

CHRISTMAS DONATION

DECEMBER 2019



SINCERE WISHES FOR A PEACEFUL HOLIDAY

ACTIONAID NIGERIA

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Every year Tundra Fonder makes a small financial contribution to a carefully selected organisation with a focus on social responsibility. Previous Christmas Donations have been made to educational institutions; a non-profit hospital in Pakistan; ECPAT (PEaCE), Sri Lanka; and Alliance Anti Traffic (AAT), Vietnam working to end trafficking in the Southeast Asia region. This year we have chosen to give our contribution to ActionAid Nigeria.

ACTIONAID NIGERIA <https://nigeria.actionaid.org/>

ActionAid International, formed in 1972, is an international non-governmental organisation with a primary focus on poverty and injustice worldwide; present in 45 countries. ActionAid Nigeria is a member of the ActionAid global federation, registered as a Country Program in 1999. The organisation maintains a strong relationship of interdependence and mutual accountability within the international federation, ensuring a strong balance between self-rule and shared-rule. ActionAid Nigeria focuses on social justice and works to eradicate poverty through gender equality and the redistribution of wealth and power. Program areas include: 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. Since 2018, ActionAid Nigeria has started implementing a Country Strategy Paper 2018-2023, with the theme of social justice to end poverty.

SMALLHOLDER WOMEN FARMERS

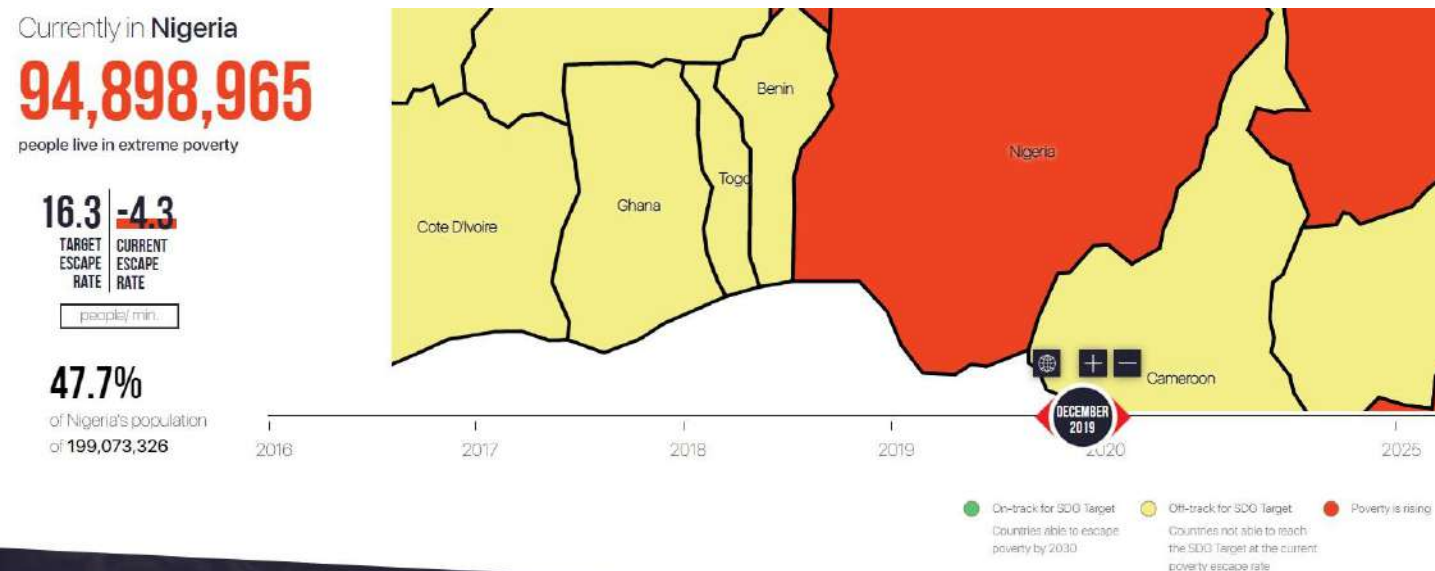
One of ActionAid Nigeria's core initiatives involves providing support to smallholder women farmers in order to address the challenges they are facing: lack of access to agricultural credit/finance, business development/advisory services (extension services) and market access, and lack of access to government services of credit, inputs, training and advice, technology, crop insurance, etc. ActionAid Nigeria through its *Public Financing for Agriculture Project* has made some significant progress towards achieving food security and reducing poverty. During the past year, over 150 women farmers were trained on agroecology, irrigation farming, crop preservation, soil protection, the use of natural fertilizers instead of artificial ones and the importance of extension workers [1].



The knowledge acquired from training has improved their farming system and increased output. Part of the project deliverable is also to help smallholder women farmers undertake annual assessment of government expenditure on the agricultural sector. The government's insurance scheme is supposed to protect smallholder farmers from losses due to climate change or any other eventuality at national and state level; to increase their production, productivity and sustainable livelihoods. ActionAid Nigeria highlights the role of smallholder women farmers who comprise the main force in food production and therefore, the necessity of enhancing their capacity. To end hunger by 2030 and reduce poverty, the Nigerian government must be willing to allocate more funds to the agriculture sector [1].

