



The SW TCH

Sustainable Mechanisms for Improving Livelihoods and Household Empowerment (SMILE) Project.

A Summary of Impact

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OVC -	Orphans and Vulnerable Children.
CRS -	Catholic Relieve Services.
OD -	Organisational Development
CRIC -	Child Right Implementation Committees.
CIT -	Community Improvement Team.
QI -	Quality Improvement.
IPs -	Implementing Partners.
MWASD -	Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development.
CRA -	Child Right Act
SMILE -	Sustainable Mechanisms for Improving Livelihoods and Household Empowerment
SO -	Strategic Objective
NPA -	National Plan of Action
SACA -	State Action Committees on AIDS
IR -	Intermediate Result
AIDS -	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

On behalf of the Board and Management of ActionAid Nigeria, I wish to appreciate the individuals, government institutions and organisations who contributed to the success recorded by the Sustainable Mechanism for Improving Livelihoods and Household Empowerment (SMILE) project. ActionAid's component of the SMILE project leveraged the use of its Organisational Development (OD) strategy to impact the lives of Vulnerable Children (VC) and their caregivers through a comprehensive, coordinated multi sectorial approach in four states; Benue, Edo, Nasarawa, Kogi and Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory.

The SMILE project was conceptualised with the overall objective of improving the well-being of 600,000 VC and 150,000 caregivers within 5 years (2013 -2018). While we have seen remarkable successes, we are expecting to see immediate and long-term impacts, as we are confident that the state governments will provide the continued leadership needed to effectively coordinate all the relevant institutions so that the all gains will become fully and sustainably functional, while ActionAid Nigeria continues to provide necessary assistance within its new country strategy, “ Social Justice to end poverty”.

The success recorded will not have been possible without the tireless efforts of ActionAid Nigeria's entire SMILE Project management and state teams, led by Maryann Obidike, the Organisational Development Director, and the State Coordinators and Officers; Vivian Efem Bassey, Godwin Agia, Hellen Netugu Williams, Charles Durojaiye, Kehinde Arowosegbe, Tommy Ubong and Sesugh Yaji. Kudos to ActionAid Nigeria's Communications Hub team led by Lola Ayanda who worked to document the outcomes of the project in various inspiring formats.

Finally, a big thank to our esteemed consortium members led by Catholic Relief Service (CRS) in collaboration with Westat; thank you for giving us the opportunity to make positive change in the lives of those who ordinarily would not have been reached.

Ene Obi



Country Director
ActionAid Nigeria.

ActionAid Nigeria is a global movement of people working together to further human rights for all and defeat poverty. We prioritise works with the poor and excluded, promoting values and commitment in civil society, institutions and governments with the aim of achieving structural changes to eradicate injustices and poverty in the world. ActionAid Nigeria is a member of ActionAid global federation. We maintain a strong relationship of interdependence and mutual accountability within the international federation while ensuring a strong balance between self-rule and shared-rule. Registered in Nigeria in 1999 as a Country Programme of ActionAid International, we have transformed into an autonomous national organisation with a strong national governance structure – a Board and a General Assembly - consisting of reputable Nigerians providing strategic oversight.

Our **strategic objectives** include: Enhancing People's power in democratic and inclusive governance; Working to protect women and girls from violence, create opportunities for economic independence and decision making; Enhancing women's leadership in accountable humanitarian and resilience system; Strengthening systems and increase resource diversification for quality programme delivery.

Through these objectives, we focus on **10 key promises:**

1. Securing women lands rights
2. Promoting sustainable agriculture
3. Holding government to account on public services
4. Achieving redistributive resourcing for development
5. Transforming education for boys and girls
6. Harnessing youth leadership to end poverty and injustice.
7. Building people's resilience to conflict and disaster
8. Responding to disasters through rights
9. Increasing women and girl's control over their bodies
10. Generating women-centred economic alternatives

Our Programmes

Central to our programmes is the full enjoyment by female and male citizens of their rights; reducing inequality; promoting gender responsive public services; and providing alternatives to the status quo in solving complex development challenges. Our programming areas are **Education; Food and Agriculture; Human Security in Conflict and Emergencies; Health; Just and Democratic Governance; and Women's Rights**. Promoting the Right to Just and Democratic Governance and Women's Rights are cross-cutting themes which apply across the whole programme, but also have stand-alone initiatives.

