

# What's New?

In the period under review, ActionAid Nigeria (AAN) responded to the deepening inequality of power, injustices and poverty in Nigeria through the launch of a new Country Strategy Paper:

Social Justice to End Poverty 2018 - 2023. The CSP which has three strategic focus will guide AAN's work in the next six years with a focus on empowering citizens' especially young people, women and girls and their movements; support the building of accountability mechanisms that will lead to enhanced peoples' power in inclusive governance, improve quality of life for women and girls; while advancing social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication in Nigeria.

Through Strengthening Citizen's Engagement in Electoral Processes (SCEEP) project, AAN established and expanded platforms for citizens engagement in the electoral process at State and Local level through the setup of the Civil Society Organisation (CSO) Situation Room for Akwa Ibom Local Government election; this provided an opportunity for citizens to bring issues of local government election to the fore.

AAN commemorated the 2017 world Anti-

Corruption day with the official unveiling of the Strengthening Citizens' Resistance Against Prevalence of Corruption (SCRAP-C) project; the project was launched by the distinguished Senator Chukwuemeka Utazi- Chairman Senate

Committee on Financial Crimes and Anti-Corruption. The project seeks to look at the fight against corruption through social norm lenses, and complement the law and enforcement approach that has been in existence in Nigeria.

In a bid to end violence against children in Edo State, AAN and partners, through the Sustainable Mechanism for Improved Livelihood and Economic Empowerment (SMILE) project supported the State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development to launch a multi sectoral priority response plan which marked the take-offs of the process of safeguarding children in the state. Similarly, through advocacy by AAN, Child street begging has been banned in Ankpa LGA, Kogi State.

Also in the news, in response to the humanitarian crisis in the country, AAN established a comprehensive referral pathway for adequate intervention on Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) in the four recently liberated communities of Benieshiekh (Kaga LGA), Pulka (Gwoza LGA), Banki (Bama LGA) and Rann (Kala Balge LGA) in Borno State. This was followed with distribution of relief materials to 1200 households displaced by herders and farmers clash in Nasarawa/Benue.

Welcome to another edition of Swift!





n December 20, 2017 the premises of Borno State Agency for Mass Literacy was agog as 250 internally displaced women received seed grants to start their business after undergoing a 3 month skill acquisition training in specialised trade of their choice. The women beamed with smile as they received their certificates and took photographs with their equipment at the end of their graduation; for most of the grandaunts, the word on their lips – dreams do come true.

Zara is one of the 9 women trained on groundnut oil production and provided with a grinding machine, frying pan, local stove and a bag of groundnut amongst other things. Amidst sobs, she recounts how she got to Maiduguri after her community was invaded by insurgents "the attack on my household happened so fast and I felt every bit of the pain my 2 eldest sons experienced while they were being killed. My 25 and 23 year-old sons were brutally murdered for no cause. My husband was taken away and never returned.

While I ran with my 4 other children, my 2-year old son cried so much and not knowing why he was crying I just held him close till he slept off again. I woke up to realise I was clung on to a dead child. He had blood gushing from his nostrils and ears, I was confused but I was determined to give him a befitting burial while also curious on the cause of death. Strapped to my back again, we continued on the long walk towards Maiduguri; we stopped over to seek for food and shelter in a very small community and I sought to see the local herbalist who confirmed my son had died of snake bite. There I buried my son according to the Islamic rites."

Zara arrived Maiduguri and like many others, were hosted by a family; she calls them her 'good Samaritan'. Some of her neighbours from Dikwa community were also lodged with host families around Maiduguri while others went to the IDP camp for succour. One of her friends from the camp came visiting to commiserate with her on the passing of her sons; it was during their discussion she heard about ActionAid proposed training for displaced women from Dikwa community.

