



# AUGUST 2023 NEWSLETTER

## AYGF'S INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES IN KOGI STATE: NURTURING HEALTHY NUTRITION FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

### Introduction

In Kogi State, AYGF is making waves with its implementation of the ANRiN Project in Kogi East and Ajaokuta LGAs. This initiative focuses on training pregnant and lactating mothers to prepare nutritious complementary foods for children aged 6 months to 5 years. These ready-to-use therapeutic foods are sourced locally within the community, emphasizing practicality and sustainability.

#### **Beyond Breast Milk:** Meeting Growing Needs

While breast milk is a superhero in the first six months of a child's life, it can't do it all as the baby starts moving around. This is where complementary foods step in. Unfortunately, in our communities, we've seen malnutrition due to improper feeding practices. Babies are often fed with low-nutrition cereal pap too early or too late. This is often due to economic challenges and a lack of knowledge among mothers.

#### **Empowering Change Through Complementary Feeding**

AYGF's solution is simple but effective: complementary feeding. It's about gradually introducing solid foods alongside breast milk, aligning with the child's growth. This approach was put into action in four communities across Dekina and Ajaokuta LGAs, creating a positive ripple effect.





## Key Objectives and Outcomes

Main Objective: Ensure healthy growth and development of infants and young children through proper feeding.

### Specific Objectives:

1. Promote healthy growth, development, and survival of infants and young children.
2. Improve complementary feeding practices among mothers and caregivers.
3. Equip caregivers with skills to prepare nutritious complementary foods using local resources.
4. Revive the breastfeeding culture within communities.
5. Reduce malnutrition locally and beyond.
6. Lower morbidity and mortality rates among infants and young children.
7. Enable mothers and caregivers to enhance complementary feeds using local ingredients.

### Anticipated Impact:

1. Better nutrition for infants and young children.
2. Decreased severe malnutrition in Abocho and Geregu communities.
3. Empowerment of women to produce low-cost stable foods for commercial use.
4. Creation of Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) support groups.
5. Improved community infant feeding practices.
6. Reduced health issues and deaths among children under 5.
7. Renewed emphasis on breastfeeding.
8. Growth monitoring programs introduced at health facilities.
9. Increased income opportunities for women in communities.

## Strategies Leading to Transformation

Four communities were selected, and AYGf teamed up with local nutrition experts and ANRiN Program leaders. These local champions enlisted dedicated women from each community to monitor children's progress over ten weeks. Interactive sessions, including managing childhood illnesses, growth monitoring, and care-seeking practices, formed the training's core.

## Culinary Alchemy for Nourishing Futures

AYGF crafted four complementary food mixes, each brimming with nutrition. "Jerry Papa" combined Millet, Soya Beans, Groundnut, and Palm Oil. "Dietrend" blended Maize, Soya Beans, Groundnut, Egg, and Palm Oil. These concoctions nourished bodies and aspirations.

## **Driving Change:** Local Wisdom, Stronger Communities

AYGF's journey in Kogi State is grounded in practicality, community involvement, and nutritional empowerment. Through this initiative, mothers and caregivers are becoming agents of change, ensuring healthier tomorrows for our children. As communities embrace this shift towards nourishment and resilience, a brighter future takes root – one meal, one child at a time.

## **NG-CARE METHODOLOGY HARMONISATION WORKSHOP FOR THIRD PARTY MONITORS AND CONSULTANTS:**

The African Youth for Global Future (AYGF) was actively present and represented at the NG-CARES Methodology Harmonisation Workshop for Third Party Monitors and Consultants. The workshop, which took place over two days, July 20-21, 2023, aimed to achieve a cohesive approach to monitoring and consulting practices.

On the first day of the workshop, Third Party Monitors (TPMs) presented their findings on the inception report and shared strategies to effectively carry out the projects. Representatives from esteemed institutions such as the World Bank, PSCU, and BOI were present and provided valuable feedback on the presentations, suggesting necessary adjustments.