Linking all these is our geographically based integrated **Local Rights Programme** which is being implemented in twelve states of the federation. Our projects are currently spread across the **30 States** in Nigeria and **250 communities** and are benefiting millions of people. From reflections and lessons of our programmes in Nigeria, we achieve good governance and accountable policies centred on the improvement of gender sensitive public services in Nigeria. Applying the Human Rights Based Approach, we centre our work on the active agency of citizens – males and females, young and old – thinking locally and acting globally. We build an awareness of rights, analyse and confront unequal and unjust power relations, advance women's rights, build partnerships, and are accountable and transparent. Our work is structured around the principles of empowerment, solidarity and campaigns.



Like they say in Africa, children do not talk where adults reason and commune. It is generally believed that adults are the voice for the children and thus, sense of culture silences the emotion and performance of the African child. In Nigeria, however, the debate for the need for a child right law was triggered by mounting evidence of abuses on children. It was against this backdrop that the Child Right Act was enacted in 2003. As it is the practice, however, each state of the federation had to domesticate the law. This led to another round of lobbying and legislative battle. Today, 24 states in Nigeria have signed the Child Right Act into law, but like many laws, assent is no signal for the song of victory—the real firework begins when a law is passed. Usually, the structures and systems required to oxygenate the law do not exist.

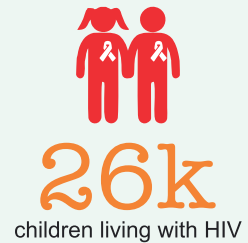
In response to the existing gap between the Child Right Law and the real practice of implementation, ActionAid Nigeria and a consortium of development partners designed a response mechanism to integrate all community based organisations, states and local government departments and ministries of gender and women affairs into a system that will provide technical capacity for institutions and individuals working on child rights and development.

The project, Sustainable Mechanism for Improving Livelihoods and Household Empowerment (SMILE), was designed to address the fundamental issues causing child abuse, neglect and abandonment and this publication highlights the impact of ActionAid Nigeria's component of the SMILE project on the lives of the target groups and relevant institutions.

Tasallah Chibok

Director of Programmes
ActionAid Nigeria

The Hurdle



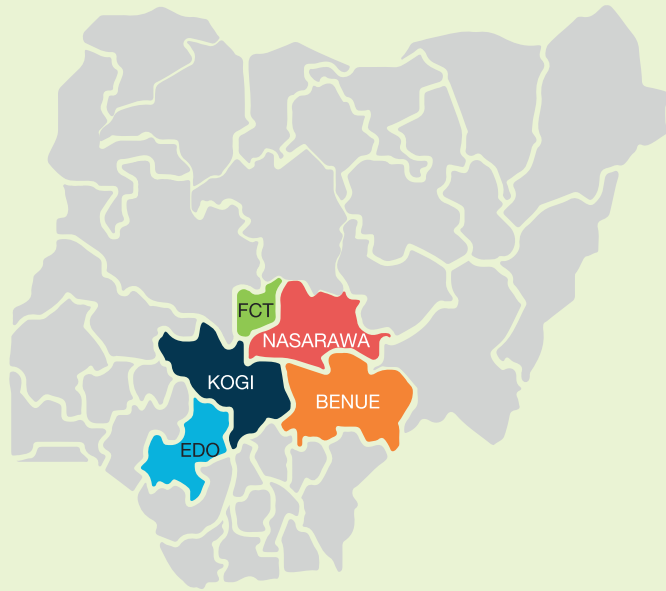
Factors contributing to children vulnerability

-  HIV epidemic
-  Poverty
-  Maternal mortality
-  Conflict
-  Harmful cultural practices
-  Gender Inequality

State and Local Governments (State Ministries of Women's Affairs and Social Development (SMWASD, Local Government Social Welfare Units) face several challenges in fulfilling their coordination and supervision role in the OVC response. In 2006, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) passed the five-year National Plan of Action (NPA) for Support of Vulnerable Children to standardize quality responses to OVC.

However, states did not incorporate the NPA into their plans, leaving SMWASDs with insufficient resources to effectively coordinate service delivery. State Action Committees on AIDS (SACA) oversee policies, programmes and projects directed at addressing AIDS, however it and other front-line ministries and government agencies are not involved in regular OVC assessments, activity planning or information sharing, leading to OVC responses with little quality standardization or coordination.

