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LOCAL RIGHTS PROGRAMME

STORIES OF IMPACT

KWARA STATE



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I also appreciate the implementing partner Centre for Community Empowerment and Poverty Eradication (CCEPE) who worked in collaboration with ActionAid Nigeria, relevant gatekeepers, Ministries, Agencies and Departments, Civil Society Organisations, and community facilitators to create progressive changes recorded across the 18 communities - Ipetu and Apa, Irepodun (Olomoda, Oguntoyinbo, Budo Aiku), Gbago, Budo Aro, Omole, Oniyere, Igboroko, Owode Oja, Okeso, Samo, Ogodo, and Sholu Communities in Asa LGA; Nuku, Tunga Maje, Gatte, Tenebo, and Nanu communities in Kaiama LGA where the programme was implemented from 2007-2023.

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Ene Obi
Country Director
ActionAid Nigeria



INTRODUCTION

ActionAid Nigeria (AAN)'s Local Rights Programme (LRP) was established to enable ActionAid achieve her mission of working with persons living in poverty and exclusion in Nigeria. The programme began in 2007 in Kwara as Partnership Against Poverty PAP) (until 2012 when ActionAid Nigeria established a new structure. Hence, now known as Partnership and Local Rights Programme (P&LRP).

In 2002, ActionAid Nigeria (AAN) decided to move beyond the single theme intervention, and introduced the child sponsorship initiative, a child focused fundraising mechanism to support her development work in six thematic areas. Under this initiative, sponsors from partner countries are linked to children in the community and bonds are built between them, which ultimately leads to improvements in the child's family life and community. This long-term integrated development programme called the Local Rights Programme (LRP) is currently being implemented in 13 states, including Kwara.

ActionAid through her local rights programme partner in Kwara state, Centre for Community Empowerment and Poverty Eradication (CCEPE) works with women, children and other vulnerable groups, the poor and marginalized communities in Kaiama and Asa Local Government Areas (LGAs) to fulfill their rights through advocacy, sensitisation, capacity building and partnership.

AAN and CCEPE secured a smooth working relationship with Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) which helped in influencing policies in favour of women and marginalized groups across the state including persons with disabilities. The programme has been able to provide capacity-building support to accountability structures in the communities where ActionAid works, in holding government accountable. The programme also facilitates the formation of community-based organizations (CBOs) to advance the work of ActionAid, even beyond the programme's lifespan.

PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the LRP is to improve the socio-economic status of poor women, men, and children in LRP states by mobilising communities and building their capacities to implement people centered development programmes using the Human Rights Based Approach to programming. This is done through a three-pronged approach:

NO. 1
Empowering grassroots community through rights consciousness and supporting locally initiated projects



NO. 2
Building the capacity of local institutions



NO. 3
Supporting policy advocacy initiatives that ensure that the voices of people living in poverty are listened to and their rights respected.



THEMATIC FOCUS

Local Rights Programme interventions focus on the following thematic areas:

1 Rights to Education 

4 Women's Rights and Empowerment 

2 Health 

5 Food Security 

3 Democratic, Good Governance and Accountability 

6 Human Security in Conflicts and Emergencies 

ActionAid Nigeria has also improved the capacity of the implementing partner in Kwara State, CCEPE, by helping them build stronger accountability systems and policies such as financial and audit policies, HR & gender policies, child protection and safeguarding policies anti-sexual, harassment, exploitation, and abuse policies. Proudly, CCEPE is now a formidable organisation that we believe will continue to promote social justice in Kwara State.

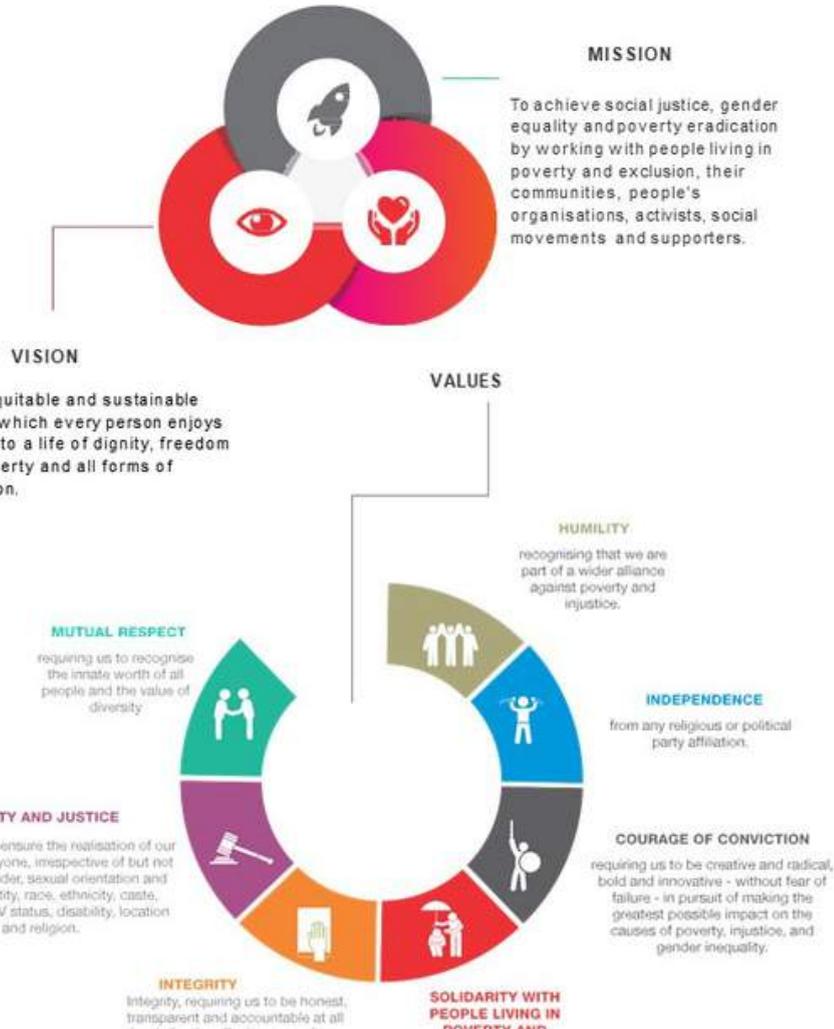


Suwaiba Muhammad-Dankabo
Director of Programmes
ActionAid Nigeria



WHO WE ARE

ActionAid Nigeria is a member of ActionAid global federation, a global movement of people working together to further human rights for all and defeat poverty. We work to eradicate poverty through gender equality and the redistribution of wealth and power. We apply a human rights-based approach to development. We mobilize the active agency of people to confront unequal power relations that exclude them or others from participating in decision-making and limits their access to and control of resources and opportunities. We also challenge the norms and practices that undermine women's rights and promote patriarchy in formal and informal spheres. These we believe will contribute to the realisation of social justice for all.