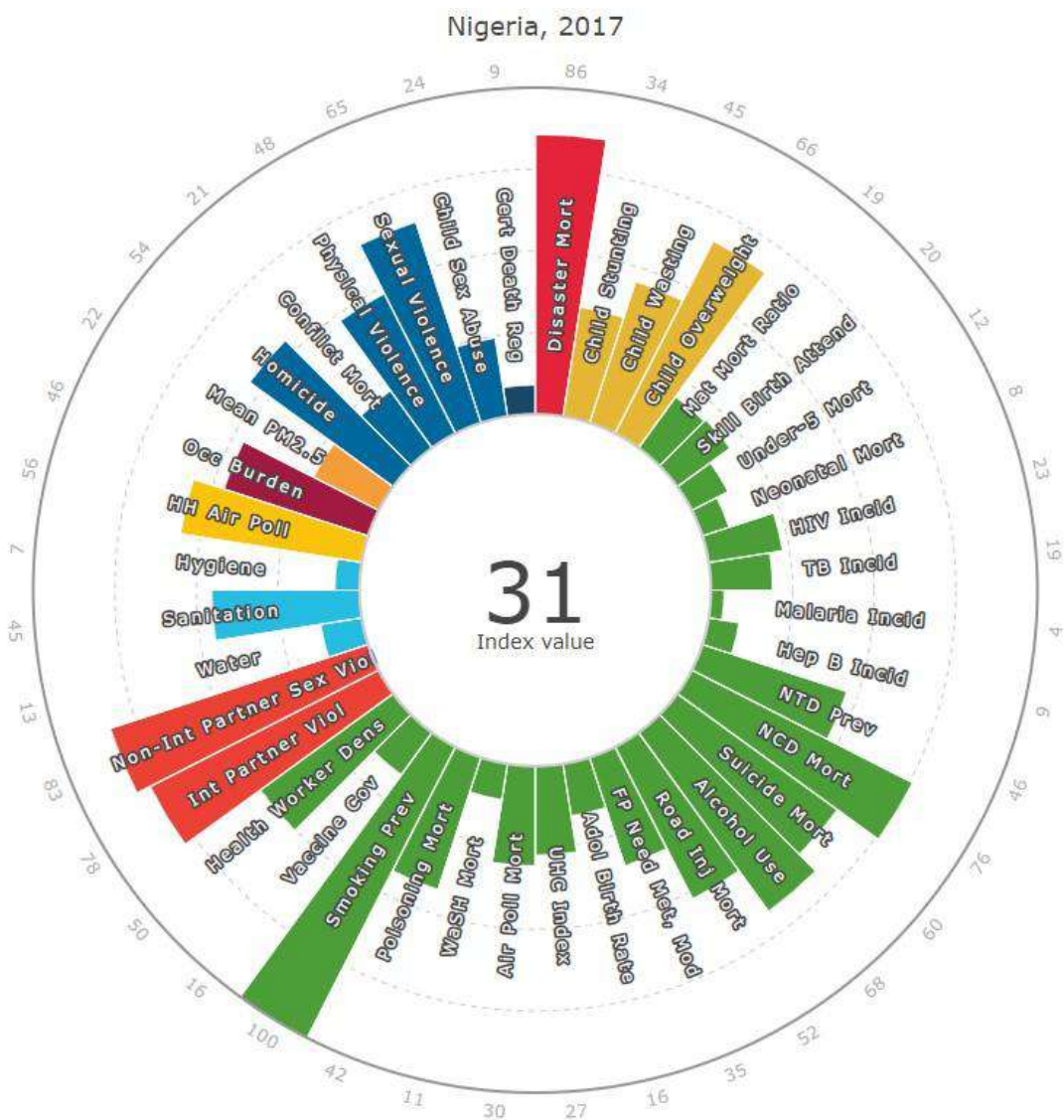
POVERTY & FOOD SECURITY

According to estimates from the World Poverty Clock, over 94 million people are living in extreme poverty in Nigeria, which is roughly half of the country's population [2]. The model produces real-time estimates and forecasts of the number of people living in extreme poverty, using the World Bank's US\$1.90 per day benchmark. The Sustainable Development Report 2019 also indicates that poverty reduction poses significant challenges in Nigeria, with 47.7% of the population living under the threshold of US\$1.90 per day and 77% living under the threshold of US\$3.20 per day [3]. Nigeria's target escape rate (rate of poverty reduction) is 16.3; yet the country appears to be falling behind regarding progress in achieving SDG1, with current escape rate being -4.3 [2]. As Nigeria faces a population boom, its quest to reduce poverty will only get more challenging. A recent United Nations report demonstrates that Nigeria is on track to have the world's third-largest population by 2050, just behind China and India [4]. Currently, it is the most populous country in Africa; and the population of Nigeria is projected to grow by 200 million between 2019 and 2050.