The Resolve



The Sustainable Mechanisms for Improving Livelihood and Household Empowerment (SMILE) project was conceptualised with the overall objective of improving the well-being of

600k
OVC



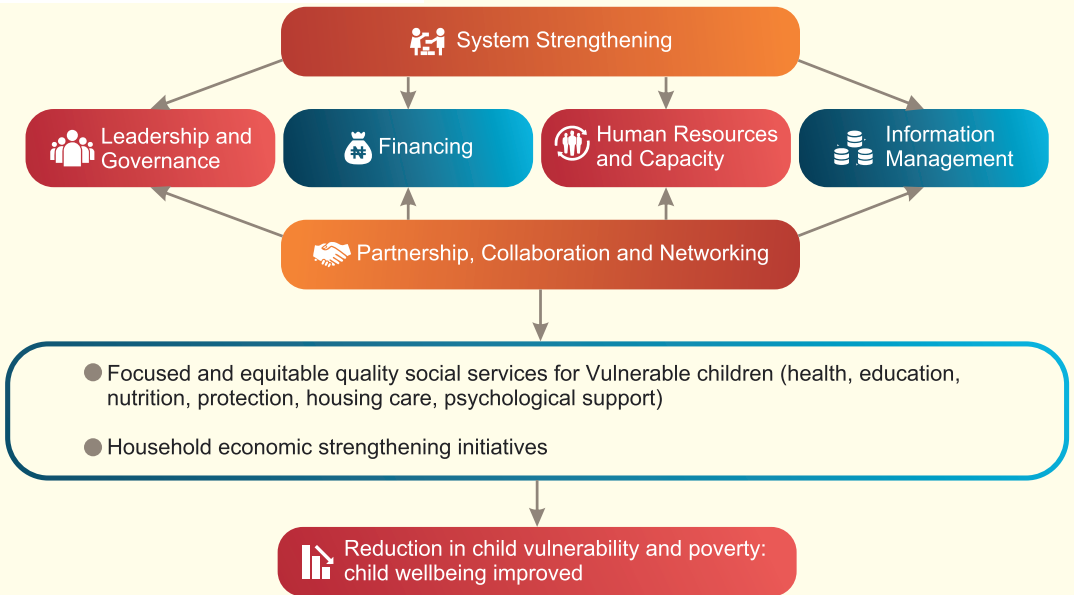
150k
Caregivers

through a sustainable, comprehensive and coordinated programme in Benue, Edo, Kogi, Nasarawa States and the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria.

.....

This will be achieved through implementation of two strategic objectives (SOs). The achievement of SO1 is essential to achieving programme sustainability and local ownership of the OVC response. SO1 has one Intermediate Result (IR): States and Local Governments using organizational systems and technical capacity to coordinate effective care for OVC and households. The three outputs of SO1 was to: Strengthen state and local government organizational and technical capacity; Strengthen systems for child protection at the state and local levels; and policy advocacy and social mobilization. While CRS is the principal recipient of this USAID funded project SMILE, ActionAid Nigeria's (AAN) proven approach to government capacity strengthening, takes lead on the SMILE Strategic Objective 1(SO1).

ActionAid's Strategic Approach



Milestones

The OD strategy was essential in achieving programme sustainability and local ownership for the OVC response. Some strategic progress as shown through the increased commitments and buy-ins of relevant stakeholders was achieved through targeted advocacies and policy briefs development. These led to: commitment from Local Government authorities to coordinating and owning OVC activities, creation of budget lines for OVC activities in some states; improved state coordination by Ministries of Women Affairs and Social Development (MWASD) as well as Implementing Partners (IPs) and Networks.



Social Development secretariats, States MWASD, 48 Local Government and 5 Area councils proficiently coordinate and manage Vulnerable Children (VC) response



Capacity and knowledge of the social welfare personnel in government and non-government sectors deepened.



Gender Mainstreaming successfully represented in VC programming



VC Desk Officers and units established/ reactivated and functional in 48 LGAs



Formal and informal linkages on Child Protection strengthened: this resulted in increased cases of early child marriage, sexual and physical violence taken up and addressed by religious and traditional institutions



VC Task Force teams enforcing, tracking, monitoring and reporting within a defined referral pathway on child related cases



Development and continuous implementation of the End Violence against Children (EndVaC) multi sectorial response plan for Edo, Benue and the FCT



Multi-sectoral implementation of 6 policy documents (Understanding my Basic Rights as a Child, Child Protection Policy, the State Plan of Action, EndVaC Response Plan, Service Standards and Directory, Resource Mobilisation Strategy.



