

ACTIONAID NIGERIA BIENNIAL NEWSLETTER

# SWIFT

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# What's New

Hello and welcome to the 21st edition of SWIFT!!

It's a pleasure to share ActionAid Nigeria work across the 6 geo-political zones with you. Before we dive right into it, we are pleased to announce to you that ActionAid Nigeria concludes the five-year Women's Voice and Leadership Nigeria (WVL-N) project, funded by Global Affairs Canada, we celebrate the tremendous impact it has achieved. Over 120 women-led organizations across six states and the FCT reached an astonishing 7 million individuals, empowering women and girls, and fostering gender equality. This milestone heralds hope for an even brighter future, as we aim to extend our reach to more communities in need.

Additionally, we celebrate the launch of ActionAid's New Country Strategy Paper titled **"Citizens' Action to End Poverty and Injustice"** a new direction for ActionAid to build agile and thriving communities and organisation.

We also celebrated 10 years of commitment, generosity, and shared purpose of all our supporters and contributors on the cause to end poverty and injustice in Nigeria. The event, which brought together long-time supporters and key members of the AAN Board, was a testament to the power of collaboration and shared values. We also saw the launch of the Multi-Stakeholder Approach to Prevent Violence Against Gender Based Violence funded by Ford Foundation.

I hope you find these stories interesting and engaging just as I did. I can't wait to write to you again.

Have a good read!!

Best regard

**Andrew Mamadu**

Country Director, ActionAid Nigeria







## Empowering Experts: ActionAid Launches HDP Practitioners' Academy

In a defining moment for ActionAid Nigeria's journey towards lasting social change, the organisation officially launched its 10-year Country Strategy Paper, "Citizens' Action to End Poverty and Injustice (2024-2034)," in August 2024. This strategy marks a new chapter in the organisation's commitment to eradicating poverty, addressing systemic inequality through social movement, and championing the rights of the marginalised across Nigeria.

The event was a gathering of champions for Social Justice. It held amidst a gathering of esteemed stakeholders, all of whom share in ActionAid Nigeria's vision for a more just and equitable society. Dr. Jummai Umar-Ajijola, the Board Chair of ActionAid Nigeria, led the event alongside members of the organisation's General Assembly and Board of Directors, whose unwavering support and leadership have been central to shaping the organisation's strategic direction.

Among the notable dignitaries present was the Honorable Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Sen. Abubakar Atiku Bagudu, whose continued collaboration with ActionAid Nigeria highlights the importance of integrating social justice into national planning and budgeting. His presence reinforced the need for a multi-stakeholder approach to address Nigeria's most pressing development challenges.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Otive Igbuzor, Executive Director of the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy, and Development (Centre LSD). Dr. Igbuzor's speech was a powerful call to action for both government and citizens to work together in addressing the persistent challenges of poverty, inequality, and social exclusion in Nigeria. He emphasised the need for a people-centered approach to development, which would empower citizens to lead the charge in creating the systemic change that the country so desperately needs. His insights set the tone for the strategy's implementation, focusing on the importance of social movements and citizen-led advocacy in shaping the future of Nigeria – [watch here](#)

The event also saw the participation of ActionAid Nigeria's Goodwill Ambassadors, led by award-winning filmmaker and content creator Femi Adebayo-Salami and Mark Angel, along with other ambassadors such as Oluwabukola Arugba and Damola Olatunji. Their active involvement in the event highlighted the powerful role of celebrity influence in driving social change and raising awareness about critical issues.

The "Citizens' Action to End Poverty and Injustice (2024-2034)" strategy builds upon ActionAid Nigeria's history of grassroots mobilisation, advocacy, and community-driven change. The 10-year strategy is designed to tackle the root causes of poverty and injustice by focusing on systemic inequality, rights violations, and governance failures that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations – [see here](#).

In a bold move to redefine humanitarian aid, development, and peacebuilding in Nigeria, ActionAid has launched the Humanitarian, Development, and Peace (HDP) Practitioners' Academy. With campuses strategically located at the University of Maiduguri, Nasarawa State University, and the American University of Nigeria, the academy is poised to transform professional practice in these fields. Its mission is clear: to equip practitioners with cutting-edge skills to tackle the complexities of an ever-changing world, while fostering inclusivity and accessibility for professionals across the country.

The academy's flagship event, the Master Trainers' Training, took place from July 8–13, 2024, at Kini Country Inn. This intensive program brought together a select group of educators and facilitators tasked with delivering the academy's innovative curriculum. The training introduced participants to advanced pedagogical techniques designed to strengthen collective outcomes, setting a new standard for excellence in capacity building. These master trainers now stand ready to shape a new generation of HDP practitioners who will lead transformative change across Nigeria.

Collaboration lies at the heart of the academy's vision. By working closely with government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions, the academy ensures that its programs align with both national priorities and global standards. This partnership-driven approach bridges critical gaps in knowledge and practice, creating a cohesive community of professionals dedicated to addressing some of Nigeria's most pressing challenges.

In September 2024, the HDP Practitioners' Academy welcomed its first cohort, marking a significant milestone for ActionAid and a leap forward for humanitarian and development efforts in Nigeria. The academy has already begun to deliver on its promise of equipping practitioners with the skills and knowledge needed to tackle complex challenges in the field. With its commitment to innovation, collaboration, and excellence, the HDP Practitioners' Academy is set to become a beacon of hope and a catalyst for lasting change in the region.





A corps member specialized in agriculture, alongside AAN's project staff giving orientation to the students before planting

## Roots of Change; ActionAid's Tree Planting Initiative in Maiduguri

In Maiduguri, Borno State, ActionAid recently brought together students, volunteers, and community members in a transformative tree-planting initiative that underscored the power of collective action. Partnering with Yerwa Government Girls Secondary School, Government Secondary School Maiduguri, and members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), the project successfully planted 600 economic trees. This effort not only addressed the global call for climate action under Sustainable Development Goal 13 (SDG 13) but also empowered young people to take tangible steps toward combating climate change in their communities.

The students, organized into teams, eagerly took up shovels alongside NYSC volunteers and ActionAid staff. Together, they planted saplings across their school grounds, embracing the opportunity to make a lasting impact. These trees, chosen for their dual ecological and economic value, will provide long-term benefits like increased biodiversity, sustainable timber, and fruit production. For many students, the experience was an eye-opener, inspiring them to advocate for environmental responsibility in their neighborhoods.

