

SW!FT

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TRIANNUAL NEWSLETTER

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Training of enumerators for data collection during ActionAid Nigeria Emergency Rapid Response to Flood Affected Households in Jigawa State.



WHAT'S NEW?

ActionAid Nigeria intervention to some flood affected households across three Local Government Areas of Jigawa State

It is with great delight that we share with you updates on ActionAid Nigeria's activities within the last quarter.

We would like to start by thanking you for supporting our fight against poverty through our work with the marginalised and vulnerable groups in Nigeria. The attainment of ActionAid's vision and mission is being made possible because we are collaborating with you.

Thirty-one States in Nigeria are currently battling with the severe flood, particularly in Kogi State where one hundred and sixty communities are submerged underwater because the Niger and Benue rivers broke their banks from shedding excess water from Lagdo Dam in Cameroon. Twenty-seven local government areas in Jigawa State are affected by the flood, albeit in various degrees. About 110,000 people are estimated to have been affected, with 92 deaths recorded and more than 5,000 persons displaced according to **SEMA**. Over a 1.4million others across Nigeria are also affected by the flood.

It is a pleasure to inform you that ActionAid Nigeria, with funding from STARTFUND and IHART has commenced emergency rapid response to flood-affected households in Jigawa State. Through the intervention, being implemented in collaboration with our Local Rights Partner, **Baba Azimi foundation**, 1000 households have been provided with non-food items & cash for food at N20,000 per Household. 500 pregnant & lactating women were also provided with dignity kits.

Plans are underway for support to States where the needs are greater.

Ahead of the 2023 elections, ActionAid Nigeria through her **ENLOGIC Project** collaborated with various experts and stakeholders to work with INEC in reviewing the planned logistics for the 2023 elections. The experts' meeting sought to engage critical stakeholders to reduce the challenges identified in the logistics deployment of election materials for election administration. The INEC Chairman, Mahmood Yakubu, all the Service Chiefs, ably represented, CSOs and, Resident Commissioners were all physically present to analyse, and proffer workable solutions towards the logistics of the 2023 elections.

Amidst the economic challenges and disturbing security situation in Nigeria, ActionAid stands in solidarity with all her citizenry. We will continue to work with women, children, youths, and all stakeholders in achieving social justice for all.

So, you're welcome to another exciting edition of SWIFT! Enjoy your read as you learn more about the impact of our work across Nigeria.

Ene Obi
Country Director
ActionAid Nigeria



WELCOME TO SWIFT!

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PARADIGM SHIFT:

WOMEN LEAD CABINET COUNCILS IN ENUGU STATE

In the history of Igbo land, traditional activities were strictly reserved for men. Women rarely got involved in such activities nor were they found leading the traditional cabinets. However, there seems to be a paradigm shift ongoing in Enugu State with growing demands for inclusiveness and agitation for the promotion of the rights of women. Some communities have begun changing the rules and regulations that prohibit women from holding traditional positions.

ABOR COMMUNITY

From immemorial in Abor community, Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State, Women's roles were clearly defined and revolved around house chores, farm work, and travel to the market for sales. Leadership was far from them, men occupied every leadership position and made all decisions in the land. Things took a new turn when Women Empowerment and Peace Building Initiative (WEPBI) introduced the

Women's Voice and Leadership Nigeria (WVLN) project, funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) in Abor community. Men and women in the community were sensitised & trained, and awareness of the importance of women's participation in leadership and its benefit to the community was created. Through rigorous and mind-blowing discussions with community leaders, perceptions and behaviors were changed as women moved up the scale from listeners at community meetings to making contributions. As confidence began to grow and the voices of women heard, they slowly began to occupy strategic positions at traditional levels through appointments into the cabinet councils, the highest governing and decision-making body in Igbo communities. Armed with this Power, women across Abor communities came together to form a coalition of women groups to speak up against ill traditional practices against women and girls, such as FGM, child marriage and disinheritance, campaigning around community peace and conflict resolution and other changes that contribute to development. With the positive impact made, the traditional ruler has since added seven women as part of the town union executive of the community.

