



UROMI JDPCI Newsletter

A Quarterly Publication of Uromi Justice, Development and Peace Caritas Initiative (JDPCI) VOL. 29 NO. 37 SEPTEMBER 2023 EDITION

INTRODUCTION

Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) sustained her efforts at contributing to a just and developed society where people coexist in peace by the series of interventions carried out within this period. These activities were in line with her mission to promote integral human development through motivation and participatory actions with relevant stakeholders toward policy reforms, empowerment of the people, and enhancement of human dignity for meaningful living.

In the Human Rights Education and Paralegal scheme project, Uromi JDPCI conducted quarterly learning sessions with school-based adolescent human rights clubs in 26 Secondary Schools across the 5 LGAs, quarterly meeting with Paralegals and Human Rights Advocates in 30 communities across the 5 LGAs in Edo Central Senatorial District, and sensitization on gender equality across the 5 LGAs.

In the migration and Countering Trafficking in Person (CTIP) desk, Uromi JDPCI made advocacy engagement meetings with stakeholders. Quarterly Cluster coaching and learning session were also conducted in the Galvanize Action for Effective Trafficking in Persons Response project.

Uromi JDPCI through her Integrated Child

Health and Social Services Award facilitated HIV testing and screening, ART drug pick up and Enhanced Adherence Counselling (EAC), Operation Triple Zero (OTZ) club sessions for Adolescents Living with HIV/AIDS, and bi-monthly review meeting sessions with Community/Facility Case Managers.

Uromi JDPCI also sustained her micro-credit empowerment Scheme by providing soft loans to Small and Medium Scale enterprises and active farmers within the 5 Local Government Areas of Edo Central Senatorial District to enhance their businesses.

Under the Correctional Center Apostolate, Uromi JDPCI conducted group and individual Spiritual/Legal Counsellings for Inmates at the Ubiaja Correctional Center.

On Environment and Climate Change, Uromi JDPCI expanded the drive to plant fruit trees and flowers in the Chancery compound and St. Theresa Catholic Church compound Ukoni.

Lastly, Sensitizations were carried out in Parishes to strengthen JDPCI activities at the Parish levels with a view to collaborate in promoting justice, meaningful development and peaceful co-existence both at the Parishes and the larger community.

HUMAN RIGHT DESK

HUMAN RIGHT EDUCATION AND PARALEGAL SCHEME

Quarterly Learning Sessions for School-Based Adolescent Human Right Clubs:

Uromi JDPCI carried out quarterly adolescent human rights learning sessions in 26 schools across the 5 LGAs in Edo Central Senatorial District from



July -September 2023. The focus was on the Edo State Child Rights Law and the students were taken through the rights of children as

contained in the Edo-State Child Rights Law. This

was to equip them with relevant authorities and information on how to protect their rights and their dignity as citizens of the state

irrespective of age, status, ethnicity, and others. In the session, participants had increased knowledge of their right to survival and development to ensure freedom and proper growth, the right to be named according to the culture of their parents, the right to freedom of association guarded by the Law, parents



UROMI JDPCI CORPORATE FACT SHEET

Name	Uromi Justice Development Peace & Caritas Initiatives.
Owner	Catholic Diocese of Uromi, Nigeria.
Legal Holder	His Lordship, Most Rev. Dr. Donatus A Ogun (OSA)
Authorized Representative & Director	Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Oriabure Arhedo
Corporate Registration No:	CAC/IT/No: 50042 & ED/MWASD/NGOR/200/04
Status	Catholic Non-Governmental, Non-Profit making, humanitarian and development organization.
Motto	Hope for the Oppressed and Empowerment for All
Areas of operation	Integral Development, Human Rights, Democracy, and Good Governance, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Prison Apostolate and Legal Aid services, Peace Building, Micro-Credit and Caritas, TB and HIV/AIDS care and support, HIV Counseling and testing, Livelihood improvement, Anti-Human trafficking and VC programming
Project steered	Conflict Management, Training of Electorate, Election Observation, Budget Monitoring, Community TB Care, HIV/AIDS Awareness Creation & Counseling, Micro-Credit Facilities, Rural Community Development Enlightenment Campaign, Prisoners' Welfare Services, Gender And Child Rights, Widowhood Association, Human Rights, Training Programmes for Police Officers and Youths, Women Development & Promotion through Micro Credit, Emergency Response, Legal Aid, VC Programming, Capacity Strengthening for Good Governance, Campaigns and Sensitizations Against Human Trafficking as well as Creating Alternatives to Human Trafficking through Vocational Skills Acquisition and Empowerment, Human Right Education and Paralegal Scheme, Don't Pay With Your Life, Strengthening Community Participation to Prevent Human Trafficking and Integrated Child Health and Social Service Award
Focus Group	The rural populace, the economically deprived, families, children, students, youths, women and widows living among the poorest of the poor in the society. Inmates in Prison and Ex-inmates, persons stigmatized with deadly diseases.
Physical Address	Inside Uromi Diocesan Secretariat at Egbele Quarter, Uromi, Edo State.
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E-mail	uromijdpci@yahoo.com
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Auditors	1. Grant Thornton Nigeria CHARTERED Accountants Emgn, Benin Branch 2. Edforte, Fortne, Ehiagwina & Associates 141 Benin-Auchi Road Ekpoma, Edo State
Bankers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · UBA BANK PLC · ECOBANK PLC · FIDELITY BANK PLC · Unity Bank PLC · Union Bank PLC · Zenith PLC
Staff Strength	24
Registered Volunteers	72
Project Executed	26



