction in crime rate”.

The community policing strategies appears simple but it has recorded better achievement than the all-booth-on-the-ground approach. The division visits communities, engage market women, traditional rulers, artisans and the members of National Union of Road Transport Workers.

The visit is always carnival like, the State Police Boss; Mr. Ali Janga would address the crowd, cautioning them to stay away

from acts of criminality and to partner with the police to rid the communities of crime. The police also engage the mass media in its Police Diary Radio show and The Police and You Television programme.

“We believe that as an organisation which promotes service to humanity, ActionAid activities have assisted in making our work easier” the PPRO said.

He provides tips for young people who are easily trapped in crime “The youths should shun any act of political thuggery, they should not avail themselves to be used by selfish politicians.

# EMERGING VOICES

**I**n 2017, when Kogi State was invited for the review of the State Action Plan on Peace and Security of Women, a United Nations' Resolution, we turned to ActionAid for technical support and they assisted in the inauguration of an action plan committee, they facilitated a 4-day training to build our capacity to develop an implementable action plan for the State. Without this support, the document may still be hanging on the shelf.

**Josephine M. Babatunde,**  
Director, Kogi State Ministry of  
Women Affairs



**O**ne of the biggest challenges of this community is lack of cooperation, people will not just agree, there was lack of unity. We were frequent visitors to the police, we could not resolve domestic conflicts, and it ends up in police stations. But we have learnt a lot from ActionAid, there are no more crises. We are now friends with the fulani's because we form a joint team to discuss issues affecting each party.

**Sadiku Otaru, 60**  
Osaragada Aku Community Head



**F**or 10years, our community had no electricity, we had no water and we lived like that, until we learnt advocacy from ActionAid. We began to engage the local government, we wrote to the State government and the members of the house of representative for our community. Our advocacy yielded result, electricity has been restored and recently the government added additional five boreholes for water.

**Alabi Jimoh, 46**  
Youth Leader and Chairman,  
Community Response Team –  
Osaragada/Aku



**E**ducating rural women about improving nutrition for their children requires a lot of outreaches and practical engagement. Working with ActionAid has exposed me to adopting new strategies for achieving better result. I have built contacts with people working in nutrition across the country; we are already implementing the programme on food fortification.

**Rachel Tokula**  
Director Home Economics,  
Kogi State Ministry of Agriculture



**M**y work has really improved; with the support of ActionAid, I have gone into interior villages where we never knew people existed, and my work at the office may not take me to such places because there may not be funds to facilitate. ActionAid has given me necessary exposure which has aided my work in the Ministry.

**Asorose Alice**  
Head, Women and Agriculture,  
Kogi State Ministry of Agriculture



**F**rom a weekly manual processing of 200kg of cassava, we can now have the capacity to produce 1 ton of cassava, because of the cassava processing machine donated by ActionAid. Before now, everyone will work in their different homes but now we join hands together and we produce more. It reduces stress and adds more income to us.

**Audu Kaka, 36**  
Treasurer of Osaragada Aku Women  
Garri Processing Cooperative



# 2018 Upcoming Events.





*Osara women showcase their processed and packaged Garri to the Commissioner for Agriculture, Kehinde Oloruntoba during the commissioning of their ActionAid supported Cassava factory in July 2018.*

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ActionAid is a global movement of people working together to further human rights for all and defeat poverty. We prioritise works with the poor and excluded, promoting values and commitment in civil society, institutions and governments with the aim of achieving structural changes to eradicate injustices and poverty in the world.

ActionAid Nigeria is a member of ActionAid global federation. Our strategic objectives include: enhancing people's power in democratic and inclusive governance, working to protect women and girls from violence by creating opportunities for economic independence and decision making, enhancing women's leadership in accountable humanitarian and resilience system, and strengthening systems and increasing resource diversification for quality programme delivery.

Central to our programmes is the full enjoyment by female and male citizens of their rights; reducing inequality; promoting gender responsive public services; and providing alternatives to the status quo in solving complex development challenges. Our programme areas include: **Education, Food and Agriculture, Human Security in Conflict and Emergencies, Health, Just and Democratic Governance, and Women's Rights.**

ActionAid Nigeria is powered by the belief that a Nigeria without poverty and injustice is possible.

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