

Seeing through the eyes of Emergency Response

African Government
Commit to Ending
Child Marriage by
2020

'Support our
School Initiative'
Award from His
Excellency

Transforming Household
Income Through
Homestead Farming



TRANSFORMING HOUSEHOLD INCOME THROUGH HOMESTEAD FARMING

Systems Transformed for Empowered Action and Enabling Responses (STEER) Project has been working to improve the lives of vulnerable Children and their families in five states of Northern Nigeria. One of the aims of the project is to strengthen Caregivers economically to enable them to adequately provide for and meet the needs of their Children.

In Aduan Community of Jema'a local government in Kaduna State, one of the Caregivers, a widow named Mary, shared how the knowledge she acquired from STEER's caregivers' training on Homestead Farming transformed her income from her gardening business.

Mary used to cultivate other crops like Maize and Ginger on her farmland. This farmland was very far away from her home, and as such she had to travel long distances every day to work. Also, with little knowledge about modern farming practices, crop productivity was very low.

However, when Mary started attending the STEER's Household Economic Strengthening Training on Homestead Farming, she learnt that her backyard could be used for farming as well. She decided to apply the principles from the training and planted as many homestead crops as she could in her backyard.



Among the crops that amazed her was the pumpkin which she planted with ease and was able to harvest severally for sales and household consumption.

Mary made over 10,000 Naira from the sales of her farm produce which she used to buy food for her household and pay her Children's school fees. She was also able to pay the University Examination (JAMB) Registration Fee of one of her children and pay apprenticeship fees for another of her child. In her words:

"I am very happy with the training I received through STEER. I had wanted to give up farming considering my status as a widow with the Children my late husband left behind, but thank God for the training and the organization God used to rescue me and my household. 'Mun gode'! Now I can expand my farming next farming season, and my Children can go to school without fear of being chased for school fees".

Mary is one of the 125,000 caregivers that STEER has been working with and empowering through different Economic Strengthening activities. Apart from Homestead Farming, other activities include Value Chain Training, Financial Literacy Training, Entrepreneurial Skills training, and Village Savings and Loans.



Mary, a beneficiary of STEER's Household Economic Strengthening Training on Homestead Farming

African Union Heads of States and Governments as well as African First Ladies on the 'African Union (AU) Campaign to end Child Marriage in Africa' gathered on the morning of Friday 30th January, 2015 at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for a breakfast meeting on accelerating efforts to end Child Marriage. Holding at the sidelines of the 24th AU Summit was a side event hosted by His Excellency, the President of Chad, Mr. Idris Deby Itno and the First Lady of Chad, Mme Hinda Deby Itno, focused on mobilizing continental awareness to build on recent achievement and make greater strides to prevent the harmful effects of Child Marriage in Africa.

The 2015 AU summit provided Save the Children with an opportunity to join the campaign to End Child Marriage by 2020 in Africa. Collaborating with the Pan African office in Addis Ababa and our local partner Adolescent Health and Information Project (AHIP), Save the Children, Nigerian Country program identified a young girl named Fatima from Kano State here in Nigeria who was able to share her remarkable story of surviving through a marriage she was contracted into at the age of 13 years. According to President Deby, Child Marriage is a Social problem and a Humanitarian problem. He called on all concerned especially the First Ladies of the AU Member States to be front runners in changing the continent and win the battle by 2020 with zero cases of early Marriage.

He stated that Africa should uphold positive values of a traditional society and say "No!" to negative values such as Child Marriage, Female Genital Mutilations etc.

Fatima who is presently 17 years old was able to share her remarkable story at the meeting highlighting how she struggled for two years trying to end the Marriage by running away several times. She called on all heads of states and first ladies to do all they can to end the horrible experience, which has retarded her educational development and progress. Incredibly, commitments were made at the meeting to adopt programs and strategies that will end child marriage in Africa by the year 2020. This calls for a general movement of all African countries to establish systems that will eliminate this insensitive practice. It's also a major call for Nigerian Government to join the global community to end Child Marriage. Save the Children will continue to collaborate with all key stakeholders in Nigeria to create a momentum on this issue and get policy makers' support and buy in. Read other references here:

<https://dfid.blog.gov.uk/2015/01/30/supporting-african-leadership/>



SEEING THROUGH THE EYES OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE

On the 15th of February, 2015, Save the Children's implementing partner, Centre for Community Health and Development (CHAD) under European Commission Humanitarian Organization (ECHO) project documented names of Children who were separated from their families. 23 children were identified and categorized into 2 states, namely Borno and Adamawa state.

Victor (name changed to protect child's identity), a 12 year old boy and former student of Government Day College Gada Maisaji, Gombi LGA, Adamawa State was separated from his family due to series of attacks in Gombi, Adamawa State. Gombi is a town situated close to Biu, in Borno State. As an unaccompanied Child (a child that is without an adult/separated from parents), Victor was picked up together with other Children and families who were also displaced.