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“Upon the women's ascension to the cabinet, ActionAid Nigeria's partner, WEPBI led the training and sensitization of the women in strengthening their voice as women leaders. The women subsequently led the abolishment of female genital mutilation in the community and are also leading conflict resolution processes in the community through mediation and dialogue towards ensuring peaceful co-existence in the community. “These women are the best at reconciling opposing sides and they use their motherly approach to reinstate peace in the community. They are doing it better than the men.” **said community leader**”

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produce by straying animals. Families are now happy with the quality and quantity of their harvest.

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NDIABOR COMMUNITY

Ndiabor community in Aninri local government area, Enugu state, as the name implies 'Ani Nri' means 'Land of food' is known for her numerous agricultural activities which constitute the greatest part of their economic growth. Crops like rice, cassava, and beans, are cultivated for food and serve as their means of livelihood. However, most of their products are often destroyed by strayed animals. This would usually affect the quantity of food available for consumption and sales.

After the inclusion of women in the Igwe's cabinets, they conceived an idea to put an end to the destruction of their farm produce. With the support of the Igwe and cabinet members, the women formed a task force to arrest whose animal is seen roaming, unguided around the community. This action brought an end to the destruction of farm

“*Sanitation and hygiene was also a problem in the community but following the inauguration of the women, they came up with a sanitation timetable for the villages, and without any special policing, they enforced the sanitation activities and made sure the market and other public gathering venues are kept clean which reduced complaints and record of air and waterborne diseases like cholera, dysentery, and diarrhea at the community health centers.”* **said Igwe.**”

“*These women are the best at reconciling opposing sides and they use their motherly approach to reinstate peace in the community. They are doing it better than the men.”* **said Community leader.**”



SWIFT WOMAN

SPOTLIGHT ON A WOMEN'S RIGHTS CHAMPION

Lilian Abang is a resident of Esuk Utan, a community notorious for the high prevalence of Gender Based Violence and other discriminatory practices against women in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State. Lilian, knows and sees firsthand how vulnerable women and girls in the community are treated unjustly.

With little or no knowledge of how to change the narrative, Lilian could only watch as things headed for the worse. Through the Women's Voice and Leadership Nigeria (WVL-N) project, Lilian was trained by ActionAid Nigeria's partner, Child Care and Adult Protection Initiative (CCAPI), as a Peer Educator. She received regularly mentorship on how to impact the knowledge on other women in her community.

Armed with this knowledge, she organised the women in Esuk Utan to form a Peer Education group where they could consolidate their voices to speak against harmful and discriminatory practices in the community. The 40-member Peer Education group formed has grown strong and now making positive impacts in the community.

Today, the group is one of the champions against rape, ill- traditional practices, and other forms of gender-based violence in the Esuk Utan community, Calabar, and these women now know their rights.

"We want to use our voices to fight for ourselves and other women in this community. As more women are trained, we would be able to protect our daughters." Lilian

To eradicate women's vulnerability and reduce over-dependence on their partners, the women of the Esuk Utan community formed a Village Saving and Loan Association (VSLA), an initiative that enables women to create and build wealth, empowering them to be economically and financially stable and prevent future vulnerabilities caused by poverty.

"Looking back at the period before the WVL-N project came and now I can proudly say that incidences of GBV, especially rape and domestic violence, have drastically reduced and the consciousness and awareness of women created through the Peer Education." a member of the Peer education group

It is expected that in the next two years, with the help of the Peer Education group, GBV cases are expected to be reduced by 80% as more than 100 households are economically empowered.

For her altruism and commitment to promoting rights of women in Esuk Utan, Lilian earned the accolade of Swift Woman for this edition of SWIFT



MOBILISING IBENO YOUTHS FOR A CLIMATE RESILIENT COMMUNITY

Ibenu is characterized by varied environmental problems ranging from soil erosion, water pollution, and gas flaring in addition to the absence of socio-economic and infrastructure development.

"Over 61 years of reckless oil extraction and industrial carbon emission has led to vast land degradation, air, and water pollution in Mkpanat Community, Ibenu Local Government Area. These have also affected fishing and farming, the major occupation of residents of this community." *The Secretary, Council of Chiefs, Mkpanat Community.*

For many years, Youths in Ibenu have been spectators, watching as their community gets degraded by oil spills and activities of Exxon Mobil, yet building their inner resilience to adapt to living in a community without adequate basic infrastructure.

