

PEACE BREEDERS

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

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Asibi demonstrating handwashing to community members using the improvised tap set up by ActionAid Nigeria and partners in Nasarawa State.

WHAT'S NEW?

ActionAid Nigeria and its state partner, Global Peace Development in collaboration with UN women, and Nasarawa State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, successfully launched the state Action Plan for Peace and Security of Women and Girls in Nasarawa State. The document reaffirms the important role of women in peace keeping and negotiations for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

150 youths registered for the maiden edition of ActionAid Nigeria's virtual videocontest, KONA. The

competition was in furtherance of the #Togetherforpeace campaign which already gained momentum amongst young people before the pandemic. The competition was open to young persons who reside in Kogi and Nasarawa states and are within the ages of 18-29 to keep them engaged during the COVID-19 lockdown.

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Training of community volunteers on COVID-19 awareness and sensitisation in Tundun- Adabu community, Nasarawa

396 Local Volunteers were trained in 24 communities in Kogi and Nasarawa states to support the community awareness and sensitisation campaign aimed to contain the spread of the COVID-19. The volunteers were provided personal protective tool kits as they moved door-to-door demystifying the growing myths and fears about the Coronavirus.

Also, in the news, 2000 young men and women converged at the 2020 Youth Summit to interact on their roles in preventing violent extremism and engage with duty bearers on

youth development and inclusion in governance in the SARVEII project states. The summit was in commemoration of the 2020 International Youth Day and discussions were held in line with the global theme 'Youth Engagement for Global Action'. The summit also presented an opportunity for them to network and get insights from experts, entrepreneurs and young business mentors on how to productively engage, organise and create the change they want to see in their communities.

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Community Volunteers engaging the locals on COVID-19 safety measures during the door to door sensitisation and awareness campaign.

COMMUNITY-LED RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS

Talk about containing the rapid spread of COVID-19, Agnes, a 40-year old mother of 7 is ready and willing to support community efforts in ensuring coronavirus does not spread in Kagbu community.


Before the lockdown, Agnes' groundnut business was booming; one of the thriving local businesses in her community. She often made as much profit as N20,000 weekly but since the pandemic, she barely made N10,000 until she halted the business.

“Since the COVID-19 lockdown people no longer came out to patronise me like before and it has really affected my business” she narrated. She was very sad because it was her only source of income and her family largely depended on the business for survival.

Agnes had spent a full month at home without a source of income. She has focused solely on caring for her children and sometimes joining her husband at the farm. As soon as the call for community volunteers on COVID-19 sensitisation and awareness campaign came in from ActionAid Nigeria together with partners in

Nasarawa state, Global Peace Development and Beacon Youth Initiative, Agnes opted to support immediately. She was happy to finally get a chance to play her role in stopping the spread of coronavirus which has also slowed down her business. She was passionate about protecting the most vulnerable people in her community like her elderly mother-in-law.

She actively participated in the one-day training of 14 local volunteers in Kagbu community who are among the 382 other volunteers in Kogi and Nasarawa states supporting ActionAid Nigeria's efforts to demystify some of the already existing myths about cure for corona virus such as eating raw vegetables and garlic. Now Agnes has more knowledge about the causes of the virus and safety measures to take to reduce exposure and spread of the virus. She and other volunteers moved door-to-door with messages on what individuals and the community are expected to do to curb the spread such as use of facemasks when outside the house and regularly washing their hands with soap and water. She is excited about this opportunity and hopes that this will all be over soon so that she can return to her business.



Trainees at the skill acquisition centre learning shoe making and design.

PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM THROUGH **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT** OF YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN

Since 2005, Yusuf, now 29 years old, had finished his secondary education but was unable to further his education due to insufficient funds. But he always had interest in business. He joined his parents in a small-scale fish farming business which he and his siblings largely depended upon for survival. Sadly, the recurrent flood in KotonKarfe affected the business, leaving them with little money to make ends meet. Yusuf got frustrated by the unstable means of survival and as the first child of his parents, he felt a huge burden to assist financially.

He began to engage in menial jobs at construction sites where he met a few other friends who introduced him to political thuggery. They convinced him that he would make more money from working for politicians than he would ever make working at the construction sites.

“At that moment, I thought it was a better choice to make quick money, so I joined them” he narrated. “Anytime they needed to fight in a political gathering or scatter a ballot box, I was called, and I was not even afraid that I might lose my own life in the process” he regretted.