and guardians, right to freedom of thoughts, conscience and religion under the proper guidance and protection of their parents or guidance,

freedom of movement subject to unharmful parental control, freedom from discrimination, right to leisure and the likes. The students expressed great



understanding of the lessons passed as they were able to effectively give feedback to questions posed to them to test their knowledge.

The students expressed joy with the added knowledge gained on human rights education based on the learning session carried out within the quarter. They appreciated the fact that policies and laws were enacted by the Nigerian government in tackling human rights violations and this increased the hope of realism to their safeguarding. A total of 528 (195 males, 333 Females) students actively participated in the learning sessions. Participants had increased knowledge of their right to survival and development to ensure freedom and proper growth, among others. The students expressed great understanding of the lessons passed as they were able to effectively give feedback to questions posed to them to test their knowledge

Quarterly Meeting of Paralegals and Human Rights Advocates:

Uromi JDPCI held her 3rd quarterly meeting with Paralegals and Advocates of the 30 community-based Human Rights Clubs across the 5 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Edo Central Senatorial District in September.



In the opening remarks, the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI Very Rev Fr Dr Fidelis Arhedo emphasized the need and importance of the

Paralegals and Advocates to be visible in the community. This he said would enable community members to seamlessly locate and gain support from them in preventing and tackling human right

violations and promoting and protecting the human rights of others. He emphatically traveled down memory lane of the positive effects communal living had in the past in the lives of community members. He stated that community members looked after the best interests of each other and did not condone selfishness or falsehood. He lamented that in contemporary times, people have grown accustomed to hiding the truth and justice and have fallen into the bandwagon of claiming might as right. He stressed the need to be unbiased and fair in handling human right violations in the community and that whenever a conflict of interest arose, the advocate should allow his fellow community human right advocates to pursue justice seamlessly rather than becoming a blockage of truth and justice. He concluded by advising participants to move promptly and smartly as community surveillance and not to be imprudent or irrational in their dealings.



The reports from paralegals showed that Paralegals and human rights advocates carried out massive door-door human rights campaigns and sensitizations to effectively reach and engage community members about human rights issues for improved coherent and cohesive interactions and positive responses. The door-to-door sensitizations were successfully carried out in the 30 communities and this led to increased reporting and interventions of human rights violations as well as a good survey mechanism to determine the impacts of the human rights interventions in their various communities since the inception of the project. The purpose of the door-to-door campaign was to increase their visibility in the community so that community members can seamlessly locate them as well as gain their support in promoting and protecting the human rights of others for effective prevention and tackling human rights violations in the target communities.



The Paralegals also reported their interventions in human rights violations observed in their communities and how they effectively supported the victims to seek justice and to overcome ill-

treatments. Some of the reported incidences of human rights violations in which the Paralegals intervened were rape, deprivation of rights to inheritance for gender reasons, ill-treatment of widows and widow inheritance. A total of 325 (173 males and 152 females) were present.

Sensitization on Gender Equality:

Uromi JDPCI conducted Sensitization on Gender Equality for community leaders from 30 communities across the 5 Local Government Areas of Edo Central Senatorial District. The sessions were attended by a total of 525 (307 Males, 218 Females) persons made



up of Community Heads, Religious Leaders, women leaders, youth leaders, Paralegals, Human Rights Advocates, and Project Staff. The

sensitization was held from July 31st to August 4th, 2023 with the topic, Powers, and Limitations of Customary Law (Pre-Colonial, Colonial, and Post-Colonial era). The purpose was to provide valuable insights into the historical heritage and the dynamics that have shaped our present-day legal and social landscape in the communities, as well as equip them with the knowledge to engage



in informed discussions in advocating for gender equality and work towards a more just and equitable society. The sensitization assisted the participants to



examine how customary laws held significant powers in maintaining social order and preserving the unique cultural heritage during the pre-colonial era.

However, women were observed to be highly subjugated in the pre-colonial and colonial eras with little or no decision-making powers in society. In the colonial, era the customary laws faced some challenges and changed to meet the realities of that time with the introduction of written constitution, which continued even in the post-colonial era. The sensitization further examined the evolvement of customary laws and their impact on the lives of community members. It also explored the gender

implications of customary laws, shedding light on how they have affected the status and rights of women in our society.



