



**RISE TO INSPIRE
AFRICAN INITIATIVE**
IMPROVING LIVES, PRIORITIZING HUMANITY



INSPIRE AFRICA INSIGHT

December Newsletter



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A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Readers,

Welcome to this month's edition of the Rise to Inspire Africa Initiative Newsletter, where we share the stories, milestones, and impact of our collective efforts.

At RIA, we remain steadfast in our mission to empower communities, support the most vulnerable, and drive sustainable development. This past month, we've taken bold steps to address critical issues, from tackling malnutrition among displaced children to advocating for gender equality and youth empowerment through creative and inclusive platforms.

Some of the highlights in this edition include:

- A collaborative effort with Farm Alert to provide 6,000 cooked eggs to children in three IDP camps in Borno State.
- Our advocacy football match with FRAD Foundation, raising awareness about ending violence against women and girls during the 16 Days of Activism.
- Key takeaways from the 7th National Youth Council Meeting, where strategic resolutions for youth development were adopted.

These activities reflect our commitment to fostering partnerships, creating impact, and inspiring positive change in every community we serve. As you read through this newsletter, we hope you are inspired by the stories of resilience, collaboration, and progress.

Together, we can continue to rise and make a difference. Thank you for your unwavering support in helping us create a brighter future for all.

Regards!

Stephen Olushola Oladepo

Executive Director



World Aids Day

December 1st of every year is marked as **World Aids Day** globally. In commemoration of World Aids Day 2024, we stand united in the fight against HIV/AIDS, embracing the power of hope and human rights.

HIV/AIDS remains a significant public health challenge, but through collective efforts, we can work toward a world free of stigma, inequality, and barriers to care. Together, we can empower lives, restore hope, and ensure no one is left behind.



As an organization committed to promoting public health and human dignity, we are actively working to address HIV/AIDS in the communities we serve:

Awareness Campaigns: We conduct outreach programs in grassroots communities to educate people about HIV prevention, transmission, and treatment. Through workshops, sensitization sessions, and community dialogues, we aim to dispel myths and foster understanding.

Support for People Living with HIV (PLHIV): Our organization provides psychosocial support, empowering individuals living with HIV to lead fulfilling lives. We advocate for their rights and work to ensure they have access to essential services without fear of discrimination.

Combating Stigma: Through targeted campaigns and partnerships, we challenge the stigma and discrimination often faced by individuals living with HIV. By fostering empathy and understanding, we strive to create more inclusive and supportive communities.

Your health is your right. Everyone deserves access to testing, treatment, care, and the freedom to live a life of dignity and purpose. Together, let's break the stigma, educate others, and ensure no one is left behind.



Football Match between FRAD and RIA

The popular saying goes, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," this proved true as Rise to Inspire Africa Initiative (RIA) engaged in a friendly football match with [FRAD Foundation](#) on December 5, 2024. This spirited event was more than just a game; it served as a platform for advocacy, championing the cause of ending violence against women and girls as part of the global 16 Days of Activism campaign.

The match, which ended in favour of RIA with a thrilling scoreline of 8–6, symbolised the power of collaboration and collective efforts in promoting a society that upholds and protects the rights of women and girls. Beyond the athletic display, the event reinforced the vital message of gender equality, unity, and empowerment.

Such initiatives transcend sports by creating meaningful connections and amplifying advocacy messages uniquely and engagingly. This friendly football match is a testament to RIA's commitment to fostering awareness and action toward a just and equitable world where everyone, regardless of gender, thrives



Strengthening Community Resilience through HDP Nexus Training

From November 27 to December 13, 2024, RIA Initiative conducted a three-day community-led step-down training on the Humanitarian Development and Peace (HDP) Nexus across five communities in Borno State.

The communities include; Moronti, Zannari, Shettimari, El-Miskin, and Gamboru.



This capacity-building program brought together different community members to enhance their understanding and implementation of the HDP Nexus approach, ensuring a more cohesive response to local challenges. Thanks to [Action Aid Nigeria](#), for funding this activity and providing the necessary support to drive this implementation.

Unveiling the HDP Nexus: Day 1 Highlights

The training began with warm introductions, creating an inclusive environment where every participant felt valued. Recognizing the varying literacy levels, facilitators adopted adaptive methods, enabling everyone to express their expectations. Ground rules were established to ensure mutual respect and a pre-test gauged the participants' initial knowledge.

Day 1 centred on the fundamentals of the HDP Nexus, with discussions highlighting:

- The interconnected roles of humanitarian, development, and peace actors.
- The benefits of adopting a collaborative approach for sustainable community solutions.
- Practical examples demonstrating the power of collective outcomes.

Day 2: Equipping Communities with Tools for Change

The second day emphasized the pivotal role of community actors in fostering HDP Nexus outcomes. Interactive group activities allowed participants to identify local stakeholders and their potential contributions.

