

**UROMI JUSTICE DEVELOPMENT PEACE AND CARITAS INITIATIVES (UROMI JDCPI) NEWSLETTER, June, 2022 Edition**

**CORPORATE FACT SHEET**

Name	Uromi Justice Development Peace & Caritas Initiatives, (Uromi JDPCI).
Owner	Catholic Diocese of Uromi, Nigeria.
Legal Holder	His Lordship, Most Rev. Dr. Donatus Aimioshor 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 Chancery at Egbele, Uromi, Edo State, Nigeria.
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Auditors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grant Thornton chartered Accountants Emgn, Benin Branch</li> <li>2. Edforte, Fortne, Ehiagwina&amp; Associates 141 Benin-Auchi Road Ekpoma, Edo State</li> </ol>
Bankers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UBA BANK PLC Mission Road, Uromi</li> <li>• ECOBANK PLC Mission Road, Uromi</li> <li>• FIDELITY BANK PLC Mission Road, Uromi</li> <li>• Unity Bank PLC Mission Road Uromi</li> <li>• Union Bank PLC Mission Road Uromi</li> </ul>
Staff Strength	21
Number of Community Volunteers	72
Project Executed	18

## INTRODUCTION

Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (uromi JDPCI) through her wide-ranging streams of interventions promotes integral development of the rural populace in Edo Central Senatorial District in accordance with her mission, which is to alleviate poverty and promote integral development through the motivation and empowerment of the less privileged/oppresed and challenging unjust structures that enhance injustice, hatred and backwardness in Nigeria. These interventions address challenges and norms around human rights protection, good governance, human trafficking and Irregular Migration, as well as interventions to promote healthy outcomes amongst children and families infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Therefore, in attainment of one of her goal, which is to contribute towards improving peaceful coexistence of the village communities and promoting social justice and respect for human rights under her Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme Project, Uromi JDPCI facilitated Community Dialogue in Four Communities and Adolescent Human Right Club Learning Sessions all in Edo Central Senatorial District. The International Day of Child Protection was commemorated and execution of the Second Quarterly Meeting (April-June, 2022) of the Human Right Clubs.

Relentlessly working to end the ills of Human Trafficking and Irregular Migration in Edo Central Senatorial District, Uromi JDPCI under her Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Human Trafficking Project conducted 2 community and 1 market sensitization to enlighten community dwellers on the dangers associated with Human Trafficking and Irregular Migration. Also, sessions were held with Anti-human trafficking clubs across 10 secondary schools in Edo Central Senatorial District while Community Dialogue meetings were held in four Communities.

Uromi JDPCI through her Don't Pay With Your Life Project facilitated monitoring visits to 50 caregivers and 14 young female Returnees supported by the project in Income Generating Activities to improve their livelihood conditions and reduce their vulnerability to human trafficking. From the visits it was discovered that 41 caregivers and 9 returnees were able to sustain their businesses. The caregivers were also able to sustain the beneficiaries (adolescent girl child) in secondary school with **33** of them successfully graduating from secondary school and one in tertiary institution.

Galvanize Action for Effective Trafficking in Persons Response at the Local Government Level in Edo State. This intervention was birthed due to the need to activate and institutionalize trafficking in persons response at the LGAs of Edo State and has since inception on Monday the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2022 carried out strategic advocacy engagement meeting with 4 (Four) Critical Stakeholders and also paid advocacy entry visits to Critical Stakeholders in Etsako West Local Government Area.

Uromi JDPCI through her Integrated Child Health and Social Service Award facilitated Operation Triple Zero (OTZ) Club Meetings for Adolescents Living With HIV/AIDS at Uromi Central Hospital and Irrua Specialist Teaching Hospital, formed eight Village Savings and Loan Associations, held two review meetings with community and facility case managers and also convened Cluster-Level Meeting with National Population Commission to strengthen collaboration with NPopC to facilitate

birth registration for OVC enrolled in the ICHSSA 2 Project and also provide mentorship on the completion of the live birth registration form known as Form B1. State Level Meeting with State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) was also facilitated to strengthen collaboration with schools in the Local Government Areas (LGAs) within the scope of ICHSSA 2 Project implementation of the project.