The projects discussed during the workshop were divided into three key result areas, each further subdivided into six Disbursement Link Indicators (DLIs). These indicators include DLI (1.1), (1.2), (1.3); (2.1), (2.2), (2.3); and DLI (3.1), (3.2), (3.3).

Day two of the workshop focused on syndicate group discussions. The main objective of this session was to encourage collaborative brainstorming among TPMs to develop a standardised reporting template and a comprehensive monitoring plan. Additionally, stakeholders were mapped out, including primary stakeholders (the beneficiaries), secondary stakeholders (the state), and tertiary stakeholders.

The workshop concluded with productive discussions and inputs, resulting in the creation of a harmonised reporting template. The participants were provided with ample opportunities to seek clarifications and receive answers to their queries, fostering a spirit of cooperation throughout the duration of the project.





The NG-CARES Methodology Harmonisation Workshop was a significant step towards ensuring transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the monitoring and consulting processes, ultimately contributing to the successful implementation of various projects.

We extend our gratitude to all the participants and stakeholders who actively contributed to this enriching event. Together, we can make a lasting impact on the development landscape and create a better future for our communities.

For more updates and information on our initiatives, visit our website: [www.aygf.ng](http://www.aygf.ng)

## **AYGF IS REPRESENTED AT THE NGO FUNDRAISING TRAINING HELD AT THE WEST AFRICA CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTE (WASCI)**

The local fundraising training was organised and facilitated by the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WASCI), funded by the Ford Foundation under the Change the Game Academy, with the aim of building the capacity of Non-governmental organisations and Civil Society on how to capitalise on generating funds within their local communities.

The training was from 7th July - 21st July 2023, at the Reiz Continental Hotel, with nine CSOs present. The training materials had contents on why local fundraising is important, methods of fundraising, practical examples of how to sell our organisation's skills as an internal revenue generating means, and methods of communication to local donors.





Mid-training participants were tasked with drafting a local fundraising plan to assist their organisations in gaining funds from local donors, individuals, and corporate businesses. Insights were shared on the tops of the draft and ways to improve this draft making it effective for the course.

The intense training ended with the presence of a guest speaker Mr Kingsley Bangwel the founder of the N100 school in Kuje, who shared insights from his wealth of experience and challenges, providing guidance to assist in the pursuit of local fund raising.

## **AYGF AT THE 2023 ANRiN ANNUAL RESULTS CONFERENCE**

AYGF was duly represented at the 2023 ANRINE Annual Results Conference, where we proudly showcased our impactful achievements and exceptional performance. This event served as a pivotal platform to highlight our active participation in the Accelerating Nutrition Results in Nigeria (ANRiN) Project—a groundbreaking initiative generously funded by the esteemed World Bank Group.

At its core, the ANRiN Project is a visionary endeavor aimed at revolutionizing nutrition outcomes across Nigeria. By strategically targeting 121 states burdened with high malnutrition rates, spanning all six geographical zones of the country, this project undertakes the crucial mission of enhancing the utilization of quality and cost-effective nutrition services. Specifically tailored to benefit pregnant and lactating women, adolescent girls, and children under the age of five, the ANRiN Project is a beacon of hope in the public health sector.

Central to its operational framework, the ANRiN Project adopts a results-based approach, setting a new standard in project management. To magnify the impact, the project harnesses the power of performance-based contracts, fostering collaboration with Non-State Actors (NSAs). These NSAs play a pivotal role in the delivery of an essential package of nutrition services, thereby ensuring a comprehensive approach to addressing malnutrition.





In this distinguished gathering, AYGf was honored to represent a formidable Non-State Actor as an implementing state within the ANRiN Project. Our presentation at the conference offered a panoramic view of the results achieved by NSAs across the spectrum. We proudly shared our success rates, while candidly addressing the challenges we encountered along this transformative journey. Furthermore, our discourse delved into invaluable learning points that have emerged through our collective efforts.

