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# PEACE BREEDERS

System and Structure Strengthening Approach Against Radicalisation to Violent Extremism (SARVE III PROJECT)

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## WHAT IS NEW?

In the period under review, ActionAid Nigeria, through the SARVE III project, made significant strides in promoting peace and preventing violent extremism by engaging youth. A key highlight was the successful passage of the second reading and public hearing of the proposed Youth Development Commission Bill in Nasarawa State. This initiative, which aims to establish a dedicated commission to empower youth, marks a crucial step in addressing youth unemployment, illiteracy, and other challenges contributing to youth disenfranchisement and radicalisation in the state.

The Women Safe Spaces (WSS), Radio Listeners Sessions, Livelihood Cooperatives, Community Action and Response Teams (CART), and Peace Clubs, established under the SARVE III project, have made significant strides in mitigating violence across the various project implementing states and

communities. These structures continue to play a pivotal role in fostering peace, resilience, and empowerment within local communities.

Also, in a bid to mainstream PCVE in Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, and Sokoto States, the SARVE III team, led by Deputy Country Director Suwaiba Dankabo Muhammed, in collaboration with the Office of the National Security Advisor (ONSA) and the Partnership Against Violent Extremism (PAVE), conducted advocacy visits to the respective state governments. The purpose of these visits was to discuss the integration of Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) into the states' Action Plans, security strategies, and development policies. The initiative was met with strong support from the state governments, who expressed their commitment to incorporating PCVE into local peace and security frameworks.

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Aisha Mohammed Mustapha during a women safe space session

## WOMEN SAFE SPACE:

### *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 SERVE 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 SERVE 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 AAN 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.

# ENABLED:

## *Through the Women Safe Space*

Imagine the challenges of being deaf and mute in a community where 95% of the people have their senses fully functioning. This is the reality for Halima Yusuf, a member of the Dorayi Women Safe Space, who has faced countless injustices and hardships throughout her life.

Before discovering the women's safe space, Halima struggled to make ends meet. She took on various menial jobs, such as washing clothes for others, only to be swindled or not paid at all. Her life was marked by these painful experiences, as she battled not only the challenges of being a woman with special needs but also the harsh realities of a community where opportunities seemed out of reach.

However, everything changed when Halima became a member of the Dorayi Women Safe Space. In the spirit of **leaving no one behind**,

the women's safe space supported her with a grant of N30,000. With this financial assistance, Halima was able to start selling soup condiments at the front of her house, a venture that has allowed her to support her family. Halima is a mother of eight children, one girl and seven boys, and her life has been significantly transformed by the support from ActionAid Nigeria, the Democratic Action Group (DAG), and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), who made the safe space possible in her community.

Today, Halima is not only providing for her family but also filled with gratitude for the chance to rebuild her life. Her story is a testament to the power of collaboration, inclusion, and the importance of supporting women, especially those with special needs, to thrive in their communities.



*Halima Yusuf at her business place*

# CHANGING LIVES:

## *A Tale of Zainab Muhammed's Journey in Wusasa Community*

**M** eet Zainab Muhammed, a member of the Wusasa Youth Cooperative, who shares her inspiring journey of skill acquisition through the SARVE III livelihood project. This initiative, a collaboration between ActionAid Nigeria (AAN) and Global Peace Development (GPD), with funding from the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), has changed lives and empowered many young people in her community.

As the saying goes, "An idle mind is the devil's workshop," and AAN and GPD recognise that unemployment is one of the key drivers of youth restiveness. The livelihood component of the project aimed to address the issue of youth unemployment by providing opportunities for skill development and economic independence.

Zainab's story began after she completed her secondary school education and found herself idle at home. When AAN and GPD

introduced sewing machines and training opportunities through the cooperative, Zainab eagerly embraced the opportunity. What followed has been a rewarding journey of growth and empowerment.

Now, Zainab not only sews clothes for sale but also creates and distributes tubans within her community, expanding her business and increasing her impact. Her newfound skills have not only improved her financial situation but have also ignited greater dreams for her future. Zainab is saving from her profits with the goal of furthering her education, a testament to her ambition and determination.

Zainab Muhammed is deeply grateful for the opportunities the livelihood cooperative has provided. It has not only changed her life but has also opened doors for many other young people in Wusasa, helping them build sustainable futures and break the cycle of unemployment.



*Zainab Muhammed at her tailoring shop*

# BICHI 1,000 WOMEN EMPOWERMENT STORY:

## *A Path to Economic Independence*

Unemployment has long been recognised as one of the primary drivers of radicalisation and violent extremism. As part of efforts to curb this issue, various initiatives have been launched to provide employment opportunities for women, youth, and men. One such initiative took place in the Bichi community, where 1,000 women were empowered through the efforts of the Honourable Member representing Bichi and the women of the safe space.