This initiative exemplifies how grassroots action can address global challenges while empowering local communities. By uniting education, practical engagement, and strategic partnerships, ActionAid turned a simple tree-planting exercise into a sustainable movement for change. As the trees take root and flourish, so does a growing commitment to a greener, more resilient future in Maiduguri and beyond.



Cleap Justice - Judicial Institutions reps. at the Post Election Justice delivery event

## Empowering Citizens Through Civic Education

In our mission to build citizens' knowledge of Nigeria's electoral and judicial processes, the CLEAP team embarked on a series of civic education initiatives across Lagos, Kano, Enugu, Akwa Ibom, and Rivers State. Through a combination of in-person training and online engagements, we aimed to equip citizens with the knowledge and tools necessary to actively participate in their democracy.

One example of the impact of our work comes from Rivers State, where a young man arrived at our civic education activity burdened by anger and disillusionment towards the electoral process. Despite his initial confidence in his understanding of electoral and judicial affairs, he soon realized the depth of his knowledge gap. As the session unfolded, facilitated by engaging discussions and informative presentations, his perspective underwent a remarkable transformation. By the end of the meeting, he humbly acknowledged the insights he had gained and expressed gratitude for the CLEAP project's role in expanding his understanding.

This success story showcases the profound impact of civic education in empowering citizens. Through our efforts, individuals like this young man have enhanced their knowledge of electoral and judicial processes and become more aware of their roles as active participants in holding the judiciary accountable.





Francisca at the Climate O'Clock Event

## Breaking Barriers: A Journey of Climate Activism and Empowerment

From the bustling markets of Nsukka to the frontlines of climate advocacy, Ifebuchekwu Francisca Edeh has always been deeply connected to her community and the environment. Growing up in Enugu State, Francisca witnessed the devastating effects of environmental degradation firsthand, as clashes between farmers and herders in her state displaced families and left farmlands in ruins. Inspired by these challenges, she committed herself to addressing climate change, combining her education in Home Science and Management with her passion for advocacy. Even as an undergraduate at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, she trained young people in tree planting and waste management, reminding them, "Every tree we plant is a step towards a better future."

Francisca's determination to make a difference led her to ActionAid Nigeria's Digital Bootcamp 2.0, where she gained valuable skills in digital advocacy and community engagement. Reflecting on her experience, she noted how the technical knowledge she acquired shaped her efforts and gave her renewed motivation to drive change. Armed with these tools, she embarked on her National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) program in Nasarawa State, where she continued her climate advocacy by sensitizing students about the societal impact of climate change and the importance of planting trees. Her efforts extended to the Nyanya branch of Activista, an ActionAid initiative that mobilizes young people to tackle social issues. Through this platform, Francisca saw tangible results, as more youths became active in promoting climate justice.

Beyond environmental activism, Francisca mentored teenagers to transform municipal waste into art through her "Art Edifice Projects," teaching them the value of recycling and creative reuse. She also educated young people in agroecology, empowering communities to combat poverty and improve food security sustainably. As a volunteer lead with SCAAD initiatives, she fosters collaboration across interfaith and inter-ethnic groups, emphasizing unity in the fight for climate justice. Her innovative approach has inspired countless young people to act, demonstrating that solutions to climate challenges lie in collective effort.

Francisca's journey is a testament to the power of grassroots activism and the resilience of one determined individual. Through her work, she has broken barriers, empowered the next generation, and instilled hope for a brighter, greener future. Her story is not just about confronting climate change but also about building a movement that bridges divides and creates lasting change for communities in Nigeria and beyond.



## Building Resilience and Fostering Peace: SARVE III's Impact on Peacebuilding and Youth Empowerment in Kano and Kaduna

For three years, the System and Structure Strengthening Approach Against Radicalisation to Violent Extremism (SARVE III) project has been a flare of hope for communities in Kaduna and Kano States. Implemented by ActionAid Nigeria in partnership with Global Peace Development (GPD) and the Dispute Resolution and Development Initiative (DRDI), with funding from Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), the project has directly impacted over 33,000 lives. Through its focus on empowering women, youth, and key community actors, SARVE III has addressed the root causes of violent extremism while building sustainable pathways to peace.

A core component of the project was equipping 606 individuals including 175 young men, 209 young women, and 222 adult women with life and economic skills to reduce their vulnerability to violence. By empowering women and youth economically, SARVE III has contributed to breaking cycles of poverty and exclusion that often fuel extremism. Furthermore, 120 media professionals were trained in conflict-sensitive reporting and feminist journalism, equipping them to drive narratives that promote peace and inclusion.

The project also strengthened security measures by training 60 police officers, including (15 women and 45 men), on the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA). This training enhanced collaboration between law enforcement and community policing structures to address rising cases of violent extremism. Meanwhile, the establishment of 12 Local Conflict Management Alliances (LOCMA) across 12 LGAs in Kano and Kaduna provided communities with tools to prevent and resolve conflicts independently.

Beyond its immediate interventions, SARVE III influenced policy change by supporting the enactment of the Nasarawa Youth Development Commission Law. This groundbreaking legislation promotes youth inclusion in governance and creates job opportunities to tackle the vulnerabilities that make young people susceptible to extremism. SARVE III's story is one of resilience, inclusion, and hope a model for community-led peacebuilding in Nigeria.





Group photo of ActionAid Nigeria Board Members

## ActionAid Nigeria Welcomes New Board Leadership and Members

ActionAid Nigeria is pleased to announce a significant shift in its leadership with the appointment of a new Board Chair, Rabi Isma, who succeeds Dr. Jummai Umar-Ajijola. Dr. Jummai, who has held the position since 2018, has been instrumental in steering the organization through transformative phases. We extend our deepest gratitude to Dr. Jummai for her unwavering dedication and exceptional leadership during her tenure.

In addition to the new Board Chair, Dr. Macjohn Onyekwere Nwaobiala has been appointed as the new Vice Chair, bringing a wealth of experience and expertise to the leadership team. We also welcome Oladele Afolabi, who assumes the role of Board Treasurer, and we are confident that his financial acumen will greatly contribute to the effective governance of ActionAid Nigeria.