The sensitization raised awareness and fostered a better understanding of the interdependency of roles and the importance of promoting positive gender norms in our society for a better and brighter future where gender equality is upheld and respected. They were able to identify the fact the Customary Law under the pre-colonial and colonial eras had similar characteristics which included, the localization of governance power, the preservation of cultural identity, and powers to resolve disputes, while the limitations were the unwritten nature of customary law which led to varying interpretations and potential abuse of power by local authorities and the perpetuation of gender inequality where

women were often marginalized under customary laws, with limited rights and opportunities compared to men.



The sensitization concluded with a task on participants to sue for comprehensive legal reforms, community engagement, capacity building, and continued advocacy as possible ways to resolve the various forms of gender inequalities deeply rooted in our culture and tradition. Participants were then enjoined to channel into meaningful action the knowledge gained from the discussion by fostering conversations, challenging stereotypes, advocating for gender equality, and actively supporting legal reforms that uplift women and create a more inclusive society.



MIGRATION AND COUNTERING TRAFFICKING IN PERSON

Galvanize Action for Effective Trafficking in-Person Response at the Local Government Level in Edo State

A Community Sensitization Meeting and Public Awareness Campaign Rally to Commemorate 2023 World Day Against Human Trafficking

In commemoration of the 2023 World Day against human trafficking, the Localizing Trafficking in Persons Response Cluster (LOTIP-R) anchored by



Cluster members in Benin City in a group photograph with the NUI Chairman and NAWOJ Chairperson

Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives on Friday 28th of July 2023 conveyed a community sensitization meeting and public awareness

campaign rally in three locations across the senatorial districts of Edo State- Benin, Uromi and Auchi. The activity was held under the Strengthening Civic Advocacy and Local Engagement (SCALE) project sponsored by USAID with the primary objective to raise awareness about the exploitation in human trafficking and the need to end the impunity while calling on communities and the government to promote practices, laws, and policies that strengthen resilience against human trafficking.



During the press briefing at the NUI Secretariat

The activity thus provided a platform to sensitize community stakeholders and the populace about human trafficking and they were conscientized on the need to report issues of human trafficking to appropriate authorities such as the National Agency for



the Prohibition of Trafficking In Persons through the 627 hotline, the Edo State Taskforce Against Human Trafficking, the Police and CSOs in

their communities for onward referral; rather than promoting indifference and impunity to the crime. Particular emphasis was placed on the need for communities to support practices that would aid prevention, identification, respite, and recovery for survivors, and ensuring an environment conducive to sustaining freedom.

The Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI; Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo in the keynote address



emphasized that the global theme for this year's commemoration "Reach every Victim of Trafficking; Leave no one behind" was a call to all and sundry to intensify awareness about human trafficking and to promote and protect the rights of trafficked victims. As



such, Participants were elaborately enlightened about the elements of human trafficking, its exploitative nature, the signs of trafficking and common recruitment

tactics employed by traffickers, as well as the devastating effects of human trafficking. Crowning the sensitization message was a desperate call of action for all to work together to combat and prevent human trafficking, reiterating the need for all individuals to expand awareness in their communities by educating and providing information to community dwellers on how to recognize traffickers and signs of trafficking and becoming a mentor to young people, who are more prone to being trafficked as well as encouraging their involvement in legal, productive activities.



The Cluster also called on the Government to strengthen policies and procedures for effective criminal justice response to trafficking, and the need to cascade anti human trafficking efforts to rural communities by establishing Anti- Human Trafficking Response Units at the Local Government Levels for effective response to the scourge as well as sustain support for Survivors through the activation of the Victims of Trafficking Trust Fund which is a veritable funding support for victims.

The Participants consisted of community stakeholders -(community heads and chiefs, youth and women leaders), the Police, the Nigeria Civil Defense and Security Corp, Federal Road Safety Corp, The Great Esan Returnee Association, Survivors of human trafficking, Representatives of Local Government Councils and Social Welfare Departments, the National Orientation Agency, Civil Society Organizations-Market women Association, members of the press and Staff of the Cluster member organizations were engaged in a group discussion prior to the public awareness campaign rally to elicit feedback on ways to strengthen prevention of Human Trafficking, protection of Survivors and prosecution of



Traffickers. Issues discussed by the various groups bothered on the following: How to proactively identify and reach out to

potential victims, especially those in vulnerable communities, What community leaders can do to combat human trafficking in their communities, Ways public awareness and education campaigns can be improved to prevent trafficking in communities, Reasons for low reportage of Trafficking cases and strategies community, CSOs and the Government can take to enhance reportage of trafficking cases and the level of community awareness about the interventions of NAPTIP (National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking In Persons) and ETAHT (Edo State Taskforce Against Human Trafficking) in rural communities and suggestions to improve the interventions of these Agencies.