Rakiya Abdullahi Mohammed, a member of the women safe space, shared her experience of how the empowerment scheme impacted the women in her community. She explained that, in the past, many women missed opportunities for empowerment, often failing to use them effectively. However, being part of the women safe space has given these women a sense of purpose and direction. The platform has facilitated numerous training programs, equipping the women with valuable skills.

Thanks to the training they received, it became easier for the facilitators of the women safe space to recommend women from their group for the empowerment program provided by the House of Representatives member. Rakiya shared that, unlike before, she is now actively engaged in various businesses, selling oil,

groundnuts, groundnut cakes, and farming.

**“** *Aisha Abdussalam, another beneficiary of the empowerment scheme, shared her personal testimony. “I benefited from the empowerment program through the women safe space. I was given a sewing machine, and it has truly changed my life. I am now meaningfully engaged and gradually make a profit of up to N40,000 a month. I'm enthusiastic about teaching other young women who are interested in learning how to sew,” she said, highlighting the transformative impact of the opportunity.*

The success of this empowerment scheme in Bichi is a powerful testament to the positive effect that targeted programs, like the women safe space, can have on women's lives, offering them the skills and resources needed to break free from unemployment and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Through these efforts, these women are not only becoming economically independent but are also helping to build a safer, more stable environment for their families and communities.



Rakiya Abdullahi Mohammed



Constructed Drainage In Kofa

## CONSTRUCTION OF DRAINAGE IN KOFA:

### *A Story of Resilience and Collaboration*

This is the inspiring story of the Kofa community's resilience, told through the lens of Alhaji Umar Nasir Kofa, the Secretary of the Community Action and Response Team (CART). He reflects on how the people of Kofa came together to repair a drainage system that had become a major menace, promoted crime and hindered daily life in their community.

The drainage repair project is a powerful testament to the impact of advocacy and collaboration, facilitated through the CART structure, established by ActionAid Nigeria in partnership with the Democratic Action Group (DAG) under the SERVE III Project. The initiative highlights how communities can come together to solve local challenges when empowered with the right support and structure.

Alhaji Umar explains that the dilapidated state of the drainage caused severe disruptions for the people of Kofa. Movement was hindered, making it difficult to transport goods from one place to another. Flooding along the pathways affected people's homes, and the neglected

area became a breeding ground for crime. The community's struggles motivated the CART to act.

CART organised a series of meetings to mobilise community members, dividing them into groups with specific responsibilities. They reached out to local government representatives and philanthropists, sharing the plight of their community and advocating for support. Their efforts bore fruit. With the support of bricks and cement from their advocates, the people of Kofa worked together to repair the drainage system. The successful renovation not only resolved transportation and flooding issues but also contributed to the overall development of the community. This collaborative effort demonstrated the power of community advocacy, resilience, and teamwork in overcoming local challenges.

The renovated drainage is now a symbol of what can be achieved when communities unite to address their own problems, supported by the advocacy structures put in place by ActionAid Nigeria and DAG.

# ACTIONAID NIGERIA HOSTS ROUNDTABLE ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT BILL IN NASARAWA STATE

ActionAid Nigeria, with support from the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), hosted a roundtable discussion with members of the Nasarawa State House of Assembly to advance the passage of the Youth Development Bill. This important piece of legislation aims to establish a Youth Development Commission in the state, focused on empowering young people and addressing key challenges such as unemployment, illiteracy, poverty, and other issues contributing to youth restiveness and radicalisation.

The roundtable was part of ActionAid Nigeria's efforts under the System and Structure Strengthening Approach against Radicalisation to Violent Extremism (SARVE III), a project designed to promote peace and prevent violent extremism through comprehensive youth engagement. The proposed Youth Development Commission will directly address the critical issues identified in a baseline study conducted during the second phase of the SARVE II

project. These issues, including high unemployment, social fragmentation, and lack of opportunities, have fuelled youth disenfranchisement and contributed to violent extremism in the state.

Following the successful passage of the bill's second reading and public hearing, ActionAid Nigeria was invited by the Honourable Chairman of the Committee on Youth in the Nasarawa State House of Assembly to convene a strategic meeting. The session focused on ensuring the smooth passage of the bill through the third reading and securing its eventual signing into law by the Executive Governor of Nasarawa State.

This roundtable underscores the critical role of legislative support in tackling the root causes of youth radicalisation. By fostering stronger coordination among members of the House of Assembly, the initiative aims to lay the foundation for a generation of empowered, engaged, and productive young people in Nasarawa State.