BUILDING WITH CCEPE: A PARTNERSHIP IN PROGRESS

ActionAid Nigeria (AAN) partners with several state-based organisations to achieve their local rights programme objectives. Kehinde Isaac Arowosegbe, AAN's Local Rights Programme Manager, gives an insight on the partnership with the Center for Community Empowerment and Poverty Eradication (CCEPE).

“CCEPE is one of the oldest partners ActionAid has worked with. The partnership with CCEPE began sixteen (16) years ago with the establishment of the organization to run the Local Rights Programme in Kwara state. The organization has however over the years being a recipient of other projects from ActionAid to complement the Local Rights' Programme in the communities. from ActionAid to complement the Local Rights' Programme in the communities. ActionAid built the board and staff's capacity of CCEPE to enable them to design their intervention strategies. Building the capacity of the communities where CCEPE works and ultimately helping to establish a working interphase between the partner, their intervention communities and the government was the focus of AAN in Kwara State. We also provided guidance and mentorship to CCEPE, supporting design, with a constant d review of their project plans and implementation, while also supporting them with funding which they used in executing their various community projects.”

Some of the key achievements of the partnership with CCEPE in Kwara State include building and renovating hospitals, health centers and schools. The programme also provided some communities with motorized boreholes, improved livelihoods through training and provision of improved seedings for sustainable agriculture. Local farmers, especially women, were taught how to use local home-made manure in their farms, other than using chemical fertilizers which are usually expensive and not environmentally friendly.

Kehinde reiterated that “AAN's partnership with CCEPE was designed with sustainability in mind. Part of the sustainability plan includes building the capacity of their partners and their beneficiaries on resource mobilisation. The partner and their focus communities were also trained on proposal writing to enable them source for funds to sustain themselves and their development project activities.”

Within the last sixteen years, ActionAid and CCEPE have empowered members of the communities, women groups, and other community groups to be able to demand for their rights and partake of the dividends of democracy. Communities are now taking ownership of projects and activities and the ripple effect of these is noticed across other communities and in the state.

To sustain the AAN/CCEPE intervention in Kwara State, the State government and other sister organizations must ensure that the CCEPE intervention in Kaiama and Asa local government areas are replicated in other local governments in Kwara State, even as CCEPE continues to mobilise resources to ensure the improvement of the communities where they work. It is important that CCEPE as a catalyst maintains synergy with the State government as partners in progress in the development of the State. The benefiting communities also have a role to play in maintaining the established structures and ensuring that the facilities provided for them through the CCEPE intervention are not left dilapidated.



Kehinde Isaac Arowosegbe
Local Rights Programme Manager
ActionAid Nigeria

FOOTPRINTS IN THE SANDS OF TIME



The partnership between ActionAid Nigeria’s Local Rights Programme (LRP) and the Center for Community Empowerment and Poverty Eradication (CCEPE) dated back to 2007. Since then, CCEPE has been working in 18 communities of Kaiama and Asa local government areas of Kwara state. Abdurrahman Ayuba is the current Executive Director of CCEPE, succeeding Suleman Kareem who handed over the baton of leadership to him in 2020. Mr. Ayuba reflects about the situation of communities prior to CCEPE intervention, the project activities and the impact of CCEPE in Kwara State:

“These were communities that were overtly neglected and ignored by the government. In fact, they had very little or no government presence prior to CCEPE/LRP intervention, and as such, were detached from development. For instance, these communities lacked education and health facilities as well as basic infrastructures. They had no electricity, no motorable roads, and no potable water. Some of the communities had neither schools nor health centers. A woman in labour would have to travel at least 5km on a torturous road to access the nearest health center,” said Ayuba. These and more were the issues identified by CCEPE, which informed the choice of these communities for their interventions.

The areas of thematic focus for LRP’s intervention were in sync with those of ActionAid, which include; Rights to education, Health, Democratic, good governance and accountability, Women’s rights and empowerment, Food and Human Security in Conflict and Emergency.

However, eight (8) years ago, the programme was streamlined to focus more on women's rights and food security through sustainable agricultural practices. This is because women in the focus communities are mostly subsistent farmers.

CCEPE has recorded a lot of achievements in Kwara State, the biggest being building the capacity of women to engage better with the government through advocacy and meaningful dialogue. Women in focus communities have been empowered with the capacity to hold their political representatives to account. In some of the communities where women were hitherto relegated to the background, they have now become so vocal that they confront issue that even men are jittery to speak about. Women now have the voice and take the lead on issues that concern them. The very first woman to emerge as PTA chairman in the whole of Kaiama local government area is from one of the LRP communities.

“We also helped in building the capacities of the local communities on human rights and accountability. This has made it possible for local communities to engage better with governments at the local and state levels. Community representatives are now able to walk into government offices and fearlessly demand their rights. In Ipetu-Abidiore community for instance, their self-help borehole was bad and upon approaching the local government authorities to request for repairs, they were told they would not get such help because they did not vote for the party in power. Ordinarily, they would have just covered and gone back home, but instead, they stood their ground to let the local government (LG) authorities know that providing those basic amenities is their fundamental right and the responsibility of the government. In the end, they were able to get the LG authorities fix the borehole for their community.

This was possible only because of the capacity the community got from the CCEPE/AAN. LRP communities now know how to make their grievances known to the government through appropriate channels. They now boldly engage with the media through programming to demand their rights and for accountability.