Further strengthening the Board, Dr. Solomon E. Arase, NPM, fdc, retired Inspector General of Police and Fellow of the Nigeria Defence College (fdc), joins as a member. Dr. Arase, a recipient of the National Police Medal, brings his vast experience in leadership, security, and public service.

We are also proud to welcome Justice Mojeed Adekunle Owoade, former Presiding Justice of the Court of Appeal (Ilorin, Calabar, and Kaduna Divisions), who retired in 2022 after a distinguished career in the judiciary. His wealth of legal experience will be an invaluable asset to our organization as we continue to advocate for social justice and human rights.

ActionAid Nigeria looks forward to the continued growth and success under the guidance of this dynamic leadership team.

## Innovative Ways Nigerian Youths Can Combat Climate Change

Empowering Nigerian youths to combat climate change through innovation and sustainable practices is essential for securing the future. Climate change, with its profound global impact, demands urgent action, and young people can be at the forefront of this movement by embracing innovative solutions. Below are four practical approaches Nigerian youths can adopt to address this pressing issue:

### 1 Integrated Farming Systems

This sustainable farming technique combines crop cultivation and animal rearing on the same land, creating a system where waste from one process becomes input for another. For example:

- Animal manure enriches the soil for crops.
- Crop residues feed livestock.

This method reduces the environmental impact of traditional farming, promotes biodiversity, and improves soil health. By adopting integrated farming, young Nigerians can contribute to a more sustainable agricultural sector.

### 2 Vertical Gardening

With increasing urbanization and limited space, vertical gardening offers a smart solution. It involves growing plants in vertically stacked layers, often using hydroponic or aeroponic systems. Benefits include:

- **Maximizing small spaces for food production.**
- **Reducing the need for transportation, thus lowering carbon emissions.**
- **Providing a steady supply of fresh produce in urban areas.**

Youth-led vertical gardening projects can transform unused spaces into green havens, fostering urban sustainability.

### 3 Solar Energy Utilization

Harnessing solar power is a game-changer for reducing reliance on fossil fuels. Nigerian youths can engage in:

- **Learning to install and maintain solar panels.**
- **Exploring solar-powered devices and systems.**
- **Educating communities about the benefits of clean energy.**

Widespread adoption of solar energy can cut emissions and provide reliable power, especially in off-grid areas.

### 4 Biogas Production

Converting organic waste into biogas is both innovative and practical. This process not only produces renewable energy but also helps manage waste effectively. Youths can:

- **Collect organic waste from households or farms.**
- **Set up small-scale biogas plants for energy generation.**
- **Use the byproduct as organic fertilizer.**

Biogas systems promote energy self-sufficiency while reducing greenhouse gas emissions from decomposing waste.



# Empowering Youths for a Sustainable Future

By adopting these approaches, Nigerian youths can gain valuable skills, inspire their communities, and drive meaningful climate action. Equipping them with knowledge, tools, and opportunities is crucial for creating a greener, more sustainable Nigeria. Together, we can unlock their potential to combat climate change and build a brighter future for all.

Now is the time to act. Let's inspire our youths to be champions of change!

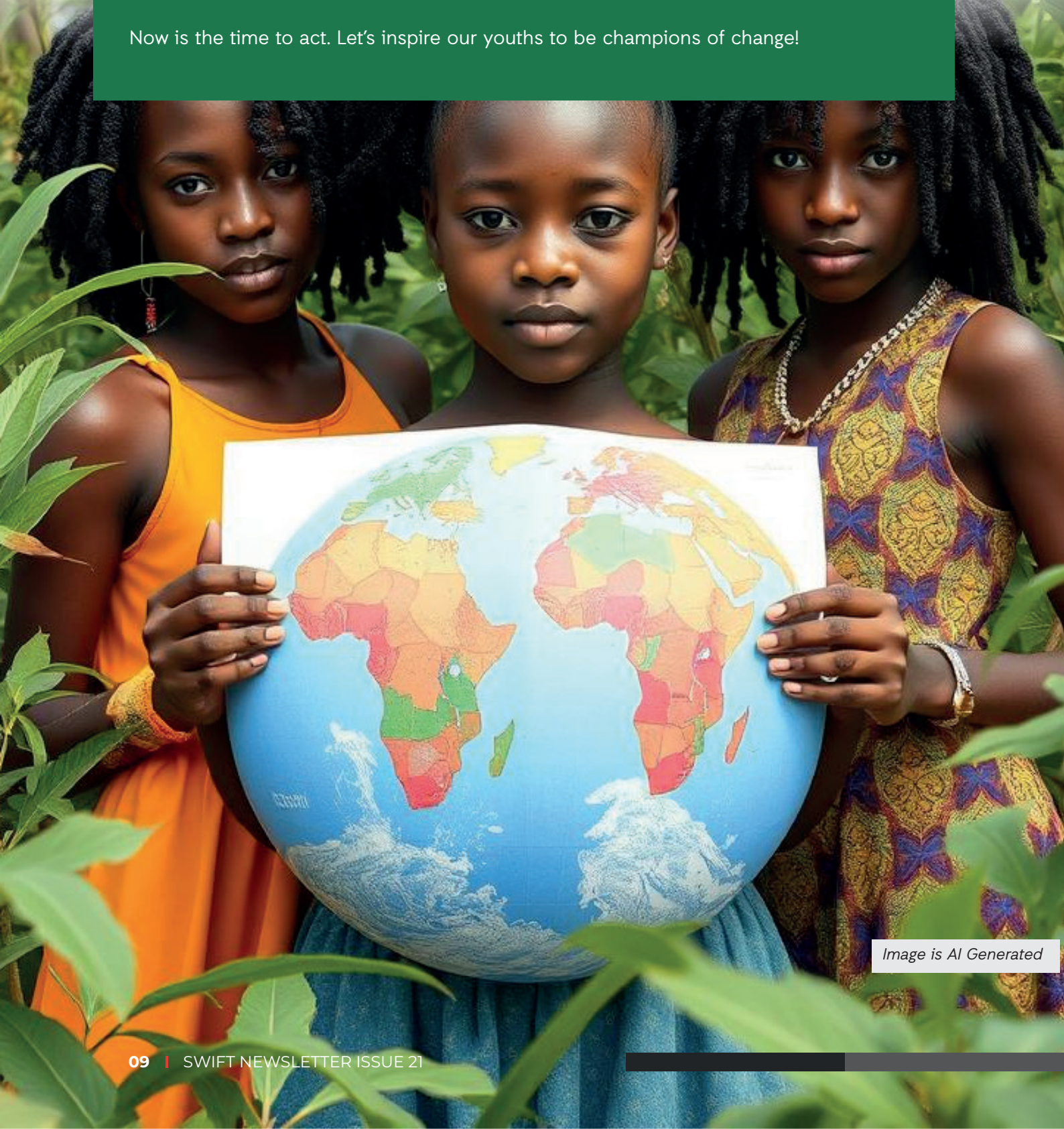


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## PHOTOREEL



Images from the Regional People Power Forum



Visit to Okoritak community



Visit to the Canadian embassy to discuss Nigeria's development agenda and how the two agencies would collaborate for future programming led by Andrew Mamedu