## MAINSTREAMING PCVE:

### *ONSA, PAVE, and ActionAid Nigeria's Advocacy Visit*

The Office of the National Security Advisor (ONSA), in collaboration with the Partnership Against Violent Extremism (PAVE) and supported by ActionAid Nigeria, recently carried out advocacy visits to the state governments of Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, and Sokoto. The goal of these visits was to discuss the integration of Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) into the states' Action Plans, security strategies, and development policies.

The advocacy visits highlighted the positive impact of PCVE interventions across the four states and sparked discussions on the potential for mainstreaming PCVE into local peace, security, and development policies. This initiative aligns with the National PCVE Policy Framework and National Action Plan (PFNAP) 2017, aiming to foster stronger coordination and collaboration between the government, civil society organisations (CSOs), community actors, and other non-state actors. Together, these groups aim to build safer and more resilient communities by integrating PCVE strategies into state-level action plans.

A key outcome of the visits was the establishment of PCVE State Technical Working Groups (TWGs) in each of the visited states. These groups are composed of government representatives, CSO members from the State PAVE Network, non-state actors, and the organised private sector. The aim of these groups is to help develop both state and local action plans, a government-led initiative anchored and coordinated by ONSA in collaboration with the PAVE Network.

By incorporating PCVE into state frameworks, these states can more effectively combat extremism, ensure the safety of citizens, and create a stable environment conducive to growth and development.

ActionAid Nigeria's involvement through the System and Structure Strengthening Approach Against Radicalisation to Violent Extremism (SARVE III) is instrumental in supporting the PAVE network, which is a diverse body of civil society actors working with communities and various associations. This partnership plays a critical role in implementing a whole-of-society approach to PCVE through the establishment of the PCVE Knowledge, Innovation, and Resource Hub (PCVE KIRH). This hub facilitates evidence-based research, the sharing of best practices, and enhances communication, advocacy for private sector funding, and the development of regional collaboration platforms.

In addition to the advocacy visits, the state chapters of the PAVE Network were formally inaugurated. These state chapters will be pivotal in collaborating with state governments and non-state actors to combat extremism in Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, and Sokoto.

This initiative is part of the broader PAVE Network's efforts under the PCVE Scale-Up Project, an extension of the ActionAid SARVE III Project. Through this collaborative effort, the project aims to create a unified approach to preventing violent extremism, helping to shape safer and more resilient communities across the Northwest region of Nigeria.

## IBRAHIM MOHAMMED'S IMPACT ON TAGARJI COMMUNITY:

### *A Success Story from SARVE III Radio Listening Sessions*

Ibrahim Mohammed, a dedicated facilitator of the SARVE III radio listening sessions in Tagarji community, Nasarawa LGA, Kano State, expressed his deep gratitude for the skills he gained through the program. These skills have empowered him to strategically confront drug abusers and violence perpetrators in his community effectively.

Thanks to the training from the SARVE III radio listening sessions, Ibrahim has been able to rehabilitate numerous youth and resolve conflicts among community members. He shared that the sessions have grown in popularity, with more participants attending as the positive changes in the lives of the youth become evident. Parents, witnessing these transformations, are now encouraging their children to join and become active members of the community radio sessions.

Ibrahim credits the ActionAid Nigeria SARVE project for equipping him with the confidence and capacity to contribute to the peaceful coexistence in his community. He feels fulfilled in his role, knowing he is making a significant impact on the lives of those around him.

*Ibrahim Mohammed during an interview  
after a radio listening session in Tagarji  
community*



Facilitation of the digital skills training for youth livelihood members

## SARVE III DIGITAL TRAINING SPARKS YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN KANO AND KADUNA STATES



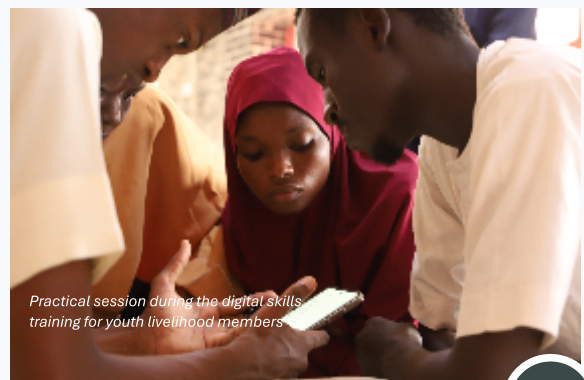
*“I never knew it was possible to advertise and sell products on social media until I attended the training organised by the ActionAid SARVE project. I was guided on how to open social media accounts and create a business page. I am now excited because I can sell my products both online and traditionally in the community markets.” - Jamila Haruna*

This transformation was made possible through the efforts of ActionAid Nigeria, funded by the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), and delivered through the System and Structure Strengthening Approach against Radicalisation to Violent Extremism (SARVE III). In partnership with the Dispute Resolution and Development Initiative (DRDI-DAG) in Kano State and Global Peace Development (GPD) in Kaduna State, ActionAid organised a digital skills training for youth livelihood members.