Community stakeholders expressed commitment to drive home some of the outcomes from the discussion session, such as deliberately looking out for vulnerable persons in their communities and sensitizing them about human trafficking. A total of 301 persons (122 males and 179 females) inclusive of 9 Persons with disability.

Advocacy Engagement Meeting with the Edo State Hon. Commissioner for Justice and Attorney General

Uromi JDPCI conducted advocacy engagement meeting with the Edo State Commissioner for Justice to inform him of the cluster's advocacy asks as discussed with the predecessor and the need for him to push for legislative review to commence from the Executive. The Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI Very Rev Fr Dr Fidelis Arhedo, in his advocacy message, stressed the importance of the review to the sustainability of the countering trafficking in person efforts in the Edo State.



In his response, the Attorney General of Edo State said it would be easier to recommend an administrative review

rather than a legislative review. He strongly argued that the task can be achieved without necessarily amending the law. But Very Rev Fr Dr Fidelis Arhedo also argued that to avoid operational challenges that may impede the effective implementation of such instructions it would still be better to push for legislative review. This he said would ensure sustainability as well as give ownership to the local government. The Attorney General, however, committed to discussing the

possibility of setting up the structures using administrative instruments with the relevant authorities.

He suggested that Edo State Taskforce against Human Trafficking (ETAHT) needs to inform him through a memo as he would not be the one to initiate the process but ETAHT. As he would encourage them to establish their presence in every LGA through local offices because enlightenment is key to the successful eradication of human trafficking in Edo State. A total of 9 persons (4M,5F) made up of the Attorney General, the head of Prosecution who was also the first secretary of ETAHT, a senior State Counsel and 6 cluster members were in attendance.

Advocacy Engagement Meeting with the Permanent Secretary and Solicitor General Edo State Ministry of Justice

In the same vein, the LOTIP-R Cluster had an advocacy engagement meeting with Prof Faith Osadolor, the Permanent Secretary and Solicitor General in the Ministry of Justice on the 14th of August



2023. The purpose of this meeting was to promote institutional memory in the Ministry of Justice as well as get his support to influence the Ministry to commence

the discussion to recommend the review. The Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI Very Rev Fr Dr Fidelis Arhedo delivered the advocacy message and requested his support to instruct the relevant department on the process of the legislative review as contained in the cluster's advocacy ask. A copy of the prototype of the law with the desired input was presented to him.

In his response, the Solicitor General appreciated the cluster for the thoughtfulness towards



having a more functional institution to counter trafficking in person. He thereafter requested for a brief outlining the recommended changes

so as to make it easy for him to minute on where necessary.

The cluster members thereafter thanked him for his kind commitment and promised to get back with the brief in one week which was submitted as promised. A total of 7 persons (4 M, 3F) were in attendance

Advocacy Engagement Meeting with Hon. Destiny Enabulele, Member Edo State House of Assembly and Immediate Past President of CONGOs

In a bid to strategize for the actualization of the cluster advocacy ask, the LOTIP-R cluster, during their cluster coaching session suggested the need to push for the review of the law through sponsorship by a member of the Edo State House of Assembly as a private member bill. Thereafter the cluster members analyzed the stakeholders to be approached and lobbied to take the lead. The first on the list was Hon. Destiny O. Enabulele who is from the CSO background and one-time President of the



Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations of Nigeria (CONGOS) Edo State Chapter

before he was elected as the Executive Chairman of Ovia North Local Government Area and now elected again as a member representing that constituency in the Edo State House of Assembly (EDHA).

It was based on this that the cluster had an advocacy engagement meeting with him to brief him of the cluster's advocacy asks and requested him to take responsibility to sponsor the bill for deliberation and passage. The Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI presented the advocacy message and informed him that the journey for the review started with the outgone legislature but for the short time they had left in office they were not able to push the review. He thereafter highlighted the need for the advocacy ask and made a formal request to that effect.

Hon Destiny O. Enabulele, thanked the cluster for the initiative and promised to discuss the issue with



some members to support him in the process. He thereafter asked for a brief of the cluster's ask to be given to him within one week to enable him to properly engage and lobby other members for support. He stated that he would let us know if we would need to address the legislative Exco concerning the bill while advising the cluster to extend the advocacy to other members of the new house for easy acceptability. A total of 6 cluster members (4M, & 2F) were in attendance

Quarterly Cluster Coaching Session

The Localizing Trafficking in Persons Response Cluster anchored by Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives held her 4th quarterly cluster coaching session. The meeting was used to examine progress and key achievements on

the Cluster's advocacy issues and strategize next-step actions towards actualization of the set objectives of



the Cluster. As such; milestones and achievements within the quarter were highlighted and benchmarks were designed to measure success along the cluster's advocacy journey with additional commitments/activities established. Discussions were also done around lessons in the practice of the Cluster approach and a review of the Clusters' declaration, the Political and Economy Analysis and Policy tracker and the outcome harvester. The Anchor-Cluster feedback session was also featured in the meeting.