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.

## **HUMAN RIGHT DESK**

### ***HUMAN RIGHT EDUCATION AND PARALEGAL SCHEME***

#### ***Community Dialogue Held in Five Communities across Edo Central Senatorial District***

Following the community dialogues held in the last 3 quarters on community stand points to the protection of rights of children and widows, Uromi JDPCI carried out her fourth quarter community dialogue in four selected communities across four Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Edo Central Senatorial District on Child Protection and Widowhood rites and rights. The communities reached were: Ahia Community in Esan South East LGA, Uhe Community, Igueben LGA, Egbele Community in Esan North East LGA and Ukpenu Community in Esan West LGA.

Our learnings from the Dialogue sessions shows that continuous engagement of community stakeholders is a veritable means of behavioral change judging from the awareness created via the sessions and commitment expressed by community stakeholders to modify aspects of their customary laws that negates promotion of human rights of widows and protection of the rights of children.

At Ahia community, discussions revealed that the community system had no clear definition as to the status of child in the community, hence could not effectively ascertain when child abuse have occurred. However, they were strongly against any form of abuse of persons referred to as “Umuaku” ie “very little children without obvious signs of physical maturity”. Haven being enlightened on the legal status of a child in the Nigerian context and the implications of child abuse to the child, the family unit and community at large, they came to the understanding that abuse against any person below age 18 was considered Child Abuse whether or not the person has physical features of maturity. They also realized that the protection of children against sexual and other abuse was a responsibility they owned their young generation in achieving a healthy society as such saw the need to institute a community structure that protect and defend children against abuses.



**Cross session of Participants during the dialogue session at Ahia Community**

On the issue of widowhood practices, the community has friendly customary laws that allows a widow to mourn her husband as she deems fit based on her beliefs.

At Uhe community, a child is regarded as anyone who was below 16 years of age and as such anyone from 16 years and above were no longer regarded as children. This response proved that child marriage was an acceptable contract in the community as they were ignorant of the fact that such practice amounted to child abuse. In the course of discussing the issue, participants were made to understand the illegality of such practice



Cross session of Participants during the dialogue session

by law and participants admitted that due to their error, 45% of children were at risk of child abuse in the community as there was no structure on ground to ensure the protection of children in matters relating to their rights. Based on this, participants resolved to carry out deliberate moves to ensure that community protected their children from all forms of abuses.

For that of widowhood practice, the community participants stated that in the past the widows were subjected to degrading treatments such as been made to sit on the floor, eat with her left hands and sleep on the floor during her mourning periods. However such practice were amended in contemporary times into ensuring that the widow mourned for her husband for a period of 7 days during which she is expected to be on black attire and remain indoors. After the burial ceremony of her deceased husband she further undergoes another 3 months mourning period still on black attire and she is allowed to exercise her freedom of movement to anyplace of her choice within the community but the market. With the knowledge shared on the protection of humans against any derogatory acts, Participants admitted that there still existed elements of ill-treatment of widows in their contemporary practice and therefore agreed to look into it

At Egbelle community, it was realized that there were no clear cut standard of measuring categories of children. The responses from participants were disparate on duties and responsibilities expected from children. While some believed that only infants could be referred to as children, others believed that anyone under the care of their parents were children. Due to the above, elements of child abuse were seen. For instance, the community participants stated that child marriage was not a usual practice except in instances where an incidence of child pregnancy was the case. The implication of this exception was that community participants failed to realize that child pregnancy was as a result of a criminal act of sexual abuse known as rape against the child, and the act of contracting the parties involved in marriage was another crime of child marriage against the child. The community participants who through the discussion understood the legal implications of such practice, as well as the general acceptable age bracket of a child in the Nigeria context (18years) agreed to make necessary amendments in their beliefs and practice with children.