Although that night in late 2014 will forever remain indelible Zara's heart, she is hopeful for the future "this is a life changing moment for me. ActionAid is helping me smile again. I look forward to the start of a new life. Thank you ActionAid"

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#### Contributors:

# Demystifying Bureaucracy, One State at a Time



MacDonald John, shares his experience working with vulnerable children in Edo State.

s a trained social worker, MacDonald Eyo-Ebiowei John is a trained social worker driven by passion to make significant impacts in the society, a long-held philosophy of his. But when he was posted to the child development department as social welfare officer, he had no idea of his first step. With no immediate resource to build on at his disposal, John's only option was to ask for help. He was subsequently told of SMILE project and later introduced to the ActionAid team in the state.

"Meeting with the ActionAid SMILE project team gave me the direction I needed to start the work," he said.

The social welfare department has developed a comprehensive template that provides a detailed response action plan that can guide anyone in the department. It also coordinates the activities of child protection networks in the state.

"Without ActionAid in Edo State, child right law will still remain dormant," John added.

One of the child protection networks that work with the ministry is the Edo State Child Protection Network. This network, like many others in the country, has been strengthened to bark and bite. "We have secured 89 convictions from 310 cases spread across the 18 local governments of the state," said the network's Board Chairman, Jennifer Ero.

Ero is a fiery child right advocate in the state. She was inspired by better coordination of activities and efficient referral system. She narrated a case which marked a defining moment. A nine-year-old child had been raped by a 70-year-old man and the community response to the incident was poor. Some fought to conceal the case from public knowledge, others begged for mercy and money was offered to the child's family while no one

showed care about the child's emotional trauma. There were also different reactions concentrated towards the male suspect while the child was couched a distance away without being considered a party to an incident in which she was a main victim.

Ero walked up to the child and asked. "What do you want to be done to the man that raped you?" "I want him to be punished for what he did to me," said the survivor. Noted Ero, "Those words jumped at me, I saw the pain, the emotional torture and neglect she must have suffered." That case was charged to court and conviction was secured. This was made possible because of ActionAid's support.

ActionAid supports a telephone hotline for the network, which receives enquiries and emergencies on matters of child abuse, child labour and domestic violence. The department of social welfare has a better response template to collaborate and coordinate efforts with several related organisations.

"It would have been impossible for the social welfare department to engage and coordinate other network of NGOs and CBOs working in the area of child protection and development if I didn't come in contact with the SMILE project" John said.

John is already creating a successive system that can ensure democratisation of knowledge in the department. His assistant, Ehis Agugu, is a trained social worker. Agugu is a protégée in training to stay abreast with information and development in the child protection field. "This is the best way to make sure that people don't walk away with the knowledge and experience and leave the department empty and always starting from the scratch," he quipped.

# See Who 2K Don Epp

We heard rumours that herdsmen were coming and we ran here.

It's better safe than sorry.

hese were the words of Mngusuun
Kampala, 18 years old, mother of 1, and
resident of Daudu, Benue State. For many
reasons, Benue and its bordering states have
become a flash point for communal and farmers
clashes which has led to the death of several
persons as seen in the news headlines in recent
times.

Unlike the other five IDP camps which house about eighty thousand IDPs in the state, Agan camp was newly opened as at the time of ActionAid's visit. Although the building is partially completed and unsafe for children, it has become home to an estimated four thousand persons, with more families trooping in on a daily basis due to the radio announcement made by the state government advising residents of communities prone to clashes to relocate to the nearest IDP camp pending when government find a lasting solution to the crisis.

The feeling of disappointment and desperation can be felt as the IDPs interact with ActionAid Nigeria (AAN)'s response team and were eager to narrate their ordeal with the hope of getting some form of relief. With a population comprising mostly nursing mothers, women, children and aged, the camp was characterised by an empty drug dispensary and poor sanitation despite presence of three functional boreholes provided by an international organisation.

oung men are seen leaving camp to find alternative sources of income or see if they can salvage what is left of the ruins on their farms. On one of such occasions, Simon Doogaa, a farmer, was kidnapped for two days and his friend killed in Mbakusu, Awe LGA Nasarawa state, however, he was able to escape and share his experience with security men and ActionAid upon safe return. Also, some humanitarian organisations have provided them with sufficient mosquito nets, mats and clean water but they still lack other basic needs such as clothing and drugs. "I have been having headaches for days; whenever I go to the clinic here they will tell me there is no pain reliever". I hope that people and government will come to our aid quickly. We are not asking for much, we just want to live in peace" Mngusuun said.