Following the training of 20 youths in Ibenu, by ActionAid Nigeria, in collaboration with Clement Isong Foundation and funding from DANIDA on the Freedom of Information Act, Social Audit, Policies/Political Education, and Gender Responsive Public Services, the youths are now mobilizing for change.

Joy Nnitor, a 20-yr-old student is leading Ibenu Youths in advocating for this change. "Ibenu is a shadow of its former self. With the increasing soil infertility, health hazard, and underdevelopment of the region, we are forced to abandon our land and seek nonexistent alternative means of livelihood in other communities. Our recent demonstration tagged Give Ibenu a future today targeted at all stakeholders to provide clean and safe water for the community. Our members are also putting pressure on them through media appearances and also, highlighting the impact of the climate shocks we are experiencing." *Joy*

Despite Akwalbom, specifically, Ibenu being the seat of oil production in Nigeria and the highest oil-producing state in Nigeria, a larger part of Ibenu's population lives in poverty and marginalization. Proudly, Ibenu Youths are now taking action to demand a change in their community through ActionAid's SPA II project.

Follow the discussion on [Youth4GreenEco](#)

THRIVING IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

Angwan Sarki is one of the Villages in Kajuru Local Government Area, Kaduna State that was attacked consistently in April 2022. During the attacks, about 140 houses were burnt and on the 9th day, everyone fled the village. Tabitha is a mother of 4 and a survivor of the attacks in Angwan Sarki. Her family's major source of income, the farmland was destroyed, their animals killed and looted, and her grinding machine which serves as her source of income was also destroyed. They are sometimes sheltered by friends and at other times, they rent a room for N1,500 a month. Having to forcefully leave her home to safety caused her two Children to drop out of school.

In tears, Tabitha said, "Sincerely, you cannot compare your own house to another person's own". Tabitha is one of the 3,000 beneficiaries of ActionAid intervention across 61 communities, funded by STARTFUND. She intends to get back to her groundnut business, in addition to beans processing for moimoi so that she can cater to her family and afford a comfortable home of her own

In January 2022, Rejoice Musa a mother of 5, and other residents of Angwan Dutse in Kajuru LGA were forced out of their village by bandits who had previously attacked their community on four different occasions. Some persons were held hostage, houses, farms, and livelihood equipment were burnt and others were sent out of the village. Before the attack, 2 of her children were in school but not anymore as she cannot afford the expenses while displaced. Faced with accommodation challenges and the responsibility of taking care of her family, Rejoice undertakes menial labour on farms to earn an income and was able to save from her wages to start a business in frying Akara (Bean Cake)

ActionAid Nigeria remains committed to supporting women and girls who often bear the direct brunt when disaster strikes.



DERAILED BUT NOT DETERRED

Mary Adams (not real name) could barely survive the poverty in her household. Mary and her 6 siblings had no fun childhood; they only bore the wrenching memories of poverty and lack of everything. Mary tells how eating one tasteless meal per day was a luxury.

At 15, she became a child labourer; doing menial jobs from house to house in her neighbourhood: "I was tired of watching my parents fight, so I will go to my neighbours and ask them what I can do for them to earn money so that I can pay for my school fees and buy my books. I washed their plates, fetched water, and washed cloths every morning before going to school" Mary said when her early morning regular chores could not sustain her and her siblings, she took to a sales job at a bar. "When I was working in a bar; I met a woman who told me she will help me, so she took me from Benue to Nassarawa State. She promised that I would have better opportunities and be able to help my family. I was happy".

Her happiness was short-lived when she realised that the good life promised was a mirage; she was later sexually exploited by the same woman who promised her help. At 16, she became 'imprisoned' by her host, who verbally, physically, and sexually abused her. "I became her prisoner, I was used as sexual slave, sleeping with different men and the woman collects all the money". Mary muttered, constantly wiping the tears which freely flowed down her sun-beat cheeks.

Mary hatched a plan to escape from her captor: "I told her I had to go and visit my sick mother that I would return after a while. I was released to go. I never returned" After one year away, she returned to complete her National Diploma and relocated to Auchi.