The Director of Programs of Uromi JDPCI addressing participants at Egbelle community

While on the aspect of widowhood practices, participants explained that the practice differed on the bases of the religion of the widow. According to them, if the widow was a traditional worshiper, she would be made to sit on the floor for 7 days, eat with her left hands unwashed before and after eating, made to use a singular

plate to eat which would not be washed throughout the 7 days mourning periods as well as prevented from having her birth throughout the 7 days mourning periods. However, if the widow was a Christian for instance, such a widow would mourn according to her religious practice.

In the course of the dialogue, participants realized the illegal and unhygienic nature of such practice and the need to amend such norm. In view of this, participants promised to make effort in amending the defect.

Lastly at Ukpenu community, participants had divergent views as to the age bracket of children. Some were of the opinion that childhood ended at the age of 12 while others claimed that childhood ended at the age of 17 years. However, they seem to have a general application to the protection of persons who are under 18 years. For instance, they vehemently kicked against any act of child marriage contracted for any indigenous child whether an act leading to child pregnancy was done or not. Also in the course of discussing issues bothering on child protection, they revealed that a crime of rape was regarded as a very serious offence in the community and where an offender was apprehended, the Community Disciplinary committee handovers such offender to the Law enforcement agents (Police) for adequate procedures for sanction.



Cross session of participants during the dialogue

Another aspect of child protection discussed was the aspect of child's right to education and child neglect. The participants noted that community members ensured that their children accessed their right to education, however in cases where such rights were denied, or where child neglect occurred, there were no community structure put in place to checkmate such situations. After much deliberation, participants saw the need to have a community mechanism put in place to enforce child's right and ensure child protection.

On the aspect of widowhood practices, responses from participants showed that such practices which were inhumane was a gender norm in the community in the sense that only widows suffered the fate. According to the participants, the widow who undergoes mourning for a period of 14 days, remained indoors while attired on black and sleeps on either a mat or an old foam; reasons being that all items used by her during the mourning period would be burnt. After that, she is made to undergo another 3 months mourning period after the interment of her deceased husband. This practice was done to any widow in the community, irrespective of her religious belief. In the course of discussion, the participants realized the inhumane nature of such practice and admitted that there was a need to amend the custom of the people.

### ***Adolescent Human Right Club Learning Sessions***



Adolescent Human Right club members in Obedu Secondary School

Uromi JDPCI Project Management Team carried out another impactful learning session with members of the Adolescent Human Right Club in the 25 selected schools within the 5 Local Government Areas of Edo Central Senatorial District. An extensive exposition of the Edo State Child Protection Policy 2015 and Sexual and Gender Based Violence were treated in the course of the sessions which were very interactive.



Irrua Girls Secondary School

A total of 418 students (171 males, 247 females) participated in the learning session and in some of the schools, a high number of students signified interest in becoming members of the Adolescent Human Right Club and they were registered as new members.

The students were taken through the Edo –State Child Protection Policy which was focused on the Code of Conduct enshrined in the policy which provides guidance on the expected standards for appropriate behavior with children, as well as clarified unacceptable forms of behaviors that would lead to formal enquiry, disciplinary measures or criminal proceedings instituted against an offender.



**Egoro Amede Secondary School club meeting, Ekpoma**

The best interest of a child was emphasized as paramount in all decisions concerning a child as enshrined in the policy. Other sections treated included respect of the dignity of children irrespective of their sex, ethnicity, and religion or disability status, the need to keep children under supervision, ensuring that contact with children took place in the open, identifying and avoiding situations which might lead to accusations of improper behavior, ensuring consent of children are sought before obtaining their data, respecting the norms, culture, tradition and religion of children as well as ensuring that children participates in matters concerning them.