Cluster members actively participated in the coaching session with two representatives each from Member Organizations and the four-project staff of Uromi JDPCI. A total of 17 persons (8M, 9F) were in attendance.

Learning Session on The Role of Victims of Trafficking Trust Fund (VTTF) in Victims Reintegration: The Prospects, Challenges in Implementation, and The Way Forward

The Localizing Trafficking In Persons Response Cluster anchored by Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) conducted a learning event on the Role of Victims of Trafficking Trust Fund in Victims Reintegration: The prospects, Challenges in Implementation and the Way Forward. The specific objective of the meeting was to promote peer learning and better collaboration among Civil Society Organizations working in the Countering Trafficking in Persons sector to explore the prospects of the Victims of Trafficking Trust Fund (VTTF) in the



Group photograph with some participants

reintegration of Victims and the way forward for its activation in Edo State.

The learning session engaged five subject experts from the Government and Civil Society Sector in a panel discussion around the topic of discourse. The Panelists were the Edo Zonal Commander of NAPTIP, Barr. Nduka Nwawene, the Executive Secretary of Edo State Taskforce Against Human Trafficking, Barr. Itohan Okugbowa, the Program Manager, Caritas Nigeria, Benin Office, Barr. Onomen Oriakhi, the representative of the founder and Executive Director of Pathfinders Justice Initiative, Barr Evon Benson-Idahosa, and the Edo State Coordinator of the Joint Association of



Panelist and moderators at the learning event



A participant making a contribution during discussion

Persons with Disability, Miss Ann Ojugo. A total of 38 persons (14M, 24F) participated in the event

The scope of discussion at the panel session was basically around the purpose and provisions of the VTTF in victims' reintegration, the level of awareness of the public and stakeholders on the importance of the victims' trust fund, the needs of victims and challenges in victims reintegration, holistic approach to reintegration and strategies that could be employed to advocate for the activation of the VTTF and its Committee. It was expounded that a holistic approach to reintegration addresses all aspects of reintegration, from an economic, social, health, and psychological dimension, hence it is expected that the Scope of the VTTF be broad enough to encapsulate all the needs of a survivor, providing a wide range of services that is client-centered and should not only focus on economic reintegration.



The Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI Very Rev Fr Dr Fidelis Arhedo given the opening remark

The awareness level of the VTTF among the public and stakeholders was said to be somewhat low, though the provisions are clearly articulated in the law which is meant to be a public document that is accessible to everyone. Some of the Panelists raised the need to intensify conversations about the VTTF and its importance among relevant stakeholders and even the victims so that the issue would gain more momentum and get the attention of the government towards its activation and also attract funds for the trust fund. They further recommended that Victims be educated on the provisions of the trust fund so as to encourage them to report their traffickers for prosecution and demand for reparation thereby generating resources for the trust fund through proceeds of forfeitures from convicted traffickers, since that is one of the sources of fund for the Victims trust fund.

Strategic Advocacy Engagement and Planning Meeting with the Executive Secretary of Edo State Taskforce against Human Trafficking (ETAHT)

Following the recommendation and resolution during the last cluster quarterly meeting on the need to facilitate an informed and purposeful exchange of ideas between the Cluster and the ETAHT team, The Cluster anchored by Uromi JDPCI conveyed a Strategic Advocacy Engagement and Planning Meeting with the Edo State Taskforce Against Human Trafficking (ETAHT). some of the key issues discussed at the meeting revolved around ETAHT's vital involvement and role in accelerating progress

toward activation of the Victims of Trafficking Trust Fund and its Committee and initiating the establishment of Local Government Trafficking in Persons response unit administratively even while the legal review for a statutory incorporation of the unit into the existing Trafficking framework of the State is being pursued from Legislative angle. The meeting was also an avenue to reinforce ETATH's strategic partnership and commitment to the Cluster as well as gather insight on how to further strengthen advocacy efforts to the government in achieving the designed project outcomes.



The Executive Secretary of ETAHT, Barr. Itohan Okungbowa noted that the objectives of the Cluster were not impossible tasks to be accomplished, disclosing that the Governor himself was highly interested in third party funding for government MDAs (Ministries, Departments and Agencies) and even piloted efforts of the Taskforce in securing funds from the Italian Government which the State is presently using to implement the Managing Migration through Development (MMDP 2.0) Project championed by IOM (International Organization for Migration), as such opened to public private partnership.

Given the Governor's interest in third-party funding for MDAs, Members of the Cluster made a compelling recommendation for the Executive Secretary to initiate an informal presentation to the Governor,



highlighting the willingness of the Private Sector to contribute to the Victims of Trafficking Trust Fund and advocate for its activation as it holds potentials to significantly generate and sustain funding for victims reintegration which is one of the core aspects of the mandate of the Taskforce. The meeting significantly helped to secure greater commitment and involvement of the Taskforce towards the Cluster's advocacy pursuit. A total of 8 persons (4M, 4F) made up of the ETAHT Secretary and Cluster members were in attendance.