Facilitators introduced practical tools for issue mapping, such as problem trees and community diagrams, empowering participants to:

- Analyze and prioritize community challenges.
- Uncover root causes through collaborative exercises.
- Develop targeted strategies for effective interventions.

Participants actively engaged in group discussions, creating visual representations of their challenges and formulating actionable plans.

Advocacy and Action: Day 3 Highlights

The final day revisited key learnings, clarifying outstanding questions. Building on the participatory tools introduced earlier, the training focused on:

- Developing actionable community plans.
- Crafting and delivering effective advocacy messages to influence policy and mobilize resources.

Participants practised advocacy techniques in groups, tailoring messages to address specific community challenges. These exercises enhanced their confidence and readiness to engage stakeholders effectively.



Due diligence from CATAI

In a bid to kickstart the [Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation \(SDC\)](#) consortium project, Rise to Inspire Africa Initiative (RIA) hosted our consortium lead partner, the [Center for Advocacy Transparency Accountability Initiative \(CATAI\)](#), at our head office for an internal capacity assessment. This pivotal exercise aimed to identify organizational gaps and establish a baseline for targeted capacity-building interventions.



The Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) tool, which formed the backbone of the exercise, spanned multiple critical domains: Governance, Finance and Procurement, Sustainability, Safety and Compliance, Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL), Communication, and Human Resources and Administration.

By evaluating these domains comprehensively, the assessment not only highlighted existing strengths but also illuminated areas requiring improvement. This proactive approach ensures that RIA is well-positioned to optimize its processes and operational capacity, thereby contributing to the smooth implementation of the SDC consortium project.

Furthermore, this activity served as a strategic foundation for fostering a robust partnership with CATAI, reinforcing our shared commitment to accountability, transparency, and excellence. The outcomes of this assessment will inform tailored interventions designed to enhance RIA's overall effectiveness and impact in delivering the consortium's objectives.



7th National Council on Youth Development

The 7th National Youth Council Meeting, organized by the Federal Ministry of Youth Development in collaboration with the [United Nations Population Fund \(UNFPA\)](#), was a landmark event that brought together key stakeholders, policymakers, community leaders, and youth representatives to address challenges, celebrate achievements, and chart strategic pathways for youth development in Nigeria, particularly in Borno State.



This five-day event which commences from December 9–13, 2024, hosted in the vibrant city of Maiduguri, revolved around the central theme - **Transforming and Repositioning the Nigerian Youth to Thrive and Catalyze Development**, emphasizing the critical role of youth in driving sustainable development and building resilience across the nation. The event took into cognizance a report on youth progress in the country and by extension the region. Furthermore, presentations on key topics were made by keynote speakers, panel discussions on Leveraging technology for improved program delivery; Strengthening public-private partnerships for sustainable development; Addressing regional insecurity and its implications for service delivery. The event also featured several breakout sessions on different topics and themes such as **Education and Capacity Building**: Enhancing access to education and skills development; **Security and Logistics**: Strategies for ensuring the safety of fieldworkers and program continuity in volatile areas; **Partnerships and Funding**: Exploring new avenues for collaboration with international agencies and NGOs.

The 7th National Youth Council Meeting successfully fostered dialogue, strengthened partnerships, and set a clear direction for advancing youth development in Nigeria. Participants left with a renewed commitment to implementing the resolutions and actionable steps agreed upon during the meeting.

Flood Relief Response



With support from the Borno South Stakeholders Forum, the Rise to Inspire Africa-initiative (RIA) was able to successfully distribute clothing materials to beneficiaries at El-Miskin and DCC Shuwari camp Targeting Women, men, adolescent girls and children (boys and girls) as well as People With Disability (PWD).

This is to ensure collaborative engagement in partnership. Throughout the distribution, a total number of 270 individuals received intervention including PWD.

RIA Initiative in Action to Amplify women's political participation in Nigerian Elections!



RIA recently participated in a one-day peer review meeting on amplifying women's political participation in Nigeria for the 2027 elections.

In partnership with organizations like [@standtoendrape](#) and the German Embassy in Nigeria, this critical project advocates for legislative quotas that guarantee women's representation in the Nigerian National Assembly by 2027.

Together, we're pushing for gender-responsive reforms, public sensitisation, and the passage of the Special Seats Bill to secure a balanced and inclusive governance system.

Eggs of Hope in Partnership with Farm Alert



On December 27, 2024, RIA Initiative, in partnership with Farm Alert, successfully executed a nutrition-focused project aimed at addressing malnutrition among vulnerable children in Borno State. 6,000 cooked eggs were distributed to children aged 2 to 12 years across three internally displaced persons (IDP) camps: El Miskin, Sabon Gari, and DCC Shuwari. This initiative directly benefited over 5,000 children, offering much-needed nutritional supplements to a population severely affected by food insecurity.