As we collectively journey towards the culmination of this remarkable project, we are steadfast in our commitment to propel its outcomes towards a sustainable future. The extended deadline of the project provides us with a strategic opportunity to refine our strategies, optimize our approaches, and nurture an environment conducive to enduring success.

In conclusion, AYGf's participation at the 2023 ANRINE Annual Results Conference was a resounding testament to our dedication and unwavering pursuit of impactful change. As the ANRiN Project continues to shape the nutritional landscape of Nigeria, AYGf stands at the forefront of this noble endeavor, resolute in our mission to usher in a healthier, nourished, and thriving future for all.

## **ARTICLE: YOUTH ECONOMIC DISENGAGEMENT: A HARSH REALITY FOR NIGERIAN YOUTH ON WORLD YOUTH SKILLS DAY (JULY 15TH, 2023) BY**

**Abdulrahman Abubaka**

### **Introduction:**

On World Youth Skills Day, it is crucial to recognise the challenges faced by Nigerian youth in the context of economic disengagement. The global reality of youth disengagement is a pressing issue, with seven out of every ten young people worldwide being economically disengaged or under-engaged. However, the situation is particularly acute in low- and middle-income countries like Nigeria, where youth disengagement rates are alarmingly high.

### **The Grim Situation in Nigeria:**

Nigeria, with its vast and rapidly growing population, has seen a significant decline in economic opportunities for its young population. Factors such as the country's economic slump since 2015, driven by a combination of government policies, falling oil prices, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, have contributed to the rise in youth unemployment and underemployment.

According to the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, at the end of 2020, the unemployment rate reached 33%, and almost half of working-age Nigerians under 35 were either unemployed or underemployed.

These statistics reflect the harsh reality faced by Nigerian youth, who are often well-qualified but struggle to find meaningful employment [1]. The lack of job prospects has forced many young Nigerians to pursue alternative career paths or learn trades outside their areas of specialisation. The aspiration to obtain a university degree, which is deeply ingrained in Nigerian culture, has not translated into improved economic prospects for many young graduates [1].

### **Consequences and Impact:**

The consequences of youth economic disengagement are far-reaching and extend beyond individual hardships. Reduced economic growth, political instability, social exclusion, increased crime rates, and social unrest are some of the negative outcomes associated with youth disengagement. These challenges not only hinder the overall development of the country but also perpetuate a cycle of limited opportunities for future generations.

### **Addressing the Issue:**

To address this pressing issue, it is essential to invest in youth workforce development programs that target the root causes of economic disengagement. These programmes should prioritise the reinforcement of foundational skills, including literacy, numeracy, socio-emotional, and digital skills. By equipping young people with these cross-cutting skills, they can better adapt to technological advancements and changes in the labour market.

Additionally, efforts should focus on "reactivating" disengaged youth through activation policies that help them transition into training, employment, or volunteer work [2]. Social assistance programmes and cash incentives can play a crucial role in re-engaging youth and providing them with economic and skilling opportunities.

Furthermore, it is important to target long-term unemployed youth by offering training and skill development programmes, vocational skills training, job search assistance, and work experience opportunities through internships or subsidised employment programmes. These initiatives can empower unemployed youth and improve their chances of securing meaningful employment.

Informal sector workers should also be a priority, as they often lack access to social security and face productivity challenges. Entrepreneurship training, access to finance, and digital skills training can enable informal youth to embrace technology, expand their customer base, and increase productivity.

Expanding access to quality formal education and supporting work-based learning programmes are vital components of addressing youth economic disengagement. Flexible pathways between workforce development programmes and general education should be established, and "second-chance" programmes can encourage young dropouts to complete their formal education. Post-secondary education programmes, such as vocational training and higher education, should also prioritise work-based learning through apprenticeships, internships, and dual programmes in collaboration with employers [2].