End Austerity Campaign Launch







## Transforming West Africa's Food Systems: Key Insights from the Regional Forum on Agroecology and Organic Agriculture

West Africa's food and nutrition systems are at a critical juncture. While challenges like hunger, climate change, and insecurity persist, the recent Regional Forum on Agroecology and Organic Agriculture in Abuja provided a platform for stakeholders to chart a transformative path forward. With the theme Financing the Transformation of Sustainable Food and Nutrition Systems for Food Sovereignty in West Africa through Organic Agriculture and Agroecology: What Policies, Mechanisms, and Instruments?, the forum focused not only on the practices of agroecology and organic agriculture but also on the policies and partnerships needed to make them a driving force for food sovereignty.

- **Rising to the Challenge of Hunger and Food Sovereignty**

One of the most striking points discussed was the pressing issue of food insecurity in West Africa. According to Andrew Mamedu, Country Director of ActionAid Nigeria, nearly 50 million people in the region struggle to feed themselves. Recent statistics indicate a 16% increase in hunger, with the majority of households unable to provide basic nutrition for their families. Despite this grim reality, the forum spotlighted the urgent need for a shift—away from reliance on imported agrochemicals and toward sustainable, locally-driven solutions like agroecology.

- **The Power of Agroecology and Organic Farming**

Agroecology, which integrates ecological principles into farming practices, emerged as a central solution. The forum emphasised its role not only in improving soil health and boosting biodiversity but also in helping communities adapt to the negative effects of climate change. Speakers from various organisations, including WAfrONet and the African Organic Network (3AO), highlighted the potential for organic farming to rejuvenate the land, reduce reliance on harmful chemicals, and enhance the resilience of local food systems.

Dr. Jude Obi, Chairman of the Local Organising Committee, pointed out that the forum was the product of collaboration between diverse stakeholders, including ECOWAS, ActionAid, and local agricultural bodies. He stressed that the event aimed to foster knowledge sharing and collaboration, which would, in turn, enable the creation of transformative policies and financial mechanisms to support agroecology.

- **Financing Agroecology: A Call to Action**

At the heart of the discussions was financing—both public and private—as a crucial enabler for agroecology's success. From ActionAid's partnership with local governments and extension services to the increased funding for agroecology initiatives, participants agreed on the importance of ensuring sustainable financial support for organic farming. ActionAid's work, which has reached thousands of smallholder farmers, highlighted the effectiveness of integrating agroecology into government-led extension programs, facilitating access to markets for sustainably produced food, and lobbying for better financing policies.

- **The Role of Partnerships and Policy Development**

A critical takeaway from the forum was the importance of partnerships. From multi-stakeholder dialogues to collaborations between governments, civil society, and the private sector, the forum underscored the need for a cohesive approach to scaling agroecology practices. Governments, in particular, were urged to create enabling policies and regulatory frameworks that support the growth of organic agriculture. Alhaji Tanimu Ibrahim, Director of Planning and Coordination at Nigeria's Ministry of Agriculture, emphasised the government's commitment to fostering systemic solutions. He encouraged participants to share innovative approaches and strategies to improve market access, enhance value chains, and increase funding sources for agroecology practices.

- **A Collective Effort for a Sustainable Future**

The Regional Forum on Agroecology and Organic Agriculture was a resounding success in bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders to discuss the future of food systems in West Africa. As participants reflected on the importance of agroecology, they also recognized the need for continued collaboration to secure funding, build stronger partnerships, and develop policies that can ensure the sustainability and resilience of food systems in the region.

The event also featured vibrant cultural performances, such as the drama presentation by the Black Bones cultural troupe, which showcased the challenges of poverty, land degradation, and the need for sustainable farming practices. By the end of the forum, it was clear: achieving food sovereignty in West Africa will require a concerted, collective effort to foster the conditions for agroecology and organic agriculture to thrive.

With commitments from stakeholders across West Africa, the future of food in the region looks more promising than ever—if the policies, financing, and collaborative partnerships discussed at the forum are implemented effectively.