"When I got to Auchi, I did many things to survive but I was lucky one day when I met a woman from Kairos (ActionAid's Partner in Auchi, Edo State), they were doing sensitization and they told us about the dangers of irregular migration, which was what I was already planning to do but after that sensitization, I changed my mind, we were given a form to fill and apply for training. The training really changed me and made me become confident, it improved the way I interact with people and the transport money that they gave us was useful, I saved the transport money and trekked every day, so I can use the money to obtain my National Diploma Certificate, which I couldn't receive since graduating in 2018" she said.



MY WIDOWHOOD JOURNEY: PREPARING FOR THE UNKNOWN

Fifty-year old farmer and mother of eight, Theresa, recalls how the death of her husband prompted her to reflect on what life and widowhood would have been if it were 7 years ago, when she had no tangible source of income, savings and widowhood practices were extremely prevalent in her community, Ikot Umiang Ede.

"Until four years ago, Widows in the community were forced to shave their hairs, wear only black clothes for a year, not permitted to leave their homes till their husbands are buried. Widows could only sit on the floor, bare and denied any form of inheritance from the late husband, especially for those without male children. The irony is that women in this community are the enforcers of these practices against their fellow women.

The introduction of women peer education training in Ikot Umiang Ede led by ActionAid Nigeria's partner, AHDC, changed the narrative for the women. The training was borne out of

several issues that women and children were facing in the community such as, domestic violence, non-financial independence of women, early pregnancy, non-inclusion of women in community decision making and other harmful widowhood practices. All seven women trained also trained seven others, each, and the chain of training continued. Topics covered included livelihood and survival; gender equality; negotiation and communication in the home, family and community, and how to use various channels like meetings and dialogue.

"At first, I struggled to believe the widowhood practices were harmful. I saw it as a form of respect to the deceased but, I understand better now.

PHOTO REEL



In October 2022, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Chairman, Mahmood Yakubu, ActionAid Nigeria's Country Director, **Ms. Ene Obi**, FCDO's **Dr. Mathew Ayibakuro** and Representatives of the Service Chiefs, NURTW, FCDO, CBN, ActionAid and INEC Residents Commissioners held an Experts' meeting in Lagos to discuss and review the Elections Logistics for #2023GeneralElections. The meeting was funded by Ford Foundation, through the Enhancing Logistics Delivery & Citizens Participation in Nigeria Elections (ENLOGIC) Project.



Senator **Muhammad Bima Enagi**, the acting Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development; **Honorable Dadutse Muntari Mohammed**, Member, House Committee, and Nigeria's the Auditor-General, **Aghughu Adolphus**, SWOFON Representatives and others at the National Stakeholders Consultative Meeting on the 2023 Agriculture Budget held in Lagos in September 2022.



ActionAid Nigeria hosted Community Sponsors in Abuja and Lagos on her first Supporters Community Visit to Vine Heritage Home Kuje, Abuja, and Wesere community Badagry, Lagos, in celebration of 2022 Customer Service week.



Participants displaying the Fulani culture during the 2022 Peace Fiesta in Kaduna State, tagged - **EMBRACE DIVERSITY, BUILD PEACE**, organised by ActionAid Nigeria in partnership with Global Peace Development (GPD) and in collaboration with Kaduna State Ministry of Culture and Tourism.



The Closeout ceremony of the MATAI Project



ActionAid Nigeria (AAN) and her local partner Global Peace Development (GPD), with funding support from STARTFUND has provided emergency relief materials to three thousand (3,000) women-led households across sixty-one communities displaced by banditry and temporarily living in host communities in Kaduna State.



PROMOTING DIGITAL ACTIVISM

ActionAid Nigeria (AAN) under the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA II) with ActionAid Denmark, with funding from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) has launched a **Youth Digital Centre** within the premises of AAN office in Abuja. The Youth Digital centre which is also supported by McArthur Foundation and sustained by the Global Platform fund will contribute to the realization of SDG 9 - industry, innovation and infrastructure which seeks to facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical and SDG 10 - reduced inequality, where we target bridging the digital divide. The launch of the centre is part of series of activities ActionAid is deploying towards building sustainable and scalable solutions to youth unemployment in Nigeria.



UNITE... 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM!!