The successes recorded in LRP communities are already producing ripple effects, so much so that other communities are now consulting LRP communities to learn and adopt their approaches. In Samo community for instance, their neighbouring communities come to them to ask questions about the strategies to adopt to attract basic amenities to their own community.

Ayuba also noted that “Before LRP intervention, Ipetu community primary school had only one (1) classroom but with the support of ActionAid Nigeria, CCEPE was able to construct a block of classrooms in the Ipetu Community Primary School, making it possible for children to learn in a more conducive environment.

Igboroko community had no secondary school prior to the LRP intervention. This meant that after primary school, the children had to go to a neighboring community for secondary education. This was quite a far distance and parents had to make provisions for their children to be resident in the community with the secondary school.

This also meant that parents were not able to supervise the activities of their children, which resulted in many of the girls getting pregnant and boys doing drugs. CCEPE helped to engage with the government to construct a secondary school in Igboroko and now the community has a secondary school. The children no longer go far to access secondary education. The rate of teenage pregnancy has also reduced considerably.

Gatte and Nuku communities also had no health facilities prior to the LRP intervention, in fact, just before the intervention, Gatte had a cholera outbreak which claimed a lot of lives. The AAN-CCEPE-facilitated health centers in these communities have helped to alleviate their health challenges.

Worthy of note is that we have helped to galvanize women farmers into cooperatives which makes it easier for them to access Agric loans and other palliatives from the government. The intervention of AAN/CCEPE in food security and agriculture is designed to help address climate change through sustainable agricultural practices.”

Farmers/Herders crisis is a major concern in Kwara state. CCEPE, with support from ActionAid Nigeria, built the capacity of the LRP communities to identify early warning signals, which enabled them to nip brewing conflict between cattle herders and the communities in the bud. CCEPE formed Rapid Response Groups (RRGs) in the communities and provided them with training on how to identify these early signals, as well as how to lay complaints to the appropriate quarters in the event of any breakout of crises between their communities and the nomads. These groups were also trained on how to provide rapid responses to other emergency situations such as disease outbreaks and natural disasters like flood or fire outbreaks.

Ayuba concluded that ‘No intervention comes without challenges. The challenges of the local rights programme in Kwara State include lack of maintenance culture, difficulty in mobilising community members, delayed responses to community needs and inadequate funding.”

LOCAL RIGHTS PROGRAMME (LRP) LEARNING AND CLOSE OUT MEETING ILORIN

SESSION	TIME	PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
Arrival & Registration	10: 00am – 10:15 am	All invited Guest
National Anthem	10:15am – 10:25am	All
Introduction of Dignitaries & Guests	10:25am – 10:35am	MC
Welcome Address	10:35am – 10:45am	Alh. Kareem Adebayo Ishola Board Chair, CCEPE
Opening Remarks	10:45am – 11:00am	Ene Obi, Country Director, ActionAid Nigeria (AAN)
Goodwill Messages	11:00am - 11:20am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • His Excellency, The Executive Governor of Kwara State • Her Excellency, Wife of the Executive Governor of Kwara State • Rt. Hon. Speaker, Kwara State House of Assembly • Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the Kwara State Governor on Non-Governmental Affairs • Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the Kwara State Governor on Sustainable Development Goals • Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Ilorin • Ministry of Women Affairs, Kwara State • Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Kwara State. • Ministry of Social Development, Kwara State. • Ministry of Water Resources, Kwara State

SESSION	TIME	PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Education and Human Capital Development, Kwara State • Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Kwara State. • Ministry of Finance, Kwara State. • Kwara State Social Investment Programme (KWASSIP) • Kwara State Universal Basic Education Board • Kwara State Agricultural Development Project (KWADP). • National Orientation Agency, Kwara State. • National Human Rights Commission, Kwara State. • National Directorate of Employment, Kwara State. • Other MDAs represented • Development partners • Representatives of Community Heads • Representatives of women groups • Representatives of Linked Children
Overview of the Local Rights Programme in Kwara State	11:20am - 11:30am	Kehinde Arowosegbe Manager, Local Rights Programme, AAN
Drama play/ Cultural dance	11:30am - 11:50am	LRP communities/Theatre Group
Presentation of Local Rights Programme Documentation	11:50am - 12:15pm	Abdurrahman Akindele Ayuba Executive Director, CCEPE
Experience Sharing Session	12:15pm - 1:00pm	LRP stakeholders
Presentation of Certificates of Recognition and Plaques to LRP partners and communities	1:00pm - 1:40pm	Ene Obi, Country Director, ActionAid Nigeria (AAN) and stakeholders
Vote of Thanks	1:00pm - 1:40pm	Alh. Kareem Adebayo Ishola Board Chair, CCEPE
Group photos, lunch & closing	1:50pm - 2:00pm	All

LIST OF AWARDEES

MINISTRIES	DEPARTMENTS	AGENCIES
Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Ilorin	Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the Kwara State Governor on Sustainable Development Goals	National Orientation Agency, Ilorin
Ministry of Social Development, Ilorin	Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the Kwara State Governor on Non-governmental Affairs	National Human Rights Commission, Ilorin
Ministry of Finance, Ilorin	Kwara State Agricultural Development Project (KWADP)	National Directorate of Employment, Ilorin
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ilorin		Kwara State Universal Basic Education Board
Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Ilorin		Kwara State Social Investment Programme (KWASSIP)
Ministry of Education and Human Capital Development, Ilorin		
Ministry of Water Resources, Ilorin		
Ministry of Women Affairs, Ilorin		
Kwara State		Asa LGA
	Kaiama LGA	Nuku, Tungan Maje, Gatte, Tenebo and Nanu



A NEW LEASE OF LIFE: SCHOOLS IN TUNGA-MAJE, GATTE AND TENEBO GET FACELIFTS

If on social media you found those images of children sitting on the bare floor, sometimes using blocks as desks in an empty classroom disturbing, then you would certainly be worried about the classroom conditions in Tunga-Maje and Tenebo in Kaiama Local Government Area of Kwara State.

That was the fate of the school children in these communities before AAN/CCEPE intervened. The community schools in Tunga Maje had no chairs and desks, the pupils had to sit on the floor to learn. This made it difficult for them to write well, and the children returned home with dirty clothes. The situation was so bad that many of the children were not motivated to continue schooling, and as such many opted to drop out of school.