Yusuf became notorious in political violence that the news got to his parents. They tried to talk him out of it, but he wouldn't listen and became more aggressive with everyone. Until he met the KotonKarfe Youth leader, Abdullahi who is also a

member of the Community Action and Response Team (CART) who explained to him the implications of violence to himself, his family, how it can slow down progress and development in his life and even his community. Yusuf did not pay attention still, but Abdullahi persisted in talking to him and invited him for their weekly peace gatherings set up by the Peace Ambassadors who attended the 2019 Youth Peace Camp. There, Yusuf met other young people like him who were living a better life and working together to promote peaceful coexistence in their community. He felt challenged by his peers and began to withdraw from bad influences.

The youth leader, Abdullahi introduced the skill Acquisition Programme and assisted him in filling the registration form. He was excited when he was selected for the programme and enrolled in shoe making. Yusuf is now part of 750 young persons in Kogi state participating in ActionAid Nigeria's Skill Acquisition Programme and will be graduating in November 2020.

“I am no longer engaged in violence; I am always happy every morning knowing that I have somewhere to go that will make my life better and this makes my family happy too” he said with a buzzing smile.

Yusuf remains optimistic about his future with plans to start a shoe design company.



Participants discuss how to identify early warning signs of conflict in a group task during the security training on community policing.

BEYOND COVID-19; Prioritising the Safety of Vulnerable Communities:

During the COVID-19 lockdown, security threats across the country increased at the most alarming rate. Strained relationship between security actors and the public remain one of the drivers of violent extremism. This is no different for people living in more vulnerable and high-risk communities, like Ette.

Ette, a small community in the heart of Kogi Local Government Area has long been tormented and attacked by extremist groups. Despite its topographical beauty, rich soil and large river for agriculture and fish farming, the narrow, bushy, yet motorable path leading to the community remains a nightmare for conveyors since it became a hotspot for rapists, armed robbers and kidnappers.

“Our women and girls do not feel safe travelling to town alone on this road. Whenever we suspect anything, we the CART members always alert the police but sometimes they arrive very late after the incidence had occurred. This is why some of our community members do not trust them again” said Oiza, women leader and CART member, Ette Community.

With the police no longer trusted in the communities, locals started to take charge of

their own safety and security by fishing out perpetrators of violence and punishing them. But this was wrong. Community policing groups are there to support the efforts of security agencies in identifying and resolving threats within their communities and not to replace them and take matters into their own hands.

Although the CART had continued to make cautious efforts to curb the reoccurrence of these horrible incidences on Ette road, ActionAid Nigeria together with partner in Kogi State, Participation Initiative for Behavioural Change in development (PIBCID), saw the need to bridge the already existing gaps between the community policing groups and security agencies, hence organised a 3-day security training for 30 police officers in Kogi state.

The police officers were enlightened on the need to work closely with the community policing groups to identify some early warning signs of violence and address them before they escalate. At the end of the training, participants capacity was built to respond to early warning signs of conflict and threats to peace. A huge step to ensuring that people of Ette and other communities alike are safe again.



L-R - ActionAid Nigeria Country Director - Ene Obi, Governor of Nasarawa State - H.E. Abdullahi Sule and First Lady of Nasarawa State - Hajia Silifa Abdullahi Sule unveil the Nasarawa State Action Plan for Peace and Security of Women and Girls.

Integrating Gender Considerations in **THE QUEST FOR PEACE**

Traditionally, women's responsibilities are categorised into care giving and other home-keeping duties but rarely decision-making or career plans other than their customary expectations.