In a bid to join organisations, government, and agencies across the globe to celebrate the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence, ActionAid Nigeria organized a one-day press conference and a walk to reiterate and declare her stand to end violence against women and girls. The walk which was carried out on the 28th of November 2022 in some vicinity around Gwarinpa was centered around creating awareness and drawing attention of the public to the issues of violence against women and girls and calling on women to break the silence culture and report cases of violence.

The walk which started with press conference, addressed the under representation of Nigeria women in politics and leadership at all levels, Increased cases of violence against women and girls, the patriarchal norms, the undervaluing of women's work, and the attacks on labour standards at the grassroots.

The theme Unite! Activism to End Violence Against Women and Girls created a platform for AAN to unite with her partners, community women and youth in tackling GBV issues. The theme also put out a call on the government, private and public sector, traditional and religious institutions, Activists, development partners, CSOs, men and women to Unite and end all forms of Violence Against women and Girls in Nigeria. As Violence against women and Girls that has continued to hinder the growth and development of women and that of Nigeria at Large.

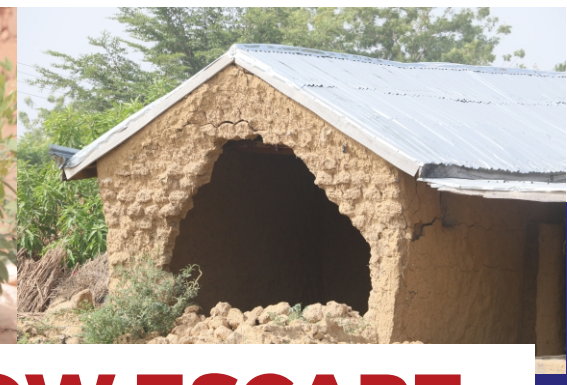
ActionAid Nigeria will continue to say NO to violence against women and Girls and we will continue to champion the course of women and girls at community, state and National level.



#FloodRelief

As the flood washed away the things they held dear and the only place they called home, many ran for their lives, some tried to grab what they could because it is very hard to let go, and some, sadly lost their lives while others remained and watched from their rooftops. ActionAid Nigeria is proudly returning smiles to their faces with the #floodrelief intervention.

Egbo Edeh community is the only place Bridget, mother of five, calls home. She had travelled to visit her Sister that had just given birth when the flood began. She returned to a submerged house and farmland. "In my lifetime, this is the worst I have experienced because I couldn't salvage anything. I am very independent and have never relied on anyone to feed but the devastation the flood caused led me to begging. Regardless, I am grateful for life and to ActionAid for coming to our rescue. The food particularly brought smiles to our faces."



THE NARROW ESCAPE

"I was 8 months pregnant when the community started getting flooded. We had nowhere to go so we stayed. The flood eventually got very heavy, and it brought down our house. I realised I couldn't find my son after the house collapsed, only to hear his groans from under the rubble of a collapsed wall. I tried to save him, but my strength failed me. I eventually called for help, and he was rescued after about 2 hours.

I cried because I thought that my son was dead. He was rescued by a youth who could swim. They broke the bricks into pieces to bring out my son. My three-year old son had gulped in large quantity of water and members of the community quickly took him to the house of a community nurse for medical attention because the flood has submerged our community hospital.

When words came back to me that he was alive. I cried even more.

My husband is a Farmer, but the flood has submerged his farm too. We no longer have a sustainable source of livelihood. Although, we have temporarily moved to a community that is on a highland and I hope the floods rescind quickly for us to start rebuilding our lives. My husband goes to town daily to do menial jobs so that we can eat. The cash for food from ActionAid will help us for the next three to four weeks." Hasiba, Duiwigi Community, Jigawa State.

She is one of the 1200 women provided with emergency response kit and cash for food in Jigawa amidst the 2022 flood.



Community Sponsorship

Empower Communities... Create Change

ActionAid Nigeria is responding to the immediate needs of families displaced by flood in **Delta, Bayelsa, Kogi and Anambra State**. We are prioritising the provision of cash for food, wash & hygiene kits, and other non-food items to women, girls, people with disabilities, Pregnant and nursing mothers. We are appealing to Nigerians to help these Nigerians in need at this time.

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