With support from ActionAid, the Center for Community Empowerment and Poverty Eradication (CCEPE) was able to construct and donate chairs and desks to the community primary schools in Tunga-Maje and Tenebo communities. CCEPE also conducted some advocacies to enlighten the communities about the importance of education. This led to the establishment of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) in the communities to oversee the administration, infrastructural development and maintenance of the schools. AAN/CCEPE has also renovated some of the school structures, giving them a massive facelift.

The impact of the AAN/CCEPE education intervention in these communities is clearly evident. “Before the CCEPE intervention, our children were not going to school. They would rather be playing around because the schools were not encouraging: the structure was dilapidated, yet inadequate and there were no teachers. But with the coming of ActionAid and CCEPE, our children now go to school. In fact, parents in Gatte don’t even allow absenteeism from school because parents have no excuses anymore.” Ramat Kazeem from Gatte community said.

With the provision of study desks came the dramatic improvement in the academic performances of the pupils. Umaru Yussuf from Tenebo community is also happy that since the intervention of LRP in providing chairs and desks for their community school, the children are happier and their academic performances have improved noticeably. “The children will leave the house in neat clothes, but by the time they come back from school, their clothes will be so dirty because they sat on the bare floor all day. But now, that is no longer happening. And in fact, their performances in school have also improved. They write better now” he recalls.





KEEPING HOPE ALIVE FOR YOUNG GIRLS OF IGBOROKO

The absence of a secondary school structure in the community meant that students from Igboroko would have to go to a distant neighboring community to access secondary education. It took Aisha Jamiu and her friends approximately about one and half hours to get to the school. This is about the same time it takes for three lessons to be delivered in class. And sometimes, by the time they get to school some lessons would have been already over. The effect of walking that distance to school also has direct bearing on how the students assimilate lessons in class.

This was a torturous experience for the children and their parents alike. Strapping her one-year-old second child at her back, a rather shy Aisha Jamiu, narrated how it was easier for those who had access to bikes to go to the school in their neighboring community. “As for me and others like me, we would have to trek the entire distance to and fro on foot. Sometimes we managed to get to the school very late, and at other times, we don’t even get to the school at all. We would wait by the roadside until school dismissed, then we would join the others back home. And our parents would never know we didn’t go to school.” she recalled.

The boys among them who owned bikes would only give them a ride to school on the condition that they start dating. That was how Aisha got pregnant with her first baby at a young age of 16. It was not just Aisha. A number of other girls from the community also fall victims to teenage pregnancy.

Funding the children’s education was already a tough job, especially for the poor parents of Igboroko community. It became even worse when they had to pay an extra cost on transportation because they had no secondary school in the community.

In the midst of it all, having their daughters come home with pregnancies was certainly not part of the plan for parents in Igboroko when they sent their children to school. Teenage pregnancy was becoming a major issue in Igboroko, as neither the young girls nor the boys who got them pregnant were prepared for the inevitable consequences of their actions.

Fatima Sahid, who is a mother to one of the girls who got pregnant while in secondary school, narrated how difficult it was for them to fund their children's secondary education due to the far distance the children needed to travel to get to school in their neighboring community. "Those who could afford it had to rent an accommodation for their children in the community where the secondary school is," she said. This meant they were not able to keep an eye on the activities of their children. As such, some of their boys got into drugs and other clandestine activities while some of the girls came home with unwanted pregnancies, thereby dashing their dreams and aspirations for further education.

The LRP intervention led to the establishment of a community secondary school in Igboroko with the construction of a block of two classroom, CCEPE also helped to facilitate the posting of teachers in the community school.

For the people of Igboroko Community, it is a massive relief. Their children no longer travel long distances to access secondary education. The LRP intervention has made it possible for them to have their own college, as such, parents don't have to spend so much anymore. And most importantly, they can now keep a close watch on their wards in secondary school. The offshoot of this includes a reduction in teenage pregnancies and illicit drug activities. Aisha Jamiu and other girls and others have since gone back to complete their secondary education in their own community secondary school without much stress.





IMPROVED HEALTHCARE SERVICES FOR GATTE AND SHOLU

The people of Asa and Kaiama local government areas in Kwara state are deprived of access roads much as they are left in dire need of other basic infrastructures, such as health facilities. It was supposed to be a 2-hour journey from Ilorin to Kaiama, and a little less than that to Asa, but both trips took nearly 6 hours each, no thanks to the bumpy dusty roads leading to these 2 local government areas; leaving one wondering if these are still part of Kwara State. This informed the decision by LRP to intervene..

Before the LRP intervention in Gatte, the community had no hospital; not even a health center. Hadiza Abubakar, a mother of eight from Gatte. had lost 2 of her children and also miscarried a twin pregnancy due to lack of access to a health facility in the community. 50-year-old Ramatu Kazim also suffered the same fate. Due to pregnancy complications, and the absence of a hospital in their community, Ramatu carried one pregnancy for one year and seven months before she was delivered of the baby.

Pregnant women from Gatte had to on the 3 hours long trip, and on a bumpy road to Kaiama to access antenatal services. This was quite a distance and also told on their meager resources. “My pregnancy complications took me to Kaiama several times and it was a torturous experience. If there was a hospital here all this would not be like that.” she said.

The story from Sholu community was pretty much the same. Women from Sholu would travel over 5 kilometers to access the nearest health facility. The community recorded a lot of avoidable deaths because they had no access to a health facility. But now a newly constructed health center stands at the center of the community, thanks to LRP intervention.



Pointing repeatedly at the magnificent building, 56 years old mother of five, Abubakar Taiba narrated the ordeals of Sholu women before the LRP intervention. “It was a difficult task having to convey pregnant women from Sholu to the nearest health facility which was very far from Sholu. It took only the grace of God to save the lives of some women in that condition. And of course, the community lost some lives due to lack of a health facility in the community before now” she said.

Apart from building the first health center in Gatte community and influencing the government to equip and staff it up, which has provided succor to the people and reduced maternal and infant mortality and morbidity considerably, Sholu community also leveraged on the capacity they were given by the LRP programme to prevail on the government to build and equip a health center in the community.