The training, held in commemoration of the

2024 International Youth Day, focused on "Youth Digital Innovation for Sustainable Development." A total of 46 participants from SARVE project youth livelihood cooperatives were trained on utilising the digital space to promote the sale of their cooperative goods and services. As part of the training, a competition was held where the cooperatives advertised their products on their various social media accounts, with the winner determined by reach, engagement, and likes.

Thanks to this initiative, participants like Jamila are now equipped with digital skills to expand their businesses beyond the traditional market, fostering both economic growth and personal empowerment.



Practical session during the digital skills training for youth livelihood members



## FOOTBALL FOR PEACE:

### *Bridging Divides in Kano and Kaduna State*

**D**uring the recent conflict between the Galadanchi and Kabara communities in Kano State, a spontaneous football match brought youths from both sides together, offering them an opportunity to lay down their weapons and extend a handshake of peace. This powerful moment serves as a reminder of how sport can bridge divides and foster harmony, even in the most challenging times.

Football, with its emphasis on fair play, sportsmanship, and camaraderie, is more than just a game – it is a catalyst for social transformation. This grassroots initiative, led by ActionAid Nigeria's SARVE project and funded by the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), demonstrates the potential of soccer as a tool for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In collaboration with Global Peace Development (GPD) in Kaduna State and the Dispute Resolution and Development Initiative (DRDI-DAG) in Kano State, the event also marked the 2024 Global Peace Day.

This initiative reminds us of the unifying power of sport and its role in inspiring lasting change in communities.

SARVE III kick for peace football match



SARVE III pre-kick off football for peace sensitisation by the Deputy Country Director and Director of Programmes, ActionAid Nigeria, Suwaiba Dankabo Muhammad



# COMMUNITY VOICES

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*I never thought I would be able to have a skill that could make me independent. With the vocational training, I learned tailoring and even some skills in cosmetology. I'm now able to earn money from sewing and doing henna designs. It has given me confidence, and I can help support my family. I'm also teaching some of my younger sisters so that they, too, can have these skills.*

**Maryam Ali Gwarzo, Community Women Safe Space**

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*Working with CART has changed my life and my community. We used to have issues with theft and youth causing trouble, but since we started taking action and working with the police, the incidents have reduced a lot. The community feels safer, and I feel proud to be part of something positive. It feels good to know that my work makes a difference, and people respect our efforts to keep everyone safe. - Aminu Musa, Community Action and Response Team (CART) Member, Gwarzo Community*

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*The support I got from the Radio Listeners Club has given me a new chance in life. I received ₦70,000, and I started selling onions. Within three months, I earned ₦300,000! I never thought I could make that much. It helped me and my family, and now I can even save a bit. I'm grateful for this opportunity, and I feel like I can really start planning for my future. - Salisu Garba, Peace Champion Member, Kofa Community*

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*We took on the responsibility to make Danzabuwa safe and secure. We talk to new residents and make sure we know who is in the community. We have been able to support vulnerable families with food and even guided parents on the importance of investing in their children's future. This project has given us pride and unity, and it's something I am committed to doing even after SARVE III ends.*

**Adamu Isah, CART Member, Danzabuwa Community**

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*Being part of the WSS has helped me more than words can say. I received funds to start a small business, and I am now able to help my family. The women here are supportive, and we encourage each other to save and invest in our futures. We used to feel forgotten, but now we have a voice, and I feel strong.- Lami Abubakar, Women Safe Space Member, Yarysa Community*

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# SARVE III PROJECT SUMMARY

**B**uilding on the successes of the first (SARVE I) and second (SARVE II) phases of the project in Kogi and Nasarawa states, and recognising the growing challenges in the Northwest region, ActionAid Nigeria has received further funding from the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) to implement the third phase of the SARVE project. This phase is in partnership with the Democratic Action Group (DAG) in Kano and Global Peace Development (GPD) in Kaduna states.



The SARVE III project is a 36-month initiative designed to strengthen community resilience against violent extremism in the Northwest region.



The project will target 24 communities across 12 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Kano and Kaduna states, aiming to address the root causes of radicalisation and promote peaceful coexistence.

Key statistics for the SARVE III project include:

<p><b>36,000</b> direct beneficiaries, including: <b>18,200 youths (12,600 male and 5,600 female)</b> <b>4,160 women</b> <b>7,320 men</b> <b>6,320 in-school children (3,160 male and 3,160 female)</b></p>	<p>Additionally, the project will reach <b>129,360</b> indirect beneficiaries, including <b>40,200 females</b> and <b>89,160 males.</b></p>
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System and Structure Strengthening Approach against Radicalisation to Violent Extremism Project, SARVE I and II are proudly funded by