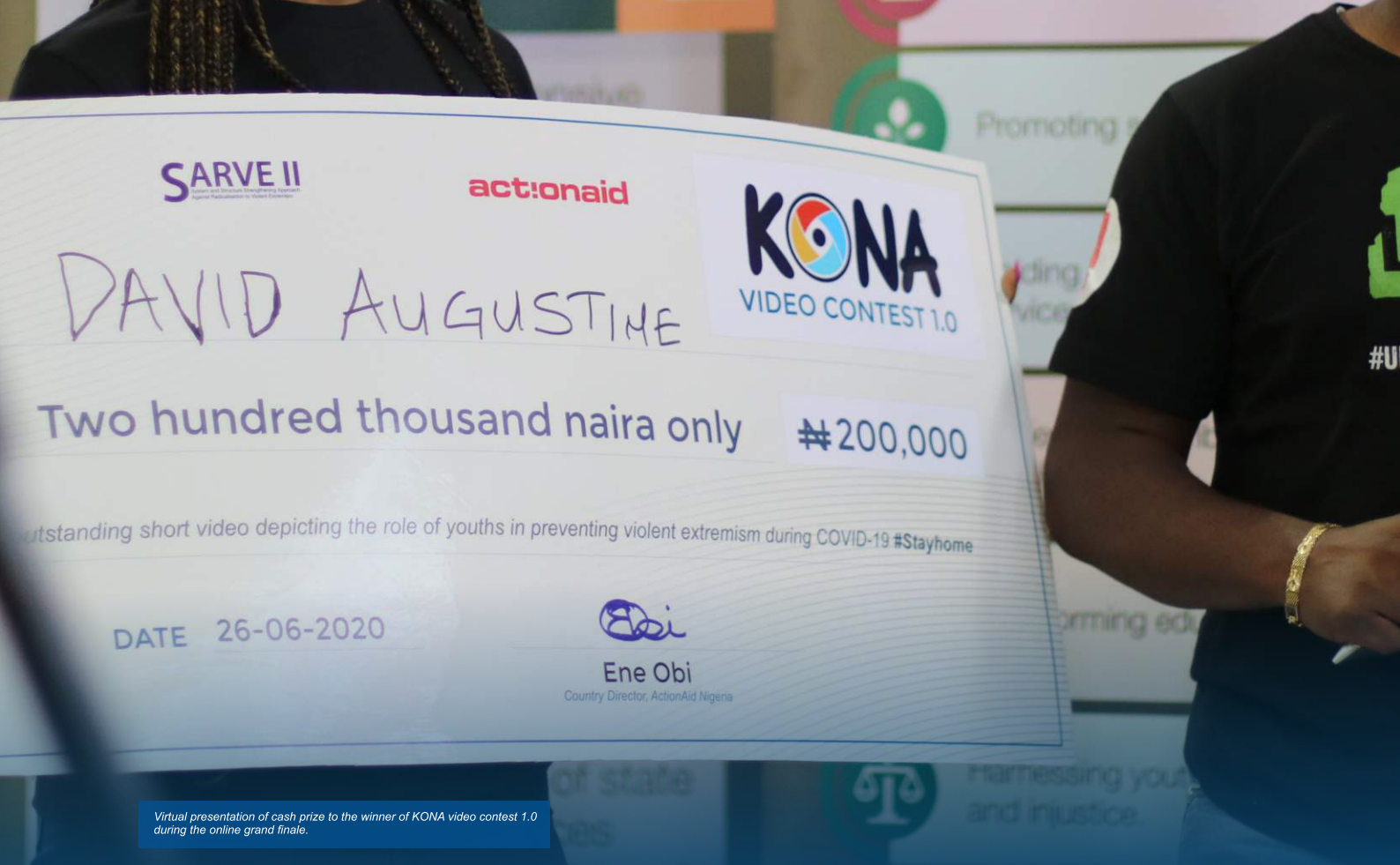
In Alizaga, the old belief that the girl child does not have any economic contribution to her father's family but is only meant to grow up and get married to a man whom she will serve still holds true. But Blessing has refused to accept this. As a little girl, she had a big dream of becoming a business expert. She had so much interest in education that even when she was denied the opportunity, she never relented in learning. She would often visit her friends who were still in school and ask them to teach her English language and mathematics.

"I learnt most of the English I speak from my neighbours because I had to forfeit my education for my brothers. I only completed Primary School education, but I am working hard to make sure my daughters attain the highest level of education", she narrated.

Having lived all 32 years of life in Alizaga community, Blessing Sunday understood that the patriarchal nature of her community will not always work in her favour. She joined the women safe space set up by ActionAid Nigeria and partners in Nasarawa state, Global Peace Development and Beacon Youth Initiative, an informal platform where women and girls meet

to discuss issues that affect them without any threats of violence, fear of judgement, abuse, or neglect. There she learnt how to develop and manage a business. She did some enquiry and discovered that the demand for cooking oil was high in and around her community, so she decided to venture into groundnut oil production. She successfully got a loan of N30,000 from the women's contributions and commenced her business. In one year, she was able to repay the loan and has also saved enough capital to support her children's education which remains her top priority. Blessing is now an active member of the women safe space, supporting the efforts to empower women and girls in her community by training 23 other young women in groundnut oil production.