The impact of the LRP health intervention in Kaiama and Asa local government areas of Kwara State has been quite noticeable. Women from the benefiting communities no longer have to travel long distances to access basic healthcare services. The health centers attracted to these communities by CCEPE, means they now have easy access to healthcare services. Infant and maternal mortality and morbidity has also reduced considerably and they ultimately save a lot of money which would have gone into transportation to those far places just to access healthcare services.

“My biggest joy is that all my grandchildren were born in the Gatte community health center with no complications. I would not wish any woman to suffer what I suffered during my pregnancies” Hadiza Abubakar said. She has been encouraging the women of Gatte community to make maximum use of the health center in their community to avoid pregnancy complications.



THE PARTNERSHIP THAT WORKS

The Kwara State Ministry of Women Affairs is a key ally to AAN and CCEPE. The Director, Women Development at the Ministry of Women Affairs, Hajiya Idris Nike Medinat noted that she has been working in the Ministry since 2006 but never had it so good with reaching the grassroots with the ministry's programmes prior to the coming of AAN/CCEPE. She highlighted the benefits of the ministry's partnership with AAN/CCEPE:

"CCEPE has been working with the Ministry of Women Affairs in grassroots mobilisation for over 10 years. This collaboration is in terms of galvanizing the women of Kwara State and enabling them to access the government for their issues. CCEPE has helped the ministry achieve its mandate of promoting the wellbeing of women in the state and has as well assisted it in getting to the grassroots with their programmes and activities. The Ministry has been carried along in all their activities in Asa and Kaiama local government areas where CCEPE/AAN works, and we are happy with what they have achieved in those areas.

The interventions in the communities have led to an upsurge in the enrollment of girls in schools, especially in Sholu and Apasa-Dadi (Apa) Community. Older women have also enrolled in evening classes to acquire some formal education in some of the intervention communities.

The LRP intervention galvanized women into cooperative groups, making it possible for these rural women to present a unified front in the communities, and also making it easier for the Ministry of Women Affairs to reach out to them with various empowerment programmes. This has helped the Ministry develop an updated database of these women's cooperatives in the state. These women's groups have been empowered with training and grants to aid their farming activities; and in our quest to address climate change through environmental sustainability, we have also given out cooking gas cylinders to these women groups to alleviate their sufferings.

The Ministry is happy to learn about the installation of a garri processing machine in Sholu community, which was made possible with the support of CCEPE. This machine has become an income generator for the women and the community at large.

CCEPE has done very well in Kwara State, but we want to encourage them to also carry the Women Development Center along in their future programs and activities. This is because the Center would serve as the bridge between her Ministry and the grassroots, helping to monitor the happenings in the communities, especially as it affects women. A lot of the rural women in Kwara State are still in desperate need of assistance such as provided by CCEPE. The intervention of CCEPE in Kwara State has really helped to lift a lot of women out of poverty, however, a lot still needs to be done. CCEPE should extend their programs to reach more communities in the state.”





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 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 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.

CCEPE also facilitated the formation of the Igboroko Girls Club initiative, where young girls come together and contribute money to ease pressure and dependency on male counterparts. The club has been very impactful in forging great futures for girls in the community. A member of the Girls’ Club, Kaosara Umar is currently volunteering to teach little kids in the community school, she said she is really enjoying the experience and that apart from impacting lives, her confidence to speak in the public place have greatly improved and she has also gotten passion to become a teacher in the future.

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4

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WOMEN EMANCIPATION: CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO

CCEPE has the welfare of the women at the center of their activities in Kwara State and this reflects in the massive transformation of the women in the project communities. Meeting with the women of Gbago, Igboroko and Ipetu-Abidiore communities gives one the impression that these women have been liberated from the shackles of naivety. Their welcoming gestures and smiles exude confidence. This was certainly not obtainable before the coming of CCEPE 16 years ago.

Women in most of the communities in Asa and Kaiama local government areas were relegated to the background, so much that most of them were not even aware of the happenings around the community, the local government and the state. They are mostly subsistence farmers, and the prevailing level of poverty among them meant they were restricted to using only the crude local methods in their farming.

Yunusa Maimunat, a 36 years old farmer from Tunga-Maje community confirmed that before the CCEPE intervention, there was a high rate of divorce among the community members, parents were giving birth with no plans for training the children. The women completely depended on their husbands for survival. They also lacked knowledge about their rights as women. According to Mrs Rashidat Dauda from Ipetu, Abidiore Community, “if there is any incidence of teenage pregnancy, the girls are forced into marriage, also there is religious intolerance among women.”

In Gbago community, the women were treated more like second class citizens. They had no voices. They were not even involved in decision making and many of them suffered domestic violence. "If any issue arises and the men could not deal with it, then we will all just sit back and do nothing, because women are not even allowed to make suggestions. Only the men attend community meetings." Fatima Abdulrasaaq recalled. Because the women in most of the communities were not united, they had no formal front for their representation in the affairs of the community. It was therefore very difficult for them to access help from the government or any other body

CCEPE has galvanized the women in selected communities in Asa and Kaiama local government areas to have a more unified front. The women were empowered through consistent sensitization, advocacy and trainings provided by CCEPE. The program organized the women into CBO groups, to provide them with some income-generating facilities as well as training them in some crafts and skills.

In the last 3 years, CCEPE has supported the benefiting communities to register 12 women-led CBOs across Asa and Kaiama local government areas. The Ministry of Women Affairs has already shortlisted and selected 5 of these CBOs in Apa, Oniyere, Tenebo, Omole and Budo Aro (Ilenla) communities to benefit from different government empowerment programs. These beneficiaries were given gas cylinders to promote climate change action.

Also, in Tunga-Maje community, CCEPE provided Shea butter processing machines for the women in the community to empower and improve their economic situation. Likewise, in Sholu community, CCEPE provided the women with a garri processing machine.

The women of Gbago and Igboroko in Asa local government area are particularly grateful to CCEPE for not only making their lives better, but also for giving them a voice. Women in these communities now have the confidence to speak for themselves. They are now able to make contributions on community issues, especially as it concerns them as women.