Child Right Implementation Committees (CRIC) in 48 LGAs hear and determine cases in line with the Child Right Act 2003



Prompt and quick response to child protection issues in the formal child justice system



Sustainability efforts yield positive results with the approval of VC budget lines in 2018 appropriation across 4 states as follows: - 18million in FCT, 10 million in Nasarawa, 45 Million in Benue, 100 million in Kogi



Renovation of 8 Children Homes and facilities



Institutionalization of child protection policy by 12 children homes, facilities and non-SMILE funded CSOs



Development of civil procedure and reactivation of the Family Court has revived closed Child cases with trial and prosecution of offenders



Over 100 communities campaigning and reporting child abuse cases in Edo, Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa and FCT



Development of 30 real life success stories/case studies across the 4 states and FCT



Promotion, protection and development of the child within an efficient case management system.



Increased visibility of ActionAid Nigeria



Vulnerable Children (VC) referral pathways were established encompassing all service areas in line with national service standard and has become important tool in facilitating access to services for children and their caregivers.



**Build our
confidence;
we are the
leaders of
tomorrow**

Stories of Change

Real people, true stories...



The Empowered Orphan

This is the story of Adesua, a 14 year old orphan in Edo State.

Madam, please I lost my dad and my mum cannot pay, that is why I stopped attending your training.

This little girl thinks she's smart, where is my money?

Young girl, move!



Officer, we are from the Quality Improvement Team of the local government, this issue has been resolved.

NIGERIAN POLICE

Yes let her go.

OK





So, Adesua, you can continue your training in this new saloon.

Thank you, I wont disappoint you.

Well-done, this SMILE project is awesome.

At the completion of her training...

Congratulations on the completion of your training. On behalf of the SMILE project team, here is some money for you to startup your saloon

Adesua, also take these tools for your Saloon.



Thank you very much

The QIT was setup to support and protect children like Adesua

The training and formation of the Quality Improvement Team on the SMILE project was led by ActionAid Nigeria.

Dooshima's Song

Dooshima was an abandoned baby born in 2016 by a 15 year old girl from Ushongo local government area of Benue State.



Three days later, at the social welfare office...

Madam please stop disturbing me, take this child and do whatever with her

The child is sick, my husband and i don't have money to treat her



Four months later, the social welfare had a meeting with the SMILE Project Team.

There is a case of this abandoned baby with one Mrs Hule

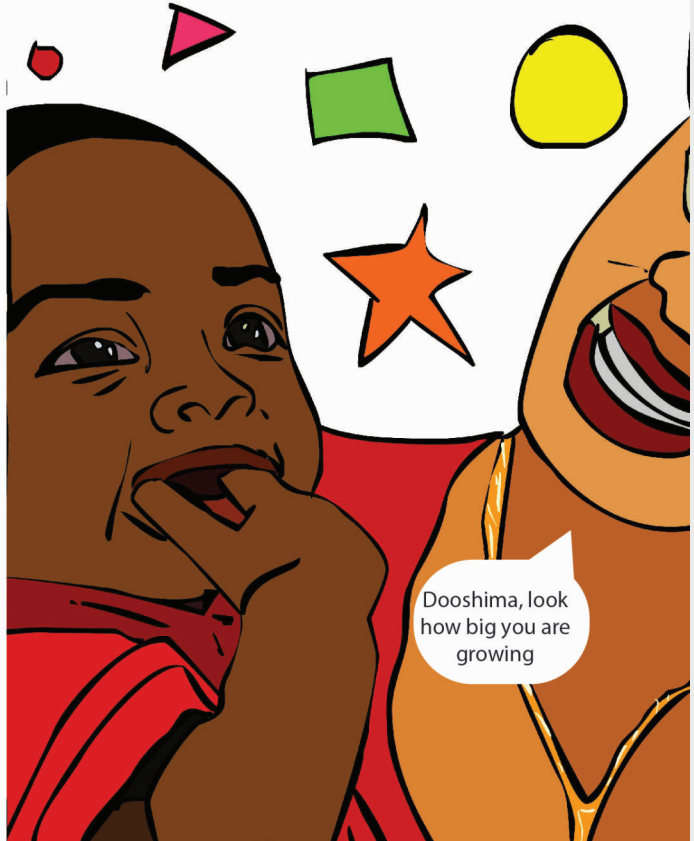
Yes, She has been complaining that she cannot keep the child.