Source: World Poverty Clock, Nigeria as of December 2019

Given the situation, there is an urgency to feed Nigeria’s growing population in order to ensure household and national food security. Agriculture is the main source of income, contributing up to 40% of the country’s GDP and employing the majority of the labor force. Despite this, Nigeria’s score of 27.9 indicates serious level of hunger in the 2019 Global Hunger Index, resulting in place 93 out of 117 qualifying countries [5]. Although hunger as a whole is gradually declining in Nigeria, the rate of malnutrition and stunted growth has seen little or no improvement. It was estimated that almost 12% of the population are undernourished; the prevalences of stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age are 44% and 11% respectively [3]. Under-5 mortality rate is roughly 100 per 1,000 live births. Unemployment rate in the country is still relatively high at 7% of the total labor force and the number is struggling to go down. To address the likelihood of a looming food crisis and reduce poverty, Nigeria needs to enhance agricultural productivity to match its population growth and guarantee food security as well as economic prosperity.



Source: Health-related SDGs

ROLE OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Women have an important role in food production and food security. They make up a major part of those employed in the agriculture sector, with over 40% of the world's agricultural labor force being women; this number rises to 70% in some countries [6]. In Africa, particularly, food production is mostly carried out by women; smallholder farmers, who tend to be rural women, are responsible for 80% of agricultural production. In Ghana, small farms kept by women provide around 80% of the total food production in the country. In Tanzania, 87% of rural women play similar roles; and Zambian women contribute up to 80% of their labor for household crops.

Nigeria has long relied on women for its food; it has been reported that smallholder women farmers constitute the majority of the country's agricultural labor force. They make up 70% of Nigeria's farming population, 80% of its food producers, and 100% of workers who process basic foodstuffs [7]. Women's role cannot be over-emphasized as they are involved in several different tasks in agriculture including: crop production (planting, weeding, applying fertilisers and pesticides, harvesting and threshing of the crops), food processing, marketing activities and animal husbandry of small livestock. Despite being the dominant force in agriculture, women's level of participation in the decision-making stage of farm management is quite low. Research has shown that the level of decision-making increases with age, level of education (e.g. regarding modern farm practices), financial resources and access to land [6].

CHALLENGES & CONSTRAINTS

Even though Nigerian women contribute immensely to feeding the population, they often face numerous constraints and as such, are hardly ever able to attain their full potential with respect to the substantial efforts they put into the agricultural sector. Their possibilities are hindered by factors such as inadequate financing, poor access to land, infrastructure and farm inputs, lack of education and technological know-how [7]. A common theme that can be identified when analyzing such factors is gender inequality - one of the biggest obstacles faced by women in all spheres of life. Women, who make up almost half of the Nigerian population, account for more than 70% of those living in extreme poverty in the nation [8]. Systemic gender biases remain and manifest in the form of deeply-rooted traditional customs and beliefs, economic and domestic workloads imposed upon women, and laws that impede women's access to credit, education, employment, or medical care, etc [6].

Land is the first and most important factor when it comes to agricultural production; but most smallholder farmers do not have the financial capacity to own farmland. Apart from the inconveniences of acquiring land, there is the socio-cultural issue of land inheritance which gives men easier access to land compared to women [9]. In Nigeria, women generally own less land by reason of traditional authority. According to Gender in Nigeria Report 2012, 60-79% of the rural workforce are women but men are five times more likely to own land. Women own 4% of land in the North-East and just above 10% in the South-East and South-South [8]. Land ownership and land tenure give women security and provide a key to access other resources and opportunities. Given that banks often demand land as collateral, this poses a setback for most female farmers in accessing loans [6]. In addition, access to property other than land often depends on whether a woman is married and under which legal regime her marriage is recognised.

GENDER INEQUALITY

The female to male labor force participation rate is around 85% in Nigeria, which is relatively high [3]. However, the ratio of female to male mean years of schooling of the population (age 25 and above) is staggeringly low at almost 69%. In addition, it has been reported that Nigerian girls' dropout rates are particularly high [8]. Approximately 71% of young women aged 20-29 in the North-West are unable to read or write, compared to 9.7% in the South-East; due to early marriage, early childbirth, poor sanitation and also a shortage of female teachers. Major reasons include education costs, which make parents more likely to withdraw girls from schooling, and the poor quality of education. Rural women farmers' illiteracy is very high, which limits their access to information on improved farming techniques and ultimately, their agricultural productivity and capability to make good farm decisions [6]. Moreover, agricultural extension services, which seek to improve the know-how of farmers, are often directed at men and fail to reach women farmers. This in turn leads to an agricultural information gap between female and male farmers.

As Nigerian women have less secure plots of land, limited access to professional training and agricultural extension services, it is not surprising that female farmers produce and earn much less than men. Although women are now increasingly involved in producing both staple and cash crops, which yield higher income, it has been shown that male farmers' total harvest value of all crops combined is five times higher than female farmers [10]. Such gender inequality can also be observed in how women farmers have less decision-making power thus lower level of participation in farm management compared to their male counterparts, regardless of their high labor contribution [6]. The power imbalance extends far beyond the agriculture sector. Nigerian women are under-represented in all political decision-making bodies, from local government councillors (of which around 4% are women) to the House of Representatives (only 25 out of 360 Members are women) [8].



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