In Oniyere community where most women were hitherto basically housewives and contributed little or nothing to the economic wellbeing of the family, CCEPE trained some women in soap making and cosmetics. This training has yielded positive results for the beneficiaries and the entire community. This poverty alleviation intervention gave the women of Oniyere the opportunities to provide for their families and take good and proper care of their children.

Women of Budo-Aro community who benefited from the CCEPE soap making training are also reaping the benefits. Formed into cooperative groups, the soap making trainees were able to access loans to start their soap making businesses. The CCEPE assisted palm oil processing machine in Budo-Aro has increased their palm oil production. With the help of the machine, individuals are now able to produce about 20 liters of palm oil per day as opposed to 10 liters or less prior to the installation of the machine.



“They made us know that even though it comes to facing the Commissioner, we can because they gave us the courage to do so... making us understand that we can question them. It’s our right because we are the ones who elected them.”

~~~ **Iyabo Babatunde**



## GIVING VOICES TO THE VOICELESS

**Y**ou will need a truck with strong shock absorbers to get to Gbago, Igboroko and Ipetu, all in Asa local government area of Kwara State. The roads are bumpy and crooked and there are no signs of electricity. These communities also lacked potable water for domestic use. And worse still, the people are not usually empowered enough to demand accountability from their political representatives.

Over the past 15 years, CCEPE has managed to build the capacity of local communities to step up and demand their rights from the government. In Gbago community for instance, the people had neither access roads nor electricity. Worse still their only source of water is a small stream which is constantly being struggled with by cattle herders and their cows. Trekking the entire one and half kilometers to the stream with their buckets and kegs on their heads, Iyabo Babatunde, Monsurat Mustapha and Fatima Abdulganiyu narrated how the women of Gbago suffered to get water. “This was what we pass through every year. This stream is far from us. But we had to go there to fetch water. If not, we wouldn’t have water to do our house chores.” Munsurat said. And even so, the stream dries up from early November, forcing them to dig trenches along the water paths in search of water.

Upon arriving at the stream, what was left was a small muddy patch of water littered with dry leaves.



The cattle herders were also seen lurking around with their cows. “This is where they drink from as well,” Iyabo added as the 3 women took turns to scoop water from the stream into their containers.

Alimatu Umoru is a farmer and a mother of 3 from Tenebo community in Kaiama Local Government Area, who narrated how they would go to the stream to fetch water for domestic uses on a daily basis. “And if we wanted our children to help with the fetching, it meant the children would not be able to go to school that day. This was because of the long distance they would have to go to fetch the water. The children always went to school with dirty uniforms and without bathing most of the time because they had no water.” She said.

They also drank from the same stream where they fetch water for their domestic uses, and the stream is clearly not fit for drinking. Alimatu also decried how they would usually go to the stream to fetch water, having long queues even at the stream. It was difficult to do their house chores like washing plates and clothes, and the struggle to get water sometimes led to quarrel among community women. The excessive water scarcity in Tenebo community led to so many illnesses such as body itching, dysentery, diarrhea, stomach ache, headache and vomiting as well as body pain from their struggle in searching for drinking water.

ActionAid and CCEPE’s intervention built the capacities of these communities to actively engage with the government and demand their rights for these basic amenities. In the words of Alimatu Umoru from Tenebo community, “They (CCEPE) educated us on how to engage our leaders. They directed us to go to our elected officials and let them know what we were going through and what we wanted, which we did and by God’s grace the government sent technicians to fix our borehole. And now we have drinking water.”



Umoru Yussuf from the same community also corroborated this claim when he said that “they (CCEPE) have enlightened us in many ways, on how we can fight for our rights and request for our needs from the government. Likewise, how we can pull our resources together for the benefit of our schools and the community.”

Apart from attracting some dividends of democracy to some of their intervention communities, the CCEPE program has also empowered communities to bolden up and demand their rights from the government. Communities who would usually cower and just take whatever politicians throw at them, are now so politically aware that they can engage actively with the government, express their views and demand their rights from their political representatives.

“They made us know that even though it comes to facing the Commissioner, we can because they gave us the courage to do so...making us understand that we can question them. It’s our right because we are the ones who elected them. Even if the governor stands before us, we won’t be scared because it’s our right.” \_ lyabo Babatunde from Gbago community in Asa local government area.

This assertion epitomizes the confidence given to local communities by the CCEPE intervention to enable them hold their political leaders to account. CCEPE has had enormous influence on their benefiting communities. The AAN/CCEPE program has made them understand they have the right to good governance and as such, it is within their rights to approach the government on any issue without fear. When the people now have the confidence to speak out even in the media, they are better positioned to attract democratic dividends to their communities. Gbago and Abidiore Ipetu Communities now have motorized boreholes. Ipetu even have a generator to help them power the borehole. Tenebo and Gatte now have health centers. Sholu community now has a garri processing machine and a borehole. Budo Aro community also has a palm oil processing machine. These and many more are evidence of how the CCEPE intervention has left the lives of people in these communities much better than they met them 16 years ago



## REPOSITIONING AGRICULTURE FOR FOOD SECURITY

**N**othing is more gratifying than when a mother is able to feed her children, clothe them and watch them run off to school every morning, but this was largely impossible for women in most of the communities in Kaiama and Asa local government areas of Kwara State. These are agrarian communities where farmers engage in subsistence agriculture. Farmers in these communities knew nothing about sustainable agricultural methods, and even though these are basically agrarian communities, they did not have access to basic agricultural palliatives such as agric loans or credit facilities, and could not afford fertilizers or the services of agric extension workers. The women did not also have irrigation facilities, dry season farming was difficult because they would have to water their farms manually amidst severe water scarcity.

Aisha Maimunat, a farmer from Tunga-Maje who cultivates groundnuts, beans, soyabean, maize and rice, recalls that women in the community only used hoes. They could not use chemicals and fertilizers because they could not afford them. She said “We could only cultivate very small portions because our husbands would not allow us to do any serious farming because they saw us as weak. As such we women could not contribute meaningfully to the upkeep of our families.” This ultimately means the women depended mostly on their husbands for survival, and this no doubt contributed to the prevailing level of poverty in the community.

The farmers in these communities recorded poor yield even after expending so much energy and spending out of their meager resources to cultivate their crops. Also, because of lack of storage facilities and poor knowledge about preservation best practices, these farmers also lose most of their produce to insect pests and wastages.