That is not a problem, with proper documentation, the baby can be referred to a good orphanage home.



After the meeting between the SMILE Project team and the social welfare department of the Local Government, referral processes were carried out by the social welfare with support from SMILE.

The baby, Dooshima was sent to the ministry of women affairs for treatment and later to Mama Abayol orphanage home in Makurdi and she is doing fine.



This is the story of Hannah , a 25 year old lady who lost her parents and dropped out of school and had the responsibility of taking care of her younger ones.

Turning The Tide



Hannah was able to finish her studies at the college of education but later lost her uncle...

She fell in love and got pregnant out of wedlock...



Dont worry, I will take care of you and the child

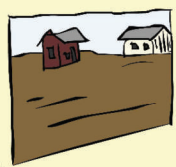
Faneh, I am pregnant



Shortly after given birth, Faneh died in a motor accident...



At Kuje Area Council



Hello Hannah, you have been selected through the SMILE Project referral mechanism to participate in a two weeks skill acquisition programme



Thank you ma, I will like to improve my computer skills and learn baking and interior design

Hannah finished her training, got a job at a business centre, and later set up her own baking and interior design business

Thank God for this SMILE project, our lives are transformed.



Child; Not Bride

This is the story of Halima, a 16 year old JSS 3 girl living with her uncle and his family in Keffi, Nasarawa State.

Welcome Mallam Musa

Thank you, I have come to take her home for holidays

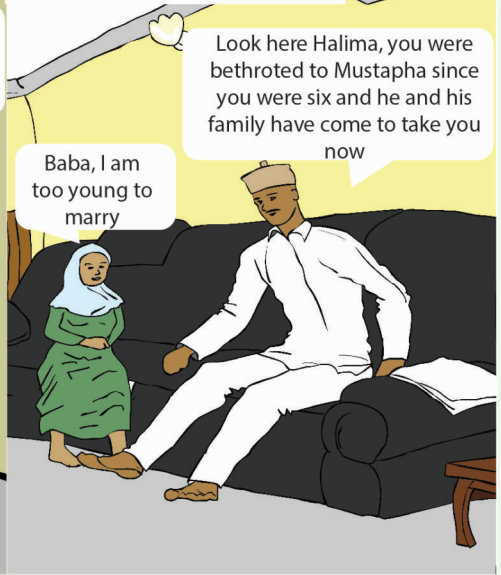
Baba welcome



At her fathers house in the Village

Look here Halima, you were bethroated to Mustapha since you were six and he and his family have come to take you now

Baba, I am too young to marry



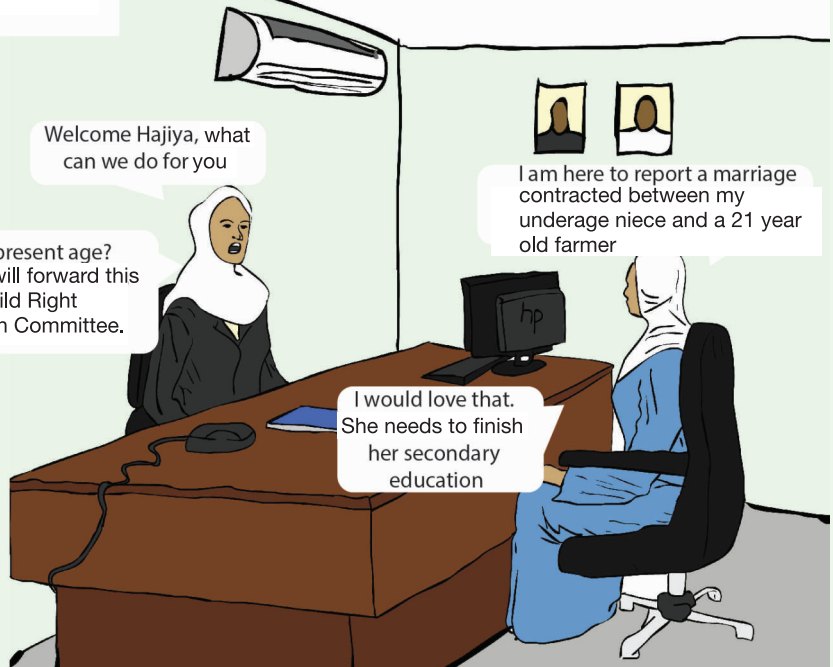
Halima's aunt at the social welfare department of Keffi Local Government Council

Welcome Hajiya, what can we do for you

What!!! In this present age? don't worry, I will forward this case to the Child Right Implementation Committee.