Strategic Advocacy Engagement Meeting with the Deputy Speaker and Member Representing Esan North East Constituency II (Uromi/Uzea), Edo State House of Assembly

The LOTIP-R Cluster had an advocacy engagement meeting with the Deputy Speaker of Edo State House of Assembly Rt. Hon. (Mrs.) Maria Omonzele Edeko, (Esq.) on the 14th of September 2023 at the Edo State

House of Assembly Complex. The engagement was a crucial step towards initiating a legislative review of the Edo State Trafficking in Persons Prohibition Law of 2018, with the primary objective of incorporating the establishment of Trafficking in Persons (TIP) response units in the Local Government Areas of Edo State. Thus the meeting was used to apprise the Deputy Speaker of the Cluster's advocacy objectives and particularly lobby for her support to advance the legislative process of integrating the establishment of Local Government Trafficking in Persons response units within the existing framework of the Edo State Trafficking in Persons Prohibition Law of 2018.



Responding, the Deputy speaker disclosed that human trafficking response and even the State trafficking framework were familiar terrains as she was partly involved in the drafting of the existing Law as the then FIDA Chairperson. She commended the efforts of the incumbent Government, noting that a lot of work has gone in at changing the narrative of the State with regard to the volume of trafficking cases originating from Edo State. However, she noted that more efforts need to be put in place and applauded the initiative of the Cluster in pushing for a statutory



establishment of local response units on Trafficking, particularly noting that vulnerability in rural communities was high and emphasized that change in government

could lead to a paradigm shift in human trafficking response in the State if not backed by enabling laws. Hence the emphasis and support for a legal framework that is built around institutions to ensure sustainability of efforts even beyond the tenure of the present administration.

In the light of the above, Rt. Hon. Maria Edeko expressed willingness and commitment to champion the impending bill aimed at incorporating the establishment of Local Government Trafficking in Persons (TIP) response units within the existing framework of the Edo State Trafficking in Persons Prohibition Law of 2018, insisting that the existing framework requires a holistic review as a lot of gaps were present in the Law.



She further

promised to push for the 11th Assembly to commit the newly elected Local Government chairpersons to establish trafficking response units at their various Local Government Areas even before the bill is reviewed. A total of 10 persons (5M, 5F) were in attendance.

Advocacy Engagement Meeting with Hon. Jonathan Ibhama-wu Aigbokhan, Member Representing Esan West Constituency, Edo State House of Assembly.

The Cluster also held an advocacy engagement meeting with Hon. Jonathan Ibhama-wu Aigbokhan, member representing Esan West Constituency, Edo State House of Assembly on the 14th of September 2023. The purpose of the meeting was to garner the Honourable member's backing and support for the legislative review of the existing State Trafficking in Person Law to include new amendments, specifically the establishment of local government trafficking in persons response unit. The cluster recognizes that building support of house members on the proposed amendment of the Edo State Trafficking Law, 2018 would ensure legal validity of the bill, and secure the necessary majority vote when presented and discussed at the floor house.



Hon. Jonathan Ibhama-wu Aigbokhan expressed appreciation for the efforts of the cluster in advocating for necessary changes. He emphasized that amending existing laws, especially when the new provisions aim to enhance the quality of life for the people, is often not a burdensome process. He wholeheartedly supported the proposed inclusions, recognizing their critical importance in effectively addressing the issue of human trafficking at the grassroots levels.

Hon. Jonathan pledged his full support for the review process, assuring that the Cluster could count on his unwavering assistance. He eagerly accepted a copy of the proposed draft for further examination and committed to working closely with Executive Secretary of the Edo State Taskforce against Human Trafficking and the Ministry of Justice to see how best the inputs can be presented. A total of 10 persons (6M, & 4F) were in attendance.



ORPHAN & VULNERABLE CHILDREN DESK

The Integrated Child Health and Social Services Award (ICHSSA 2) Project is 4 years project, implemented in Edo Central Senatorial District by Uromi JDPCI with support from the Association for Reproductive and Family Health (ARFH) and funding from USAID. The goal of the project is to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on vulnerable children and their households through quality care, protection and support services.

Among the activities conducted within this quarter were; HIV testing and screening of 1598 (943 Females and 655 Males) persons for HIV across the project LGAs with no new case identified. In the same vein, a total of 20 HIV-exposed infants were taken through Dried Blood Spotting (DBS) with all turning out negative and they received the appropriate HIV preventive treatment and their caregivers were tutored on HIV preventive measures as regards their infants. A total of 8 Lost to Follow-Up (LTFU) Children Living with HIV (CLHIV) were also returned to care.