To mitigate this, AAN/CCEPE organised various interventions to promote and sustain rights to food and sustainable agriculture in Asa and Kaiama LGA using a multi-dimensional approach. First, AAN/CCEPE sensitised the farmers, especially women, on the importance of agriculture in the fight against poverty. They also educated women-farmers on sustainable farming methods that are more environmentally friendly; AAN/CCEPE also procured motorised irrigation facilities to aid the farmers during dry seasons and trained farmers on the use of organic manure which is cheaper and readily available, to substitute chemical fertilizers which are more expensive.

Alimatu Umoru from Tenebo community is grateful for the farm tools (Engine) provided for the women farmers by AAN/CCEPE. "We have been using tools and have been able to harvest and store their soya beans. CCEPE also gave us local fertilizer which has been of great help to us as farmers. Now we have learnt the method of planting, how we will do it, so that our crops will grow very well. They taught us how to prepare organic fertilizer with manure from animal waste products before we used to burn them but after we were taught on how to make good use of our waster as manure, it has boosted our productivity. We really learnt and benefited tremendously." She said

Hauwa Yunusa, a 70-years old grandmother and groundnut farmer in Tunga-Maje, who is also a member of Wahela Sabuke Cooperative, was able to harvest 25 bags of groundnuts in 2022 despite her age. This is a massive improvement from the 20 bags she harvested in 2021. She attributed this improvement to the technical support provided by CCEPE/AAN in forming them into groups and providing training on best agricultural practices.

Women farmers in this community are now experiencing positive effects of practicing agro-ecology as they testified that their crops are yielding better, especially with the use of organic fertilizers (animal dung) compared to when they use chemical fertilizers which makes crops rotten once the crops germinate.

Balikus Yusuf, 25 years old mother of 3 from Apa community also benefited from the CCEPE training on sustainable agriculture. "I learnt how to make organic fertilizer as an alternative to chemical fertilizers. I started putting that knowledge into practice by using animal wastes as manure. And since I started using this method, my vegetables growth rate has been very fast and the quantity harvested has increased." She recalled, adding that this has increased her income, and she is comfortably enrolling her kids in school and taking better care of them.

In Gbago community, the women are particularly grateful to AAN/CCEPE because the motorized water pump installed for them means they now have access to water for irrigating their farms. This enables them to produce their vegetables all year round.

For Mrs. Rashidat Dauda from Ipetu community, CCEPE intervention has made it possible for the women to produce more from their farms. The women are now able to feed their families better and even send their children to school without much stress. Rashidat also said that CCEPE has taught them ways of preserving their grains from insect pests to avoid wastage. Hence, they are now able to preserve and store their grains for rainy days.

A photograph of a woman wearing a bright yellow headscarf with a pink inner lining. She is looking slightly to the right with a thoughtful expression, her hand near her chin. She is holding a young child with braided hair, who is looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a building and trees.

## SUSTAINING THE LRP IMPACT

Every intervention has an endline. As such there is a need for a sustainability plan. As ActionAid's LRP program in Kwara State is winding down, the sustainability plan of the intervention includes helping the communities gain access to, and build relationships with government agencies, something they considered impossible before the LRP intervention. The program has empowered women by establishing women-led community-based organizations (CBOs) who are able to push on with the project interventions even after the exit of LRP from Kwara

The State government and other sister organizations must ensure that the LRP intervention in Kaiama and Asa local government areas are replicated in other local governments in Kwara State even as CCEPE continues to mobilize resources to ensure the improvement of the communities where they work. It is important that CCEPE as a catalyst, maintains synergy with State government as partners in progress in the development of the State. The benefiting communities also have a role to play in maintaining the established structures and ensuring that the facilities provided for them through the CCEPE intervention are not left dilapidated.

# MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND MILESTONES

The biggest achievements of ActionAid/CCEPE interventions include:

- Fourteen (14) hand-pump boreholes constructed across communities in Asa and Kaiama LGAs
- Four (4) blocks of classrooms were constructed to support safe learning across three public primary schools and one junior secondary school in Ipetu, Ogodo, Tunga maje & Igboroko
- Four (4) blocks of classrooms were renovated across four public primary schools in Okeso, Samo, Omole and Tenebo communities, Asa and Kaiama LGAs
- Four (4) Children playing centres were set up in four public primary schools in Kaiama and Asa LGAs
- Six (6) income-generating activity centre were set up for women across six communities in Asa and Kaiama LGAs
- One (1) water pump machine for women vegetable farmers to engage in dry-season farming in Gbago, Asa LGA
- One (1) generator was donated to Abidi-Ore community to power motorized borehole
- Knapsack sprayers distributed to smallholder women farmers in Asa and Kaiama LGAs of Kwara State
- Forty (40) women farmers' groups formed into cooperatives to access soft Agric loans in Asa and Kaiama LGAs to provide a platform to engage government and were also provided with seeds and seedlings.
- Twelve (12) Women Community Based Organisations (CBOs) formed and supported to register with relevant government agencies in the State
- School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) restructured and trained in Asa and Kaiama LGAs
- Supported the formation of eight (8) girls' girls clubs in Asa and Kaiama LGAs
- Trained and Formed women peer education groups across 10 communities in Asa and Kaiama LGAs
- The communities especially considered the LRP-SWEDGE a success, because a lot of girls who ordinarily will have dropped out are now in the secondary school in Tungan Maje Community
- Supported about 1,000 teenage girls with sanitary pads to enhance menstrual hygiene and girl child education

## SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

The ActionAid-supported LRP intervention has gone on for 16 years. The programme worked in eighteen (18) communities in Kaiama and Asa local government areas and focused on Human Rights Based Approach to Development in the thematic areas: Rights to Education, Health, Democratic, Good Governance, Women's Rights and Empowerment, Food Security and Human Security in Conflict and Emergency. These communities were selected based on a rights-based needs assessment and previously had little or no government presence. They had little or no access to basic amenities and the level of poverty in these communities was very high.

The LRP intervention approach involved supporting persons living in poverty and exclusion to advocate and demand for their rights from duty bearers. The program succeeded in providing succor to the neglected people of Asa and Kaiama local government areas. Women's rights was at the center of the intervention; hence, their project activities mostly targeted the women.

The impact of the intervention is evident in the level of confidence exhibited by the benefiting communities in Kaiama and Asa, in speaking up and demanding for their rights as a people.



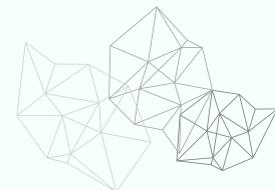
It also shows in the level of improvement and productivity they have recorded in their farming. And ultimately, the impact of the LRP intervention is noticeable in the overall improved standard of living of the communities, who are now able to feed better, have access to water for their farming activities and for domestic use as well as having access to credit facilities and agriculture loans through their cooperative groups. These communities are also able to send their children to school.