The belief that Nigerians, "people" themselves can support poor and vulnerable groups who make up 65% of the nation's population to come out of poverty birthed the Y2K (Your Two Thousand Naira) campaign in September 2017. An innovation of AAN Resource Mobilisation and innovation team, the campaign aims to encourage Nigerians to contribute to positive change in poor and excluded communities by donating a minimum of 2000 naira monthly and joining the Y2K club; a movement of cool people who have passion and new attitude to social change. Through the donations from supporters, ActionAid Nigeria was able to provide young Mngusuun and 1200 other households with toiletries and beddings, but with your donations we can do more! To donate, visit www.actionaid-ngr.org or call +234 (0) 700 707 0700.

We remember Kadiri Momoh, a consultant driver with ActionAid Nigeria who fell ill during the trip to Agan IDP camp and died shortly afterwards. He was a hardworking gentleman who believed in justice and equity for all. With a heavy heart, we wish him eternal rest.



# Words on Marble

# "

We can no longer be comfortable with the crumbs that fall from the masters table, it is time to take our place as women and participate in decision making

# "

#### Mma Odi

Acting General Secretary, Alliance for Credible Elections. Excerpt from 2018 Kogi Women Summit, organised by ActionAid in partnership with Participation Initiative for Behavioural Change in Development, PIBCID.

# "

All protocols duly observed. I am happy ActionAid organised this event because it has given us the opportunity to speak to the government directly. The Honourable Commissioner came to our campus last year, he visited the hostels, saw how appalling it was and promised to renovate it. As I speak, nothing has been done. Now, the same government is expecting me to vote them next year. Why will I campaign for you to return if I am paying high tuition fees, studying in a school with bad roads, poor infrastructure and no free Wi-Fi which affects my ability to research and be a more productive student?

#### "

#### **Umar Aliu**

Kogi State University, gives feedback to the representative of the state government at the maiden edition Kogi Youth Summit.

# "

A validated girl becomes an empowered woman. A girl who is validated by her father early, will be unstoppable. Male leaders, who want to better their economies, must invest in women and girls

# "

### Dr Oby Ezekwesili

Former Federal Minister of Education and Co-founder, Transparency International, in commemoration of 2018, International Women's Day.

# "

The feat of increased enrolment in girls education in Northern Nigeria will not yield much if girls and their parents perceive schools to be unsafe. Girls' education has become critical for Nigeria with the increasing levels of inequality and gender disparity in education especially in Northern Nigeria, the Government must therefore intensify its efforts to safeguard schools.

### "

#### Ene Obi

ActionAid Nigeria Country Director comments on the return of some #DapchiGirls.

# Quick facts



2,000

women from 40 communities mobilised through Focus Group Discussions in 5 states and the FCT to articulate the Nigerian women charter of demand.



234

(157 Male and 77 Females) young people including 7 PWD were provided a platform for engaging the leadership of the Nigerian Conference of Speakers towards a favourable outcome for the young people in the constitution review process through a National Town Hall Meeting.



289

(186 Male, 99 Female, 49 youths, 19 PWDs) engaged with State Independent Electoral Commission, security agencies and political parties on issues relating to the LGA elections in Plateau and Akwa Ibom states.



487

women including 14 Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and 111 young women and 33 Men engaged on conversations around women's participation in elections at both the state and national level.



105

stakeholders from 4 recently liberated LGAs of Gwoza, Kala Balge, Bama, and Kaga in Borno State trained on responding to cases of GBV.



6000

Kogi youths mobilised on preventing violent extremism.