Through consistent communication, between the unaccompanied Child and an ECHO Project Facilitator, Victor remembered his Father's name, where he came from and the Church they attended back in Gombi, Adamawa State.



ECHO project facilitator, Father and National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Babangida Labaran that played key role in the family unification

The search for Victor's parents began with placing of phone calls to Church members and consultation with other Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Gombe State on the whereabouts of his father.

A contact person in Gombe State provided CHAD with the contact of their Pastor in Gombi who later contacted the father of the boy.

Consequently that father was contacted and reunited with his son. He stated that he had been searching for his son since September 2014.

Once he arrived and provided proof of relationship, a meeting was held with National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Center for Community Health and Development (CHAD) and camp committees to ascertain his claim. After the whole process of documentation the boy was released to the Father a week later. Victor was happy to be reunited with his father and willing to go back to school.

Save the Children was able to achieve this through Referral Mechanism and Family Unification Structures that are being put in place to assist over 5000 children over 100 of which are unaccompanied. These children reside within the 7 camps Save the Children implements Protection and Psychosocial support through Child friendly spaces and Capacity building of Borno State key stakeholders.

'SUPPORT OUR SCHOOL INITIATIVE' AWARD FROM HIS EXCELLENCY



On 20th February 2015, Save the Children received a letter stating a nomination to receive an award for the Lagos State "Support Our Schools Initiative", and thus invited to attend the annual award ceremony- a breakfast meeting with the State Governor, His Excellency, Mr. Babatunde Raji Fashola, SAN.

Save the Children, Lagos team representatives attended the ceremony on 12th March 2015, where the Lagos State Governor was the Special Guest of Honour. Save the Children was recognized and awarded in 2 out of 4 categories (B and C). In B, we were recognized for Water and Sanitation Hygiene (WASH) renovations that we had carried out in 9 project schools, and in C we were recognized for overall School Health and Nutrition support to 10 public primary schools, as well as our strengthened partnership with the Lagos State Universal Basic Education Board and Ministry of Education.

It is worthy of note, and perhaps unique that our programing work as Save the Children only began fully in Lagos State Schools in 2013. This is therefore an evidence that in a short while, Lagos State Government has come to recognize and celebrate Save the Children's presence in the state.

Save the Children as part of its work on education is intervening in 10 public Primary Schools in Lagos State with a current reach of 5,885 Children and 158 teaching Staff. The project aims at increasing the availability of services for School-based Health, Hygiene and Nutrition; improving the quality of the school environment especially WASH facilities, so that it is safe and clean; and improving the Knowledge, Attitudes and practices of school Children, for Health Services and Healthy behaviors.

STAFF IN ACTION STORY

BY SUSSAN AKILA



My name is Sussan Akila and I am the Advocacy and Communications Officer for Save the Children in Katsina State, Nigeria. My job entails influencing and bringing about change in attitudes, behaviors and prioritizing the formation and design of policies relating to rights of Children in Nigeria.

One of the things that gave me fulfillment during the course of my work is the creation of a Budget line for Nutrition in Katsina State for the first time ever. After series of Campaigns, Mass mobilizations and negotiation's with Katsina State Government, the sum of 20 Million Naira was allocated for Nutrition in the 2015 Budget with a costed plan of how the money will be spent effectively and efficiently.

Katsina and others States in Northern Nigeria is known to have high rates of Malnutrition cases and I believe with this major achievement, Malnutrition will be reduced drastically if not completely eradicated.

Helping Children reach their potential has always been my passion and I am glad Save the Children is giving me the opportunity to put my passion into action.



Systems Transformed Empowered Action Enabling Responses (STEER)

Systems Transformed for Empowered Action and Enabling Responses (STEER) project is currently being carried out in five states of Northern Nigeria – Kaduna, Kano, Sokoto, Plateau and Bauchi States. The project uses a 360° systems strengthening approach to strengthen families, communities, government systems and engages the private sector to ensure that all orphans and vulnerable children access and utilize comprehensive and coordinated services, and are able to realize their full rights.

Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM)

Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM) is a deep rooted cultural practice in Nigeria that has continued to be practiced in alarming rates especially in the Northern part of the country. Save the Children is collaborating with partners in joining the campaign to End child Marriage by 2020 in Africa.

Humanitarian Emergency Response

Build communities' resilience to future emergencies, support children and their families to cope with disaster, make sure children are better protected from harm and give children psychosocial support during crisis.

Education: School Health & Nutrition (SHN)

The aim of the SHN project is to improve the educational, health status and hygiene practices of primary school-aged children by building on existing SHN programs while working with our partners in the school and health system."

Dear Colleagues and Friends



Welcome to the January - March 2015 edition of the Save the Children - Nigeria Country Programme Newsletter. This is an opportunity to share updates of the country programme activities which are focused around Health, Nutrition, Education, Child Protection/OVC & Livelihoods across Nigeria. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the entire Nigeria Country Programme staff for their contributions towards this edition. We hope the stories in this issue will inspire you to continue giving children a chance to survive and thrive to their fullest potential.

Benjamin Foot

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