I am here to report a marriage contracted between my underage niece and a 21 year old farmer

I would love that. She needs to finish her secondary education



Members of the CRIC having a session with Halima and her father

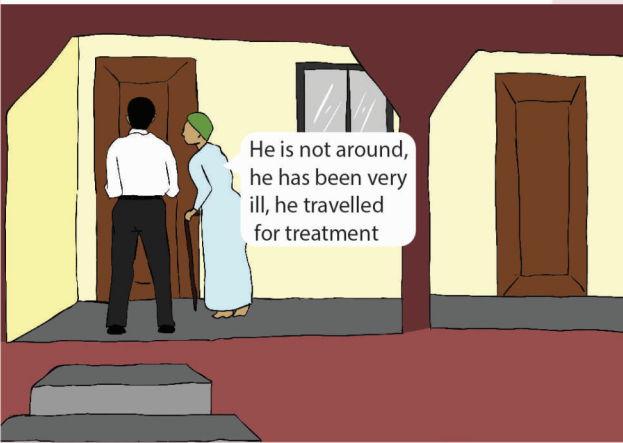
Mallam Musa, according to Child Right Law, Halima is a minor and as such, she cannot be married off

She is my daughter, you cannot tell me what to do.



Court Bailiff visits Mallam Musa's house to serve him a court injunction.

He is not around, he has been very ill, he travelled for treatment



Members of CRIC having a meeting with Halima extended family

We need you all to intervene in this matter, 'Halima cannot marry now, we believe he will listen to you

She is his daughter

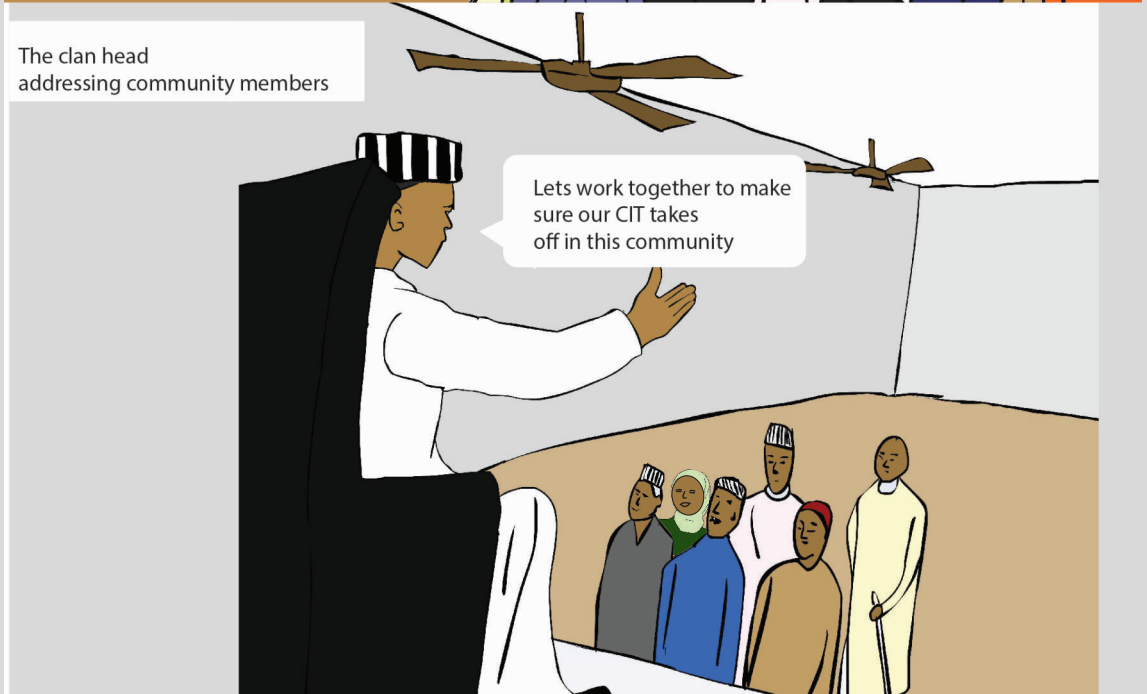
There is nothing we can do. It is our culture