36

person (24 men and 12 women)
Community Action and Response Team
(CART) members trained on conflict risk
reduction & management and strategies
for advocacy and architecture.



bout a year ago, the students of the Government Day Secondary school, Sokoto had to survive without any source of water near the school. Aside from buying sachet water, the closest promise lay in a lake that took twenty five minutes by foot. On getting there, it is apparent this construction is less of a lake, and more of a pool of water, the likes of which can be found all over Sokoto, amongst the fields that dot the landscape. The water is unpurified and possibly full of harmful bacteria. Yet, for years the students of the secondary school have made do with the lake as their source of water; for drinking, for performing ablutions, and for cleaning hands and feet. The water is murky and unlike the clear water that is taught in schools, this one is almost brown.

The path to fetch the water is its own other special challenge. Walking under the hot sun, three girls are seen carrying buckets to fetch water. When they got to the area, they had to tread carefully through small rocks that make up the pavement. One wrong fall, and anyone could be seriously hurt. Particularly when factoring the increased danger of walking the path back with water laden buckets. Yet the students for many years have endured this until the intervention of ActionAid

Nigeria through the MacArthur funded Promoting Girls' Retention and Enrolment in Secondary School (PROGRESS) project. The project which has achieved its main objective of institutionalising SBMCs in the state which also prioritised removing barriers hindering girls enrolment and retention in school; in this case, Water.

After the building of a new borehole, the students now remark on the ease of life. They have more time to stay in school and study. They also have access to cleaner water, many of whom are glad to have a close place to go after relieving themselves that doubles as a drinking fountain. Even the animals are excited at the development. A group of peacocks stay drinking the dripping water droplets from the tap for a long time. Now the students have more time to attend classes and more time to concentrate on their future ambitions and class lessons. "Before, we trek a long distance and the water makes me sick because it is dirty, now, with this clean water close by, I am able to concentrate on my studies" Hauwawu Mohammed, Head Girl, Government Day Secondary School, Dundaye, Sokoto State.

# In Other News

# **#SCRAPCorruption**

11th December, 2017 – In commemoration of World Anti-Corruption Day, ActionAid and partners mobilised the private sector, media, professional bodies, women groups, youth groups, academia, policy makers and labour unions to re-emphasis the need to unite against the hydra headed monster of corruption. Highlight of the event was the unveiling of the DFID funded Strengthening Citizens Resistance Against Prevalence of Corruption, SCRAP-C project.



# FIGHT Age of Greed. #FightInequality act:onaid

# **Fight Inequality Dialogue**

25th January, 2018 – ActionAid Nigeria held the #FightInequality Dialogue with the objective of mobilising citizens to stand together and show national leaders that citizens will not accept rising inequality, and that there is a constituency of ordinary people who will oppose the unfair status quo. The dialogue also provided an opportunity for activists to share ideas on leading effective campaigns against inequality to hold elite and corporate powers to account.

# **#SJ2EndVAWG Essay Competition**

20th February, 2018 – on 2018 World Day of Social Justice day, ActionAid launched an essay competition for girls to lend their voice to the growing menace of Gender Based Violence. The competition which was opened to girls in JSS 1-3 in public schools was on the theme "Ending Violence Against Women & Girls; the Quest for Social Justice. The winners were; Agbada Gloria, Christ College, Bolorunduro, Akure Ondo State, Mercy Elijah Dickson, Comprehensive Secondary school, Nkana , Akwalbom State and Aghogho Queen, Orhoerha Secondary school, Ugono, Delta State. The girls won cash prizes for renovating their schools as well as personal education supplies.



# MINISTRY OF WOMEN AFFAIRS AN ILL. WITH STATE OF

# E-VAC Launch

22nd February 2018, history was made in Edo State. With the support of Sustainable Mechanism for Improving Livelihood and Household Empowerment (SMILE) Project, the State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development launched the priority response plan to end violence against children. This is in response to the 2014 national survey conducted by the National Population Commission which revealed that: before the age of 18 years, approximately 6 out of every 10 children experience some form of violence. One in two children experience physical violence, one in four girls and one in ten boys experience sexual violence while one in six girls and one in five boys experience emotional violence.