Wassa discussing with friends

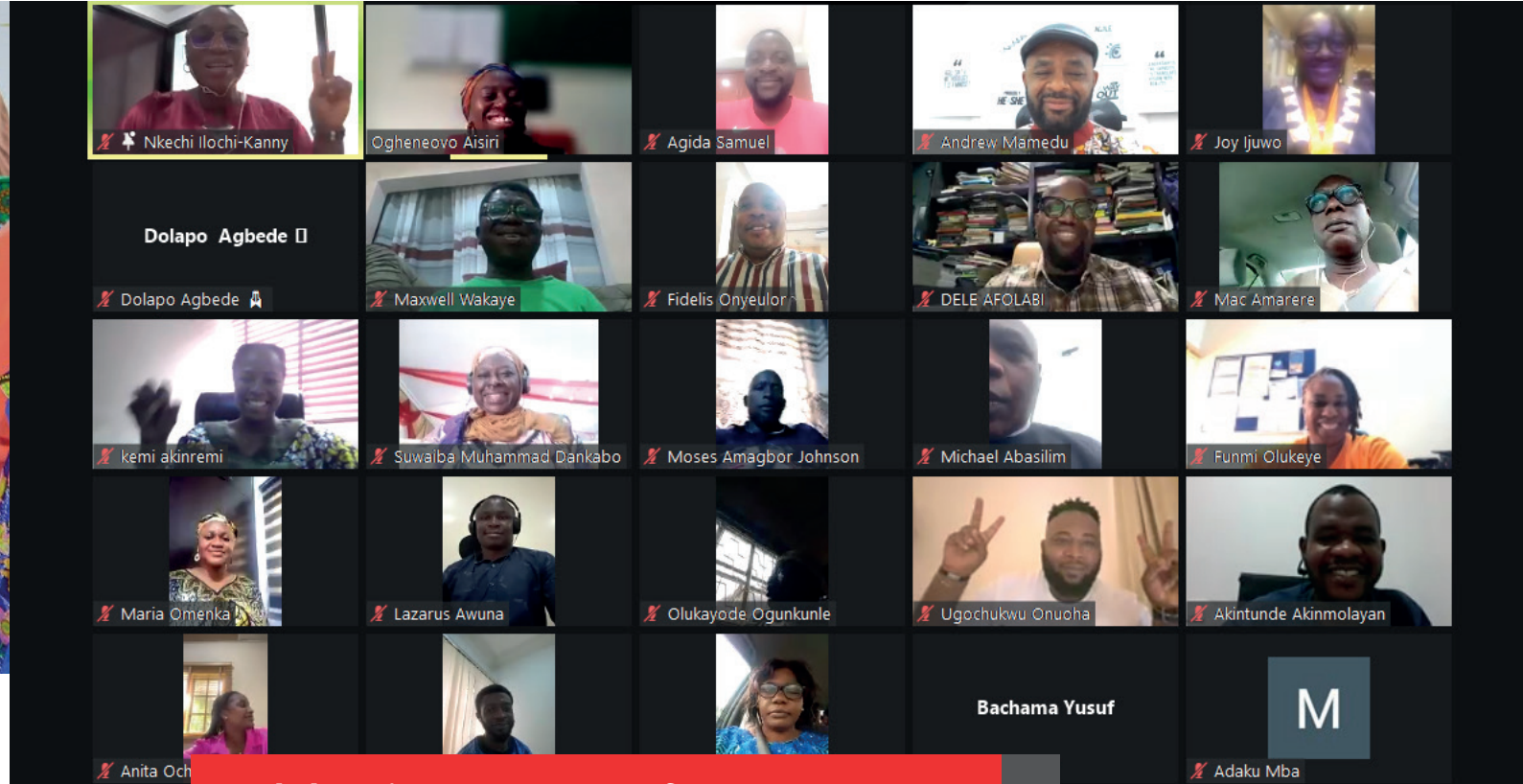
## How ActionAid is Building Resilience in the Face of Crisis

Wassa’s story is one of strength and survival. At just 32, she had already endured unimaginable loss, fleeing her home in Gwoza, Borno State, with her two young children to escape the Boko Haram insurgency. Seeking refuge in Maiduguri’s Al-Kassim Fillin Ball Camp, Wassa found safety but was burdened by the emotional scars of her experiences. Through ActionAid and HALI’s safe space, she accessed much-needed psychosocial support, joining group counseling sessions and finding a community of women who helped her begin to heal. Slowly, she started to rebuild her life.

In September 2024, Wassa’s fragile stability was upended again when the Alau dam collapsed, unleashing devastating floods in Maiduguri. Her shelter was submerged, and she watched helplessly as her few belongings were swept away. Clutching her children, she waded through the chaos of rising waters, only to face displacement for the second time. The trauma and despair were overwhelming, but Wassa’s determination carried her through, and she turned once more to ActionAid safe space for support.

Even as the floodwaters disrupted activities at the safe space, ActionAid’s response was swift. Emergency interventions included hot meals for affected families and dignity kits for 840 women and girls. When the safe space reopened, Wassa returned, finding comfort and camaraderie in the peer support groups where women shared stories of resilience. ActionAid’s investment in psychosocial support and skill-building helped her find hope and develop coping strategies to manage anxiety and trauma.

Today, Wassa is mentally stronger and beginning to plan for her future, fueled by gratitude for the support she’s received. She reflects, “ActionAid and HALI didn’t just feed us; they restored our dignity and helped us heal.” ActionAid’s work in Maiduguri goes beyond emergency aid, focusing on building long-term resilience and empowering women like Wassa to lead recovery efforts in their communities. Through this, Wassa’s story is no longer just one of survival but of transformation and hope.



## Celebrating 10 Years of Impact: A Successful Virtual Hangout with Our Supporters and AAN Board

In a heartwarming celebration of commitment, generosity, and shared purpose, ActionAid Nigeria (AAN) hosted a Virtual Hangout with Community Sponsorship Supporters and the AAN Board in July 2024, to mark the 10th anniversary of the Community Sponsorship Initiative. Launched in July 2014, the community sponsorship initiative has been a beacon of hope, enabling individuals and organizations to contribute regularly and directly to transformative community development efforts across Nigeria.

The event, which brought together long-time supporters and key members of the AAN Board, was a testament to the power of collaboration and shared values. Supporters had the unique opportunity to engage directly with the Board, reflect on a decade of collective achievements, and contribute their thoughts on the future of the initiative.

Highlights of the Virtual Hangout was that supporters were recognized for their unwavering dedication over the years. Messages of gratitude were shared by AAN’s board Chair and Ambassadors, and stories of real impact were highlighted—underscoring how their contributions have changed lives.

AAN presented a compelling report on the initiative’s achievements, showcasing how their efforts have supported out-of-school children, empowered women farmers, provided maternal healthcare, and offered aid during emergencies and conflict situations.

The event fostered a deeper sense of community by creating a space for Supporters and the Board to engage in meaningful conversations about their shared mission.

From all of us at ActionAid Nigeria, we extend our deepest gratitude to our supporters and partners. Together, we will continue to create a more just, equitable, and compassionate society. Here’s to another decade of transforming lives and empowering communities!





Group photo of WVLP team with Andrew Mamedu (Country Director ActionAid Nigeria)

## Empowering Women's Voices, Transforming Communities: The Success of the Women's Voice and Leadership Project in Nigeria

Over the past five years, the Women's Voice and Leadership (WVLP) Nigeria Project, funded by Global Affairs Canada and implemented by ActionAid Nigeria, has transformed the lives of millions of women and girls. Launched in 2019, this initiative tackled critical issues like economic disempowerment, gender-based violence, and women's exclusion from leadership and decision-making. By working with 182 women's rights organizations across 24 states and the Federal Capital Territory, the project touched over 7 million lives, leaving behind a legacy of empowerment and change.