Also, 71 most vulnerable CLHIV were supported with the sum of NGN 1500 each to facilitate their ART drug pick up. Similarly, a total of 98 CLHIV were bled for Viral Load of which 28 most vulnerable of them were assisted to facilitate the process. It was also gathered that most of these CLHIV self-reported at the various facilities.

Furthermore, a total of 84 Children Living with HIV were taken through Enhanced Adherence Counselling (EAC) session to ascertain reasons for suppression.

A total of 121 beneficiaries of the Community based Health insurance scheme were monitored as well as monitoring of 13 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) with 3 functional. All these activities put together have led to increased adherence rate resulting in greater viral load suppression amongst the CLHIV.

Operation Triple Zero Session

Uromi JDPCI within the reporting period built the capacity of 40 Children Living with HIV through the Operation Triple Zero (OTZ) peer-to-peer mentorship Programme. This was to enable them to mentor fellow Children Living with HIV on the practices of becoming OTZ heroes as well as its importance. Included in the discussion were the explanation of peers, mentors, formal and informal peer educators, HIV programming, criteria in the selection of an OTZ peer mentor as well as their



roles and responsibilities. This capacity-building session was done through the OTZ platform organized at Uromi Central Hospital, Esan North East and Irrua Specialist Teaching Hospital, Esan Central and has increased the willingness of the CLHIV to take up the responsibility of mentoring fellow CLHIV on Operation Triple Zero.

Caregivers Forum

Uromi JDPCI built the skill of 32 Caregivers on liquid soap making at Arue community of Esan North East, Ugbegun and Irrua communities of Esan Central LGA through her Caregivers Forum. This was to



Liquid soap making skill acquisition at Arue community

alleviate the economic hardship experienced by some of the indigenes, through the expansion of their business horizon so as to have an alternative source of income.



Liquid soap making skill acquisition at Ugbegun community

Adolescent Female Hygiene

Uromi JDPCI distributed Kotex sanitary towel to 13 adolescent female Children Living with HIV through their Case Managers, with each child receiving 2 packs each of the Kotex sanitary towel. The essence of this distribution was to help improve the hygienic state of these girls during their menstruation. The Children expressed so much gratitude on the reception of the package.



Training of New Case Managers

Also, Uromi JDPCI trained 4 newly employed Case Managers on OVC Case Management and Care plan development. This was to equip them with the techniques involved in OVC Case Management Process and Care plan development.



Bi-Monthly Review Meeting

Uromi JDPCI held 2 bi-monthly review meeting sessions with Community/Facility Case Managers within the reporting quarter at Chancery complex, Egbele Uromi. This was meant to create an avenue to re-strategize



ways to carry out the project activities, partake in shared learning and best practices, and admonish the CCMs/FCMs to give their best in the project implementation despite the prevailing economic conditions. It also provided an opportunity to reiterate/intimate the Case Managers and Staff on the essence of quality and timely service provision necessary for the fulfilment of the project goal. In attendance were 44 (24 Males and 20 Females).

MICRO CREDIT DESK

Uromi JDPCI continued her economic support to rural farmers and petty traders across the five Local Government Areas in Edo Central Senatorial District with a total of seventeen disbursements made to seventeen different groups within the quarter out of which nine were new groups formed within the quarter. Fourteen of the groups were supported with soft loans to expand their farms while the other three were groups of petty traders. Meanwhile, forty-five groups across the four schemes made refunds of part of the loan given to them in the previous quarter. The repayment within the period was quite encouraging and Uromi JDPCI is grateful to the various groups for their solidarity and urged them to cooperate with the organization and show more commitment to repayment



that could possibly qualify them for another round of loans.



Akara (Bean Cake) as a business re-established with the soft loan received from Uromi JDPCI. According to her, before her encounter with Uromi JDPCI, she was out of the business owing to financial constraints necessitated by the economic hardship and desired to restart the Akara business because such business was not available in her area but did not have any assistance until she met Uromi JDPCI. She was given the sum of N50,000 as well as other members of her Group. While affirming that she is experiencing tremendous growth in the Akara business as her customer base is now about 40 customers per day, she stated that her family's living condition has improved. She expressed gratitude in singing to Uromi JDPCI for their benevolence and initiative to improve the livelihood of the people in Esan Land, that is, Edo Central Senatorial District.



Similarly, a beneficiary empowered through the Agric PROMIC scheme noted that prior to his involvement with Uromi JDPCI, he used to grapple with the challenge of expanding his business and increasing profitability due to lack of access to financing for his farming enterprise. At that



time, he and other group members received the sum of N50,000, from then, a positive transformation in his business began. Since then, he has received an increasing sum of loan

overtime and his farming operations has expanded from cultivating 500 hectares of land to an impressive 1,000 hectares. This expansion led to abundant harvests, providing enough produce for his family's consumption and surplus for sale. The remarkable improvements in his life attracted the attention of fellow farmers in his community, who were eager to learn about his success and exceptional performance compared to other farmers in the area. The beneficiaries shared information about Uromi JDPCI and the valuable services it offers. This newfound interest among other farmers in his community eventually led to the formation of four farmers' groups in the community made up of over 43 members.