# ...still in the news

# National Women Charter of Demand

15th March, 2018 – ActionAid Nigeria pioneered the development of a national women's charter of demand which captured the voices of the women on current issues brewing in the polity. The charter was formally handed over by women living in rural areas to the Minister of Women Affairs, ably represented by Mrs. Rosemary Ugwanyi of the Ministry in Abuja. A key demand in the charter is the urgent need for safer schools for children, especially girls and implementation of the 35% affirmative action promised.



# **Policy Brief on SDGs**

15th March, 2018 – ActionAid launched a Policy Brief on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth) & 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). The policy brief highlighted CSOs recommendations to the government on attainment of the aforementioned goals.

### **Relief Distribution**

14th – 17th March 2018 - 1000 displaced persons across Gubio, Muna Garage and Teachers village IDPs camps in Borno State were supported with food and non-food materials. Pregnant and nursing mothers, families with children with disabilities, the most vulnerable men (without women in their homes) and foster families were prioritized as beneficiaries; this was made possible by Tolkien Trust.



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# PROGRESS End of Project Dissemination

22nd March, 2018 – ActionAid held the close out dissemination of the MacArthur Foundation funded Promoting Girls' Retention and Enrolment in Secondary School (PROGRESS), which was implemented in Sokoto State from 2015-2017. Highlight of the event was the reaffirmation by Hon. Aminu Bala Bodinga, Chairman, House Committee on Education to ensure sustainability of the institutionalised SBMC, as well as commitment to ensure safer schools for children, especially girls in the state.

# One More Thing!



e all have this one friend in the corporate world who asks rhetorical questions like "why is Monday so far from Friday, and Friday so close to Monday?" A seemingly suitable answer is not far-fetched; the culture of a workplace - an organisation's values, norms, practices - has a huge impact on the overall attitude to work, happiness and success of its team.

The belief that when we prioritise getting the culture right, we can build a long term brand with passionate employees is what birthed the January Programme Meeting (JAM); an annual event that brings all ActionAid Nigeria team together in a relaxed atmosphere to share quick wins and missed opportunities in the last year, as well as set realistic goals for the coming year. Unlike the past years JAM, 2018 had many highlights; a music composition and presentation inspired by the new Country Strategy Paper, a volleyball competition with teams divided by directorates and an award night – to mention a few.

The Resource Mobilisation and Innovation Unit won the music competition. With the sonorous voices within the unit, they couldn't have performed less. The country team was amazed that the Directorate of Finance came second – no one knew that behind those impassive faces constantly gazing at spreadsheets and paper works were some fun loving talented fellows. The Directorate of Organisation Effectiveness clinched the golden cup for acing the volleyball games, while Directorate of Programmes won the best cheerleading team, yikes!

The award night was graced by the four past country directors of AAN; Charles Abani, Otive Igbuzor, Hussaini Abdu and Ojobo Atuluku while ActionAid Nigeria brand ambassador, Actress and philanthropist, Dakore Egbuson Akande added colour to the event and was honoured with an award for her continued solidarity with the poor and excluded.

The climax was the presentation of awards to long serving staff; Ronke Omolegbe received award for five years, Tunde Aremu, Oluwole Elegbede, Collins Chinyere, Nkechi Ilochi-Omekedo picked awards for serving for a decade, while Tasallah Chibok, Goodluck Omoh and Stephen Obinwa,

received awards for 15 years' service. Indeed, the most beautiful moments always seem to accelerate and slip away; but with the music so loud and the dance floor well lit, we certainly anticipate the next JAM.



For a decade, ActionAid has given me a platform to pursue my passion and contribute towards a better Nigeria, a country where equity and justice reigns.

I dedicate this award to the poor and excluded. Soonest, we will triumph.

**Tunde Aremu-** Manager Social Mobilisation



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