The project's economic empowerment programs supported over 19,000 women to launch businesses and helped 890 women secure leadership roles in traditional councils. Village savings and loan programs facilitated by project partners generated over 408 million Naira for local business ventures, creating pathways for financial independence. These achievements demonstrate the transformative power of investing in women and their potential to reshape their communities.

In politics, the WVLP project enabled 131 women to run for office, with 40 winning elections—a significant stride in bridging gender gaps in governance. Women's organizations supported by the project also played a pivotal role in advocating for 47 gender-focused policies and laws, fostering inclusivity and equality in decision-making. Through these efforts, women's voices are now more represented at state and national levels, paving the way for systemic change.

The fight against gender-based violence was another cornerstone of the WVLP project. Over 5,000 cases of violence were managed, while advocacy efforts led to the establishment of gender desks in 24 police stations and the creation of 21 safe spaces for young women and girls. These initiatives provided survivors with access to justice and safety, ensuring they could reclaim their lives and dignity. Stories like Regina Kechi Eze, the first female cabinet member in her traditional council, and Blessing Alice, the first female president of the University of Calabar's Student Union, exemplify the lasting impact of these efforts.

As the project concludes, its impact endures. With over 2.28 billion Naira invested in women's rights organizations, local groups are now better equipped to advocate for gender equality and sustain the gains made. As ActionAid Nigeria embarks on a new 10-year strategy to lift 5 million Nigerians—60% of whom are women—out of poverty, the lessons from the WVLP project will serve as a foundation for building a more inclusive and equitable future.

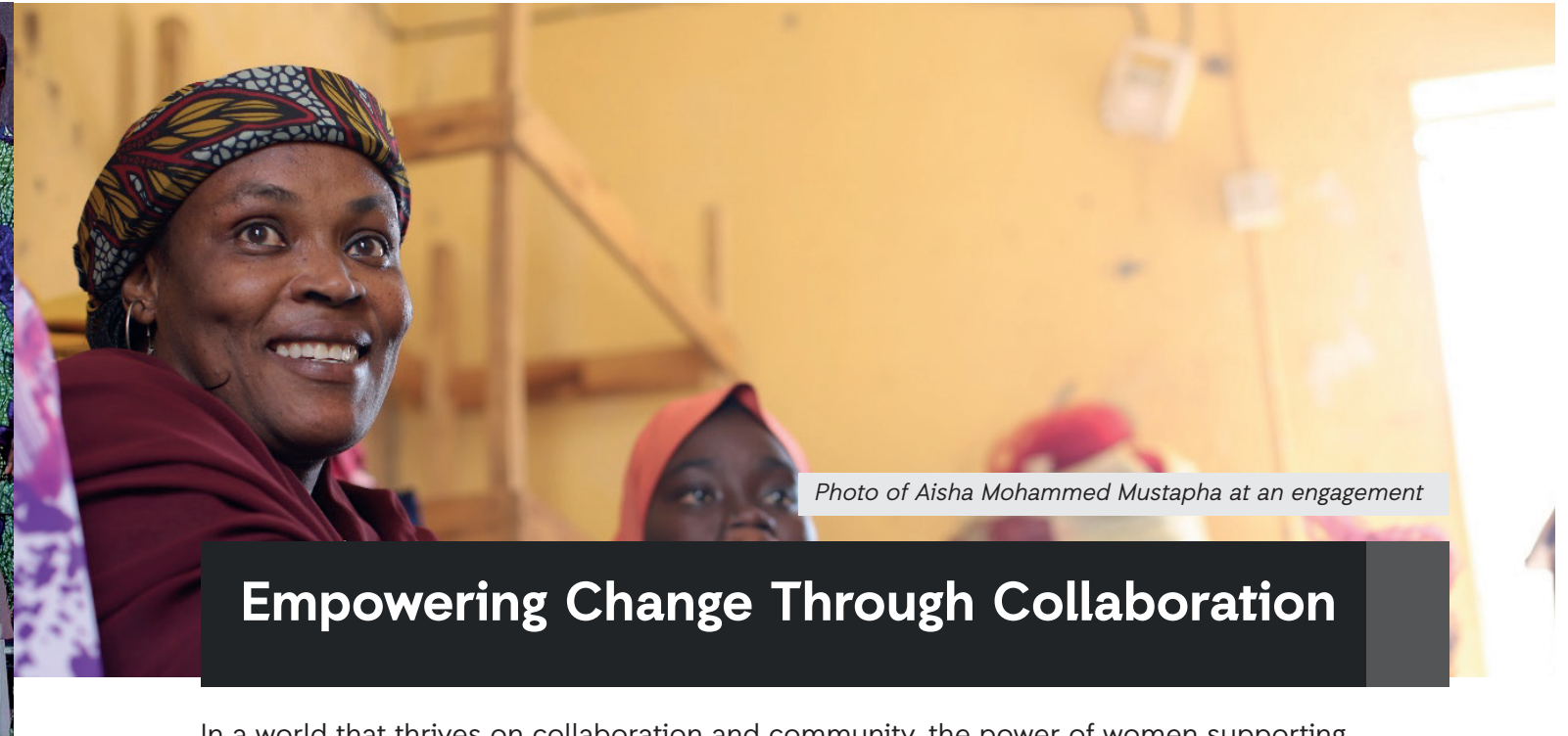


Photo of Aisha Mohammed Mustapha at an engagement

## Empowering Change Through Collaboration

In a world that thrives on collaboration and community, the power of women supporting women stands as a beacon of hope, strength, and inspiration. The Dorayi Women Safe Space is a shining example of this power in action. This transformative initiative emerged through the combined efforts of the Democratic Action Group (DAG) and ActionAid Nigeria (AAN), with generous funding from the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), as part of the SARVE III Project. The Dorayi Women Safe Space has become a pillar of support, providing hope and empowerment to local women and offering them the tools to live their best lives while also helping others do the same.