The LRP intervention succeeded in Kwara State because of the massive support it got from Government MDAs and other duty bearers and programme ownership by communities. The communities are full of praises for the intervention and wish the programme continues for more years.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The AAN/CCEPE intervention in Kwara State has had its successes and challenges over the past 16 years. While the success stories abound and the benefiting communities are grateful for the intervention, there is certainly room for improvement. The following are therefore recommended going forward:

- The LRP/CCEPE intervention has a lot of potential for scale up. The massive successes recorded in the 2 local governments of Kaiama and Asa, suggest that the program could do more if expanded to other local governments in the state by Government and development agencies
  - While it is understandable why the intervention seemed to favour women more, it would have been good to maintain gender balance for the beneficiaries of the intervention.
  - Even though the project is closing out, it is important that CCEPE maintains the relationship with the benefiting communities. This is not only good for its visibility, but will also help CCEPE keep an eye on the projects' installations in the communities with a view to sustaining them and ensuring they are not abandoned, or left to dilapidate.
- CCEPE can conduct periodic impact assessment to monitor the progress and impact of the intervention on the beneficiaries.
  - As part of the sustainability and scale-up plan, CCEPE should roll out a Train the Trainer (TTT) program where communities that have benefitted from the CCEPE intervention can mentor other communities by teaching them the survival skills they have acquired from the CCEPE intervention.



| TYPE OF PROJECT                                            | YEAR COMPLETED | LOCATION    | FUNCTIONAL                                    | NON-FUNCTIONAL                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Block of 3 classrooms with Headteachers office and a store | 2008           | Ipetu       | ✓                                             |                                                                                                                |
| Block of 2 classrooms                                      | 2010           | Ogodo       | ✓                                             |                                                                                                                |
| Block of 2 classrooms and Principal's office               | 2016           | Igboroko    | ✓                                             |                                                                                                                |
|                                                            | 2008           | Omole       | ✓                                             |                                                                                                                |
| 1 Borehole                                                 | 2009/11        | Oniyere     |                                               | Not functional due to topography (repaired twice by the community people) but broken down now.                 |
| 1 Borehole                                                 | 2012           | Budo Aiku   |                                               | Non-functional (repaired twice by the community people with the support of Asa LG)                             |
| 1 Borehole                                                 | 2012           | Olomoda     | Not functioning effectively due to topography | Non-functioning effectively because of topography                                                              |
| 1 Borehole                                                 | 2014           | Oguntoyinbo |                                               | Not functional due to topography                                                                               |
| 1 Borehole                                                 | 2008           | Owode oja   | ✓                                             |                                                                                                                |
| 1 Borehole                                                 | 2015           | Gbago       | ✓                                             |                                                                                                                |
| 1 Borehole                                                 |                |             |                                               |                                                                                                                |
| 1 Borehole                                                 | 2007           | Sholu       |                                               | Non Functional due to topography and shoddy work done by Contractor. IT WAS THE FIRST PROJECT DONE IN THE LRP. |

| TYPE OF PROJECT                                 | YEAR COMPLETED | LOCATION | STATUS AND COMMENTS |                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                 |                |          | FUNCTIONAL          | NON-FUNCTIONAL                                                    |
| 1 Borehole                                      | 2010           | Nanu     | ✓                   |                                                                   |
| 1 Borehole                                      | 2008/09        | Apa      | ✓                   | Has broken down and been repaired several times by the community. |
| 1 Borehole                                      | 2008           | Tenebo   | ✓                   |                                                                   |
| Labour saving equipment:<br>Oil processing mill | 2009           | Budo-Aro | ✓                   |                                                                   |
| Garri processing mill                           | 2017           | Sholu    | ✓                   |                                                                   |
| Classroom renovation                            | 2013 & 2015    | Okeso    | ✓                   |                                                                   |
| Classroom renovation                            | 2015/16        | Samo     | ✓                   |                                                                   |
| Health centre                                   | 2008           | Gatte    | ✓                   |                                                                   |
| Health centre                                   | 2009/10        | Nuku     | ✓                   |                                                                   |
| Classroom renovation                            | 2018/19        | Omole    | ✓                   |                                                                   |
| 1 Borehole                                      | 2015           | Samo     |                     | Not functioning effectively due to topography                     |
| Garri processing machine and presser            | 2019           | Apa      | ✓                   |                                                                   |

# PHOTO REEL



# PHOTO REEL



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# DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

| S/N | Acronyms | Full Meanings                                            |
|-----|----------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | AAN      | Actionaid Nigeria                                        |
| 2   | CBO      | Community Based Organization                             |
| 3   | CCEPE    | Center for Community Empowerment and Poverty Eradication |
| 4   | CDC      | Community Development Committee                          |
| 5   | LGEA     | Local Government Education Authority                     |
| 6   | LRP      | Local Rights Program                                     |
| 7   | MDA      | Ministries, Departments and Agencies                     |
| 8   | PAP      | Partnership Against Poverty                              |
| 9   | PTA      | Parents Teachers Association                             |
| 10  | RRG      | Rapid Response Group                                     |
| 11  | SBMC     | School Based Management Committee                        |
| 12  | TTT      | Train the Trainers                                       |







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