The project aligns with RIA Initiative's goal of promoting the health and well-being of vulnerable populations through targeted, community-driven interventions. This effort was made possible through the unwavering support of His Excellency, Hon. Umar Usman Kadafur, Deputy Governor of Borno State, whose commitment to improving the lives of the displaced continues to inspire hope among affected communities.

Key Achievements

This initiative was specifically designed to:

- **Target Beneficiaries:** Reach 6,000 vulnerable children across three IDP camps within one day.
- **Provide Nutritional Support:** Supply a protein-rich supplement in the form of eggs, addressing acute malnutrition and nutrient deficiencies among children.
- **Foster Community Engagement:** Strengthen relationships with caregivers, community leaders, and local authorities to enhance future interventions.

At each camp, caregivers and beneficiaries expressed heartfelt gratitude, emphasizing how critical such support is in improving their children's well-being.

One mother from Sabon Gari IDP Camp shared, “These eggs are more than food to us, they are hope in a time of scarcity. My children had their first proper protein-rich meal in weeks, and I am grateful to those who care about us.” Caregivers noted that the distribution complemented their limited food rations, improving some of their immediate nutritional concerns.

Families praised the collaborative efforts of RIA Initiative, Farm Alert, and the government in addressing their urgent needs.

This initiative underscores RIA Initiative's unwavering commitment to improving the lives of vulnerable children in Borno State. By providing a simple yet powerful intervention, the project has not only addressed immediate nutritional needs but also ignited a sense of hope and possibility among families in displacement camps.

The collaboration between RIA Initiative, Farm Alert, and the Deputy Governor of Borno State has laid a strong foundation for future interventions that will continue to uplift the most marginalized populations.

Together, we can make a lasting difference in the fight against malnutrition and ensure

In-house training on HDP

The in-house training on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus aimed to enhance the Staffs understanding of the interconnectedness of humanitarian, development, and peace Nexus, focusing on practical tools and strategies for integration, real-world applications, and the importance of fostering collaboration to address complex challenges; it concluded with participants mapping out the issues in their respective field of work and developing actionable plans to implement the HDP Nexus approach in their respective projects for sustainable impact



Key Population Community HIV Services Action and Response (KP CARE 2): An Advocacy Visit

To strengthen partnerships and drive meaningful collaboration towards achieving the objective of the Key Population Community HIV Services Action and Response (KP CARE 2) Project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and Society for Family Health.



The RIA KP CARE 2 Team conducted an advocacy visit to the Association of Women Living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (ASWHAN) Borno State Chapter and the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Borno Chapter to discuss collaborative efforts aimed at improving access to essential health services for women living with HIV. During the visit, the teams shared insights on ongoing initiatives and explored potential partnerships to enhance support systems within the community, emphasizing the importance of empowering women through education and legal advocacy.

During these visits, which occurred on 6 and 19 Dec 2024, respectively, the KP CARE 2 team discussed the project's goals and objectives. 1: To ensure the provision of a comprehensive HIV service package, including prevention, referrals, and linkage to treatment services in the SFH one-stop shop (OSS) for vulnerable women. 2: To provide an enabling and legal environment for vulnerable women in Borno state through the promotion of human rights, legal aid, and reduction of stigma and discrimination.



Training of Facilitators on Engaging Community Volunteers in Case Management.

Our Executive Director, Stephen Olushola Oladepo recently participated in a transformative five-day Facilitators' Training on Engaging Community Volunteers in Child Protection Case Management in Bangkok, Thailand by The [Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, USAID, and Plan International USA](#). This immersive training provided in-depth knowledge and practical skills to equip facilitators to support community volunteers effectively.

Key highlights included mastering the Toolkit for Community Child Protection Volunteers, addressing power dynamics, ensuring volunteer safety, and designing ethical and sustainable case management frameworks. The training significantly enhanced the facilitators' capacity to engage with community volunteers, fostering a collaborative environment for child protection initiatives. The training empowered facilitators to implement more effective and culturally sensitive interventions by equipping them with advanced techniques and tools. As a result, communities can expect improved outcomes in safeguarding children's rights and well-being through strengthened volunteer networks. The increased capacity of the facilitators will enable them to better support and guide volunteers in their respective communities. This, in turn, will help create a more sustainable child protection system.

Through interactive methodologies such as role-plays, simulations, and group discussions, participants explored strategies to strengthen volunteer engagement, build their capacity, and advocate for inclusive practices.

This training has empowered us to drive impactful child protection initiatives in our communities, ensuring children are safeguarded and volunteers are supported ethically.





RIA Initiative Nigeria

 Flat 13, Block 3, Legacy Estate Gardens Phase 1, off Kano - Jos Road, Maiduguri, Borno State.

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Photography

All photos are courtesy of RIA Initiative. All photographs taken with participants' involvement were on a voluntary and consent basis. Other photographs are publicly available on the World Wide Web and are appropriately acknowledged.

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