The Child Right Committee is not giving up. They have been empowered by ActionAid Nigeria through SMILE project to handle cases of Child Right Protection. They are committed to fighting for Halima's right to Basic Education by ensuring that the marriage does not hold. But if it however takes place before a court injunction is declared, their hope is also hinged on the possibility of an annulment of the said marriage of an underaged as provided in the Nassarawa State Child Rights Law of 2005.

Speaking With One Voice

This is the story of Mbayongo community which had no form of child development focus group before the SMILE project introduced the Quality Improvement (QI) methodology in the community.



The CIT identified needs and worked closely with the Vandeikya LIT to bring development to the community.



Children can now attend schools set up by the CIT with the support of the LIT.



Nearby communities are emulating the progress made by Mbayongo community by implementing the QI methodology in their community.



Esosa's Story

This is the story of Esosa, a 16 year old JSS3 Girl who was sexually abused by her father in Esan Local Government Area of Edo State



Her father, Mr Osahon, runs away from the village



She tries to commit Suicide but was found by a passer by



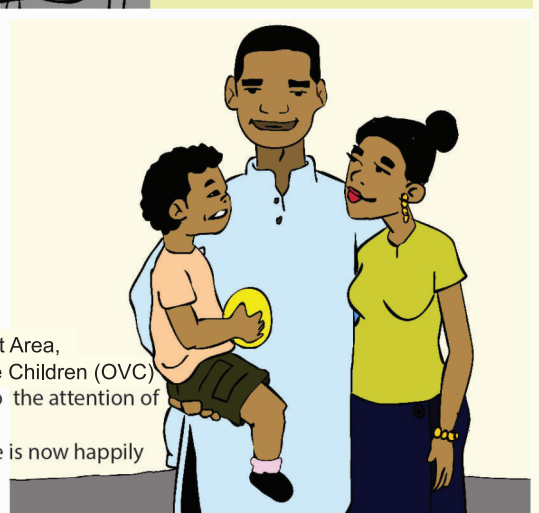
At the counsellor's office...



Esosa, we are going to refer you to hope hospital for antenatal, and you dont have to worry, the local government will take care of all your immediate needs



Due to the presence of SMILE Project in the Local Government Area, structures were set up on the issues of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) and were used by the OVC desk office to bring Esosa's plight to the attention of the management of the local government. Esosa was rehabilitated and delivered of a healthy baby and she is now happily married.



Jane's Transformation

This is the story of Jane, she got married at a young age, but lost her husband in a ghastly motor accident, after giving birth to two children, a boy and a girl.



Jane, you will be enrolled to Jumorota Community Care Initiative where you will learn a skill



Thank you, I will love to learn tailoring

At the training centre

This is how you pass the thread through the needle's eye



Today, Jane is one of the best tailors in Gwagalada. She has 8 apprentices and her children attend good schools

This is achievable because of the SMILE project which supported Gwagalada area council to initiate stakeholder referral meetings.



The Start of Something Good

SMILE coordinator meets with the honourable commissioner for women affairs and social development to brief her of what SMILE is about and to ensure that the ministry coordinates all her children activities, ensuring that the rights of children are not violated in the State



The commissioner met with the governor and used her good office in ensuring that the executive governor supported the inauguration of children parliament in the State.



On October 27th 2016, the fourth children parliament was inaugurated in the state.



The parliament swung into action after the speaker of the Kogi State House of Assembly promised to allow them access to the state chambers for their seatings, while the secretary to the state government promised that the state will pass into law any bill presented by the children parliament.





Children without birth documentation in SMILE project states and communities, receive formal birth certificates with the help of ActionAid Nigeria.

ActionAid is a global movement of people working together to further human rights for all and defeat poverty. We prioritize works with the poor and excluded, promoting values and commitment in civil society, institutions and governments with the aim of achieving structural changes to eradicate injustices and poverty in the world.

ActionAid Nigeria is powered by the belief that a Nigeria without poverty and injustice is possible.

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