Excluding women in certain activities and decisions that affect them will only enhance extremist's agenda. ActionAid Nigeria is changing the norm by empowering women in vulnerable communities to be better versions of themselves. Together with UN women, Nasarawa state Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development and partners, a State Action Plan for Peace and Security of Women and Girls in Nasarawa state was developed to serve as a framework of action for inclusive governance where women and girls play central and leadership roles in peace and security processes.



Virtual presentation of cash prize to the winner of KONA video contest 1.0 during the online grand finale.

EXPLORING INNOVATIONS FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

When the spread of COVID-19 threatened the laudable progress made towards peace building and communal cohesion in communities, ActionAid Nigeria together with partners in Kogi and Nasarawa states swung into action. Young people were beginning to indulge in activities such as spending more time on social media that was increasing their vulnerability to violent extremism.

Trending hashtags and online competitions were the core attraction points for young people online. The SARVE II project's #Togetherforpeace campaign had already gained popularity among youths in Kogi and Nasarawa prior to the pandemic hence its incorporation in project's activities during the lockdown worked perfectly for youth engagement.

The KONA (Kogi and Nasarawa) video contest was an innovation of the SARVE II project targeted at engaging young people between the ages of 18-29, on their role in peacebuilding processes through online entertainment especially during the COVID-19 #StayHome

when formal and informal schools were closed.

150 youths registered for the competition with only 26 participants who submitted a 90 second video skit each on how young people can promote peace during the pandemic with the goal of winning a cash prize along with other consolation prizes after scoring high on the screening criteria which were clarity, creativity, suspense, persuasion and public votes on Facebook

The judges included, Mark Angel, ActionAid Nigeria's brand ambassador and comedian, Social justice influencer and actress, Hilda Dokubo and the Director of Organisational Effectiveness, Funmilayo Oyefusi, while Communications Coordinator, Lola Ayanda and Resilience Programme Coordinator, Anicetus Atakpu hosted the online grand finale which was livestreamed on YouTube via Zoom. While the top 3 winners received cash prizes, all 26 participants have now won a spot to attend the SARVE II 2020 annual Youth Peace Camp scheduled for mid- November. While we plan to make KONA an annual event, here are the testimonies from the winners...

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Participating in the KONA video contest was really challenging but I am happy it gave me the opportunity to educate my peers on their roles in preventing radicalisation and violent extremism which is worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. With the cash prize given to me and my little savings, I have been able to purchase a new laptop which I now use to keep myself productively engaged by learning new tricks in video production

Kure, 25 years old, 2nd runner up KONA video contest 1.0.

Kogi state

Cash prize: N40,000 (\$100)



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The KONA video contest 1.0 taught me a lot of things like paying attention to details. I never really sat down to think about my role as a youth in peace building until the competition. It was an eye opener for me. Although I was only one mark away from the winning, emerging the 1st runner up made me excited and encouraged. I have used the cash prize given to me to purchase a soft box for my photography business

Johnson, 23 years old, 1st runner up, KONA video contest 1.0.

Kogi state

Cash Prize: N60,000 (\$ 150)



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Sincerely I did not know I was going to emerge the winner because the competition was tough, with amazing entries from other participants. It was a great privilege to have worked alongside other young persons like me to showcase our roles in peace building during this pandemic even while engaging online. I have used my cash prize to purchase a brand-new laptop which is more efficient for my video editing and production. I plan to create more educative videos like this

David, 27 years old, Winner, KONA video contest 1.0.

Nasarawa state

Cash prize- N200,000 (\$500)



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Sponsorship**

ActionAid Nigeria appreciates the little you can afford. A one-off donation is a fantastic start, but the kind of extreme poverty that children are facing are long term problems, and they need long term solutions. ActionAid is committed to making a sustainable difference and changing lives for good. **JOIN US!**

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39 Journalists

(27 men, 12 women)

from Kogi State, Nasarawa State and FCT were trained on preventing violent extremism and supporting peace building through budget tracking and Monitoring.



30 persons

(27 women, 3 men)

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396

community volunteers were trained on COVID-19 sensitisation and awareness campaign.