Aisha Mohammed Mustapha, the facilitator of the Dorayi Women Safe Space and the women's cooperative, shared how the initiative is making a significant difference in the lives of women in the community. Through the safe space, the women meet twice a month to engage in discussions about conflict resolution and ways to support one another. This shared space fosters mutual care, learning, and emotional support, creating a sense of belonging and solidarity. In addition to their meetings, the women have initiated a weekly contribution scheme known as "adache." Through this system, they pool their resources together to support one another, enabling women to raise funds and invest in their businesses. This collective effort not only strengthens the community but also fosters economic independence for women who may have otherwise struggled to access financial support.

Aisha also highlighted the livelihood component of the SARVE III Project, explaining that eight women, including herself, were trained in sewing at the inception of the cooperative. Over the course of just one year, they have trained over forty other women, all free of charge, and provided them with access to the cooperative's sewing center. The women are encouraged to use the facilities to generate income, while contributing a small monthly fee of N1000 for the maintenance of the machines. This initiative has empowered many women to build their businesses, and the cooperative has become an important resource for financial independence and skill-building.

This success story underscores the profound impact of the collaboration between ActionAid Nigeria and DAG, as well as the strength and resilience of the women of Dorayi. It highlights how structural support, community-driven initiatives, and shared resources can work together to foster positive change, illustrating the power of collaboration in combating radicalisation and promoting social cohesion. The Dorayi Women Safe Space is not only a testament to the importance of women's solidarity but also a powerful reminder of the potential that lies within communities when they come together to uplift and support one another.



# A Story of Resilience:

ActionAid Nigeria's Intervention in Plateau State



In June 2024, ActionAid Nigeria, supported by the Start Network Fund, embarked on a rapid emergency response mission in Plateau State. It was my first field assignment with the organization, and my task was clear, document the intervention through stories and images. Armed with a camera and notebook, I set out, eager to capture the unfolding moments. But as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie aptly notes, sometimes stories shape themselves, and this one led me deep into the heart of Tilengpat Pushit, a community devastated by violence.

Gunmen had attacked the village, killing 12 people and displacing thousands. This tragedy followed earlier assaults that left over 3,000 households reeling in the Mangu and Bokkos Local Government Areas. Families faced immense loss—loved ones, homes, livelihoods—and urgent humanitarian aid was crucial. Responding swiftly, ActionAid Nigeria, in collaboration with Plan International and other partners, stepped in. Over a 45-day intervention, they provided food supplies, dignity kits, hygiene awareness, psychosocial support, and cash relief to alleviate suffering and help survivors rebuild.

One encounter remains etched in my mind—a woman from Mangu community, her smile masking deep pain. She had lost her husband and eldest son in the attacks. Now, she lived with her brother-in-law, raising her only surviving child. Despite her grief, she expressed gratitude for the intervention, which brought her and others a glimmer of hope amidst despair. Stories like hers were repeated across the villages, where survivors welcomed the ActionAid team with warmth and appreciation.

From the first gathering in a church hall to the final goodbyes, the intervention left an indelible mark. Families expressed their relief and gratitude, not just for the material aid but for the empathy and solidarity shown. This mission underscored ActionAid Nigeria's commitment to standing with communities in their darkest moments, transforming stories of loss into narratives of hope and resilience.



Woman Farmer in her farm

## Sowing Seeds of Change: Transforming Communities Through Agroecology

In the rural heartlands of Nigeria, ActionAid Nigeria's commitment to empowering small-holder women farmers and youth is creating ripples of transformation. During a recent monitoring visit for the SPAC (Smallholder Women Farmers in Agroecology and Climate Change) project, inspiring stories emerged from participants of the Training of Trainers (TOT) program. Designed to cascade agroecological knowledge to local communities, the program has equipped selected farmers to mentor and train others, fostering a network of sustainable farming advocates.

One such champion is Khadijat Taiwo from Ona Abayo in Ondo West, who has directly and indirectly trained over 100 individuals, including students from the Ondo State University of Medical Sciences who have started backyard gardens at their lodge. At her own model farm, established in June, Khadijat harvests tomatoes, peppers, and okra weekly, now on her fourth cycle. "The knowledge I gained has changed my life," she shared with pride. "Not only am I feeding my family, but I'm also sharing this knowledge with my neighbors." Her farm symbolizes a grassroots revolution, driven by women and youth determined to combat climate change through innovation.

The visit showcased thriving model farms where agroecological techniques like crop rotation, organic pest control, and intercropping are being successfully implemented. Farmers proudly demonstrated how these practices are improving soil health, reducing pest damage, and cutting farming costs—leaving them with healthier crops and more disposable income. However, they also shared challenges, such as combating climate variability, which provided valuable insights for refining project strategies. The striking difference between agroecological and conventional farms reinforced the impact of sustainable practices on resilience and productivity.

Beyond monitoring, ActionAid experts provided hands-on mentorship, helping farmers address issues such as pests and diseases in real-time. This support has boosted confidence among participants, enabling them to replicate and expand these practices in their communities. Through the SPAC project, ActionAid is not just improving food security and livelihoods; it's fostering a movement of dignity and resilience. As farmers like Khadijat lead the way, agroecology is transforming agriculture in Nigeria—one sustainable step at a time.





Participants at the recent Fmeisnt dialogue forum

# Feminist Dialogue Series

The Young Feminist Dialogue Forum series has emerged as a vital platform to educate and empower young people to champion feminist leadership, amidst rising cases of gender-based violence. This forum aims to enhance understanding of young leaders' roles in addressing GBV, foster inclusion, and advocate for gender-responsive public services.

Through the series, sessions have highlighted the patriarchal challenges faced by women and girls daily in Nigeria and globally. Young people in Kubusa and Leleri Gwari community in the FCT have been empowered to question and confront unequal power and patriarchal norms.



# Nigeria at Risk from Ecological Fund Mismanagement: A cry for Help.

Nigeria faces a significant challenge in ensuring food security for its growing population. While the Ecological Fund was established to address environmental issues and promote sustainable development, persistent concerns about its mismanagement continue to undermine efforts to combat environmental degradation, a root cause of food insecurity.

The Nigerian Earth Warrior, a social movement advocating for environmental justice in northeastern Nigeria, leveraged the 2024 World Hunger Day themed "Thriving Mothers, Thriving World" to underscore the vital role women play in ensuring food security.

With support from ActionAid Nigeria's MOVE project, the movement organized an awareness-raising rally, using powerful campaign messages to draw attention to the link between the mismanagement of the Ecological Fund and women's struggles with food insecurity. This mismanagement, a significant driver of climate change, exacerbates poverty and worsens food crises.