In the same vein, the Secretary of Akugbe group 1 in the Idoia community expressed their success story on behalf of the group since their association with Uromi JDPCI. Prior to their engagement with Uromi JDPCI, they were forced to borrow from another



group that imposed a staggering interest rate on all borrowed amounts. Due to their lack of funds for their farming business, they had no alternative but to continue with this arrangement. This practice hindered their business growth, as the profits from their products were primarily used to repay these loans. They could only set aside a small portion of their produce for personal use and their immediate families. Their introduction to Uromi JDPCI came through one of their chiefs, who had experienced remarkable growth in his own farming business as a beneficiary of Uromi JDPCI. He recommended Uromi JDPCI to them, and after a thorough assessment, they qualified and gained access to a soft loan. Since their association with Uromi JDPCI, their farming business has thrived significantly. This growth has led to higher profitability and an improved standard of living for all group members.



CORRECTIONAL CENTER APOSTOLATE

Uromi JDPCI under her Correctional Center Apostolate carried out her monthly Spiritual/Legal Counselling for inmates in the Ubiaja Correctional Center on the 20th of September, 2023. The team was led by the Assistant Director of Uromi JDPCI Rev. Fr. Ferguson Ukpebor who was also the facilitator in the Spiritual Counselling, topic; "Having and Unyielding Spirit" and 20 male inmates formed participants in the session.



The welfare Officer in the Correctional Center expressed joy over the efforts made by the organization to relate with officers and inmates in the Correctional Center. He noted that such an interface gave them a sense of belonging and new hope for a better future.

In his exhortation, the Assistant Director of Uromi JDPCI explained that having an unyielding spirit in the spiritual context meant having an undaunted hope and faith in God irrespective of one's current state or situation in life. He admonished the inmates on the need to continuously look up to God in their current situation, knowing that God's intervention would lead to their eventual freedom.

Buttressing further, he cited the Books of Romans 8 V 31, Philippians 4 V13, Isaiah 41 V 10, Romans 5 V3-4, 2Corinthians 4 V8-9 and Hebrews 11 V1. He also explained that one characteristic of a person with an unyielding spirit and hope in God was a person who made plans ahead for the future. According to him, such a person was already certain that he would regain his freedom in the long run. He advised all present to begin to have plans to make ends meet in view of their freedom. He however stressed that for one to look upon God's intervention, one had to genuinely resolve to become a better person and a better Christian; which could be achieved through personal reflections, forgiveness, prayers, and discipline.



He made a passionate appeal to inmates to refrain from crime and imbibe a Christian way of life when they eventually get their freedom and not to be in any position where they would be rearrested as outlaws. He admonished innocent and falsely accused, to leave vengeance to God.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE



Planting of orange seedlings in the chancery compound

With Uromi JDPCI's commitment to mitigate the impact of climate change and promote practices that aid protection of our environment in

Edo Central Senatorial District, led to the planting of additional 14 fruit trees comprising 6 oranges, 2 tangerines, 2 grapes, 2 soursops, 1 mango and 1

guava at the chancery compound. The drive was also expanded to Parishes in which a total of 15 flowers, 26 pawpaw, 6 soursops, 5 mango, 6 oranges, 2 tangerines, 2grape and 1 guava were planted at St Theresa Catholic Church compound Ukoni.



The Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI/Parish Priest of St. Theresa Catholic Church Ukoni

PARISH JUSTICE DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE COMMISSION



Sensitization in St. Theresa Catholic Church, Ukoni

Uromi JDPCI carried out sensitization and awareness creation on the workings of Uromi JDPCI, the need to have a functional JDPC in all the Parishes/Mass Centers in Uromi

Diocese, and seek membership and collaboration. This was done in two Parishes namely, St. Theresa Catholic Church, Ukoni with 10 (4 Males, 6 Females) persons, and St. Patrick Catholic Church, Ebhoiyi with 9 (1 Male and 8 Females) indicating interest in joining the group.

The activity was preceded by the Holy Mass, and Uromi JDPCI teams were given the opportunity to address the parishioners during an announcement in all the Masses during which the parishioners were taken through Uromi



Sensitization in St. Patrick Catholic Church, Ebhoiyi

JDPCI areas of interventions which are; Good Governance, Human Rights, Sexual and Gender Based Violence, Migration/Anti Human trafficking, Health, legal/correctional Center, and Environment and Climate Change amongst others. The team thereafter sought their cooperation and collaboration in cascading of the outlined thematic areas. The functions of the Parish JDPC were to settle disputes among families or community members, advocate for development, and sensitize the community on the aforementioned areas.