### **The Need for Increased Investment:**

To address the scale of the challenge, increased investment in youth workforce development is crucial. Most countries, including Nigeria, currently allocate less than 0.5 percent of the global gross domestic product to workforce development programmes. Given the potential economic gains of closing the skills gap, greater investment is needed to effectively tackle youth economic disengagement and unlock the untapped potential of young Nigerians.

### **Conclusion:**

On World Youth Skills Day, let us remember that investing in youth and empowering them with the necessary skills for employment and entrepreneurship is not only a global imperative but a critical development priority for Nigeria. By prioritising youth workforce development programmes and implementing targeted interventions, Nigeria can pave the way for a more inclusive and prosperous future.

### **References:**

1. The Guardian: "Young, qualified and barely scraping by – inside Nigeria's economic crisis" - [Link](<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/14/young-qualified-and-barely-scraping-by-inside-nigerias-economic-crisis>)
2. World Bank Blogs: "Youth economic disengagement: A harsh global reality to remember on World Youth Skills Day" - [Link](<https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/youth-economic-disengagement-harsh-global-reality-remember-world-youth-skills-day>)

## **AYGF'S ENGAGING PARTICIPATION AT THE IPCR WORKSHOP: ENHANCING SOCIAL ASSISTANCE IN PROTRACTED CRISES IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA**

In a compelling demonstration of our commitment to fostering positive change, AYGF was prominently represented at the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution's (IPCR) enlightening workshop on the "Politics of Social Assistance in Protracted Crises in North-East Nigeria" (PSA-NEN). This gathering, aimed at validating and disseminating research findings, served as a dynamic platform for dialogue and exchange among diverse stakeholders.

The workshop centered around the captivating research endeavor known as BASIC-Better Assistance In Crises Areas. Funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and conducted by the esteemed Institute of Development Studies, this research ventured into multifaceted dimensions. IPCR, however, concentrated its efforts on unraveling innovative pathways to optimize the delivery of social assistance in the complex context of Northeast Nigeria.





Founded in February 2000, IPCR occupies a pivotal role within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, emerging as a potent combination of a research hub, a think-tank, and a catalytic agency. Its core mandate revolves around strengthening Nigeria's capacity to proactively champion peace, prevent conflicts, and efficaciously resolve disputes.

At the heart of the discourse lay the concept of social assistance—a constellation of programs and initiatives designed to extend vital financial aid and support to individuals and families grappling with diverse challenges. Whether it's the impact of low income, the burden of unemployment, the challenges of disability, or other hurdles, social assistance programs work as a lifeline to alleviate poverty, elevate living standards, and ensure that basic necessities reach the vulnerable and marginalized.

### Key Objectives of the Workshop

1. **Validation and Dissemination of Research Findings:** The workshop fervently pursued the task of validating and effectively disseminating the research findings concerning the intricate politics surrounding social assistance in protracted crises within Northeast Nigeria.
2. **Stimulating Dialogues and Collaborations:** This gathering orchestrated a symphony of dialogue and collaborations, uniting a diverse assembly of researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and the vibrant civil society. Such a rich amalgamation of perspectives was pivotal in steering the discourse towards holistic solutions.
3. **Crafting Innovative Strategies:** A pulsating undercurrent of the workshop was the spirited deliberation on innovative strategies. These strategies aimed to enhance the efficacy and inclusivity of social assistance programs in a region marked by complex challenges and entrenched crises.
4. **Generating Actionable Policy Recommendations:** The robust discussions culminated in the formulation of pragmatic policy recommendations. These far-reaching insights hold the potential to inform the blueprint and execution of social assistance policies and programs, not only in Northeast Nigeria but also in analogous contexts around the globe.

In conclusion, AYG's active participation in the IPCR workshop was a testament to our unwavering dedication to advancing social welfare in contexts of crisis. As the findings of the research unfold and the echoes of these enriching dialogues reverberate, we remain steadfast in our pursuit of crafting tangible change, advocating for inclusivity, and uplifting the lives of those most in need.