To amplify their advocacy, the movement also hosted a press conference to present evidence of the Ecological Fund's mismanagement and its harmful effects on food security, particularly for women. The event generated substantial media coverage, sparking public discourse on the issue.

Demonstrating its commitment to inclusive engagement, the movement led a delegation on an advocacy visit to key government officials. They presented a comprehensive report detailing the challenges, proposed actionable solutions, and called for increased transparency, accountability, and effective use of the Ecological Fund for environmental restoration projects.





## The CLEAP Justice Project Carving a Niche in Post-Election Justice Delivery in Nigeria



The CLEAP Justice project has achieved significant recognition in post-election justice delivery in Nigeria. A testament to this success is evident through a simple Google search, where the project emerges as the foremost result when the term "post-election justice in Nigeria" is queried. This visibility signifies the project's growing reputation and ActionAid Nigeria's increasing recognition and capacity in this critical domain.

By establishing itself as a leading authority in post-election justice, the CLEAP Justice project has demonstrated its commitment to promoting transparency, accountability, and fairness in Nigeria's electoral processes. This success not only enhances the project's credibility but also underscores its pivotal role in strengthening the post-election justice delivery in Nigeria.

## The Impact of Media Engagement on Agroecology and Climate Justice



The media plays a crucial role in promoting Agroecology and climate justice in West Africa. Through increased coverage, the media has helped integrate Agroecology into government services at all levels. The goal is to enhance the knowledge of climate change and agricultural reporters on these topics. Conversations with the media have focused on the importance of in-depth reporting to scale up Agroecology as a sustainable, nature-based solution to food and nutrition security amid climate change in the region.

## National summit on Agroecology and public private partnership



The summit brought together stakeholders from both public and private sector farmers organizations and young people's movements to promote Agroecology. The summit provided an avenue to advocate for increased quantity and quality of public financing for Agroecology towards increased government political and budget commitments. It also created market access for sustainably produced agricultural products through Agroecology. Facilitating Public Private Partnerships on agroecology will further lead to adoption, scale to millions of farmers, and transition to sustainable agriculture practices. The impact on communities will include savings from non-purchase of chemical inputs, improved and increased productivity and increased incomes due to diversified livelihoods in addition we will be testing new approaches & getting the private sector to sign up into ethical practices that support SHWF in climate resilient agriculture.

## Strengthening Partnerships Through Strategic Advocacy



Action Committees inaugurated through the Multi-Stakeholders Approach to Prevent Gender Based Violence (MAP-GBV) project across three project states have successfully engaged key gatekeepers to advance their advocacy goals. In Osun State, the committees held sensitization visits with the Chief Justice and Commissioner of Police, fostering

collaboration on justice and security initiatives. In Anambra State, the Multistakeholder Action Committee partnered with the Anambra Broadcasting Service (ABS) to amplify their advocacy through special programs and gained the support of the Obi of Onitsha, a strategic ally. Similarly, in Rivers State, the committee conducted an advocacy visit to Eze Chike Worlu Wodo, the Paramount Ruler of Apar Kingdom and Chairman of the Rivers State Council of Traditional Rulers, securing his backing for their initiatives. These efforts highlight the committees' commitment to building partnerships that drive impactful change.



## Strengthening Community Development in Jigawa State



In July, our team visited Jigawa State as part of the Local Rights Program (LRP), a community-driven initiative by ActionAid. The primary objective was to establish the Inclusive Forum for Accountable Society (IFAS), a groundbreaking process that tackles inequality, poverty, and governance through collective action.

Active in 10 states across Nigeria, LRP operates in seven communities within three Local Government Areas in Jigawa. A highlight of our visit was handing over a renovated school to the Rakwata Sale Community, underscoring our commitment to education and community upliftment.

The establishment of IFAS in Jigawa exemplifies our unwavering dedication to fostering positive change in Nigeria.

## Lagos Youth Policy Signed with Major Contributions through SPA II Advocacy



The Lagos State Government officially signed and approved the Lagos State Youth Policy, a significant milestone achieved through the persistent advocacy on the SPA II project. This policy framework is designed to address the needs, aspirations, and challenges of young people across Lagos State, providing a structured approach to youth empowerment and development.

The approval of the Youth Policy marks a critical achievement in Lagos State's commitment to youth development.

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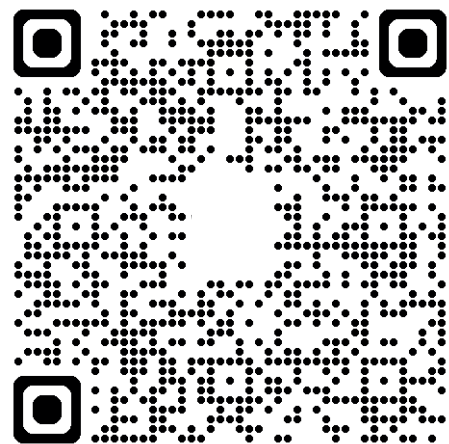






## SPARK NEWSLETTER

We're thrilled to welcome you to the inaugural edition of the Strategic Partnership Agreement Reporting Knowledge (SPARK) newsletter. This platform is your gateway to staying connected, informed, and inspired by the impactful work of the Strategic Partnership Agreement II (SPA II) project.



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## About SPA II

Funded by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), Strategic Partnership Agreement SPA II is a four-year initiative (2022-2025) aimed at advancing human rights, resilience, and sustainable livelihoods for young people, especially young women, living in marginalized communities and areas affected by crises. The project operates across five states in Nigeria—Akwa Ibom, the BAY States (Borno, Adamawa, Yobe) Enugu, Lagos, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in collaboration with our dedicated partners who work tirelessly to bring the SPA II vision to life on the ground.

**01.**

Ensure that young people, especially women and those experiencing marginalization or fragility, can exercise their rights within an open and enabling democratic space. This includes facilitating access to well-resourced programs and public services.

**02.**

Empower young people, particularly women and marginalised individuals, to achieve enhanced, sustainable livelihoods through the promotion of climate-accountable governance and a green private sector.

**03.**

Empower young people, particularly women and marginalised individuals, to achieve enhanced, sustainable livelihoods through the promotion of climate-accountable governance and a green private sector.







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