58,982

(33,556 men and 25,686 women)

community members reached through community (door-to-door) sensitisation on COVID-19.



1,614 persons

(youth-600 men, 505 women: 509 adult women)

currently being trained on various skill acquisition programme.

FACTS AND FIGURES:



60

(15 women, 45 men)

police officers trained on Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) to community policing.



12

structures of Local Government Conflict Management Alliance (LOCMA) established in 12 LGA in Kogi and Nasarawa States.



28

committee members of Kogi State Action Plan on UNSCR-1325 trained on implementation of the four pillars of the State Action Plan.



121

(45 women, 76 men)

facilitators from the 24 project communities coached on advocacy, policy engagement and early response system to conflict.

PEACE AMBASSADORS SPOTLIGHT.

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I never thought I could live a drug-free life! After being negatively influenced by my peers I became addicted to all kinds of hard substances including alcohol. On many occasions, it lured me into conflicts and political violence. I became a nuisance in my community. My participation in the Youth Peace Camp activities changed my perception about life and transformed me for good. I began to make cautious efforts to withdraw from these bad habits through rehabilitation and now I am in a better place, actively engaging with other youths in my community and assisting those ones who live the kind of life I lived before, to build a productive lifestyle. I am proud of the good work ActionAid Nigeria and partners have done to change me and other youths in my community

Ibrahim Azara, Laminga Community, 29 years.

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All my efforts to start a good and profitable business within my community failed because I lacked the appropriate skills and information needed to run a successful business. During the mentoring session at the Youth Peace Camp, I was taught that successful business entails identifying a need and using my product or service to fulfill that need. As soon as I returned to my community, I did a quick survey and discovered that personal hygiene kits were scarce, and the demand was high. With that information, I used my savings from the per diem and transport at the peace camp to start a soap and Vaseline production in my community. I have made huge profits that sustains the business while also supporting my sibling's education. I am grateful to ActionAid and their partners in Nasarawa state for giving the opportunity to be part of the Youth Peace Camp

Yakubu Musa, Tudun Adabu Community, 27years.

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On several occasions, I wanted to end my life. I had developed emotional imbalance, Self-hatred and depression which resulted to all kinds of aggression, anger, and violence. During the Youth Peace Camp, I was exposed to teachings and mentorships that helped to boost my self-worth. I took the Cosmetology training seriously and started my own business. I now make #2000 profit every week. This helps to keep me engaged and away from idle thoughts. Thanks to ActionAid Nigeria, GPD, BYI for this for everything they have taught during the peace camp

Halima Musa, Kurudu Community, 26years.

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SARVE II PROJECT SUMMARY

The “System and Structure Strengthening Approach against Radicalization to Violent Extremism” SARVE II project was informed by the need to decrease vulnerability of at -risk young men and women to violent extremism, strengthen community systems and structures to address violent extremism, and to create an enabling environment for preventing violent extremism. The commencement of a second phase was as a result of the impact and achievements recorded in the 1st phase of the project which was designed to systematically address the source of extreme restive violence that played out in Kogi state as a result of its numerous porous borders by digging deep into the fundamental causes of the type of violence in the state and to create workable community driven solutions to prevent and address internal conflicts and general restiveness.

With funding from the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), SARVE II is now being implemented in Kogi

and Nasarawa States in partnership with ActionAid Nigeria's Local Rights Partner in Kogi State; Participation Initiative for Behavioural Change in Development (PIBCID) and Global Peace Development (GPD) & Beacon Youth Initiative (BYI) in Nasarawa State. The project is also working closely with the office of the Governors, Ministries of Women Affairs and Social Development; Ministries of Agriculture; Ministries of Youth and Sports Development; Ministries of Education; Ministries of Commerce & Industries and other relevant MDAs, Community Based Organisations and youth groups in the states. The project is being implemented to reach 36,000 direct beneficiaries in six LGAs in Kogi State (Igalamela/Odolu, Ankpa, Adavi, Okehi, Lokoja and Kogi) and six LGAs in Nasarawa State (Obi, Lafia, Nassarawa-Eggon, Akwanga, Toto and Nassarawa)

System and Structure Strengthening Approach
against Radicalisation to Violent Extremism Project,
SARVE I and II are proudly funded by



GCERF

Global Community Engagement
and Resilience Fund

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