Under Sexual and Gender Based Violence, they were taught that rape of minor,



**Adolescent Human Right club members in Ugbejun Grammar School**

forced prostitution, sexual exploitations and sexual harassments were all forms of Child Sexual Abuse. They were thus enlightened on what the law stipulates in responding to such abuse in Edo State.

The fact that adolescent school children are been exposed to the understanding of human right and child protection in their early stage of life, is an added advantage to the behavioral change we aim to see regarding

respect of the rights of persons irrespective of sex, ethnicity, religious and disability status. This is because, their knowledge would broaden their horizon and shape their manners and responses to issues related to human relations and making unlearning of norms which negates respect of human rights unnecessary.

### ***Commemoration of Child Protection Day***

Uromi JDPCI commemorated the Child Protection Day on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of June 2022 with the theme: A BETTER FUTURE FOR EVERY CHILD: SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN’S RIGHTS TO EDUCATION”. The commemoration was used to better enlighten the public on children’s right to education, the negative ripple effects of the negligence of this right and a call for immediate action to salvage the future of our dear country by protecting our children’s right to education, which was already suffering immeasurable neglect.



**Adolescent Human Right club members in Uhiele Secondary School**



The Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI addressing the meeting participants

The event which took place at the Catholic Chancery Hall, Uromi was graced by eminent stakeholders across Edo Central Senatorial District which included Chief Inspectors of Education, School Principals, Secondary School Students, Medical Personnels, Security Agents, Community Human Right



The guest speaker making his presentation

Supervisors and Paralegals as well as men of the Press. The guest speaker, Very Rev Fr Dr. Theopilous Itaman, a renowned educationist whose impacts in the educational sector have caused his students to be rated best in the Senior Secondary School Certificate (WAEC) over the years, succinctly expounded cogent issues impacting children's right to education which includes; Access to education, Equity in the learning process, Challenges in getting quality education, the implications of the Fundamental Rights for the children's education and the way forward in securing a better future for our children through education.



One of the students while making his contribution at the event

Uromi JDPCI recognizes the need for Parents, Caregivers and all stakeholders involved in safeguarding the rights of Children to be continuously enlightened and reminded of their responsibilities in promoting and enforcing children's right.



Group photograph with meeting Participants

Therefore, the Commission leverages on events such as Child Protection Day to keep the relevant stakeholders informed. We are optimistic that this event would serve as another avenue to improve the welfare of children within the senatorial district.

### ***Second Quarterly Meeting (April-June, 2022) Of the Human Right Clubs in Edo Central Senatorial District***

Uromi JDPCI held her 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 - Esan North East, Esan South East, Esan Central, Igueben and Esan West Local Government Areas. The meetings which was an avenue to highlight key human right issues intermediated upon by community Advocates within their communities, as well as receive information on the achievements recorded, challenges encountered and possible subsequent solutions and recommendations to tackle such challenges were successfully held.



## ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING

### ***STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION TO PREVENT HUMAN TRAFFICKING (SCOPPH-T) PROJECT***

#### ***Igueben Market Sensitization***

To create more awareness on human trafficking and irregular migration, Uromi JDPCI carried out a market sensitization at Igueben Market in Igueben LGA with the purpose to educate the market men and women about the hazard of human trafficking and irregular migration. About 582 women and 304 men were reached with a total of 886 persons sensitized about the menace of human trafficking and irregular migration.

The Meaning of human trafficking and its effects to the victims and other related human trafficking issues were shared with the market people as well as the dangers attached to irregular Migration was conveyed to the market men and women.



and women



Community volunteers  
interpreting in Esan dialect

With the help of Public address system, the team was able to reach out to a very large number of people in different areas of the market.

More so, the marketers were educated about the different types of human trafficking which are the child labor, child marriage, the organ removal, forced labor and sex trafficking. Handbills with different human trafficking quotes were also shared to the marketers for better understanding.

A woman in the market contributed saying that “journey through Libya is very risky and dangerous, that she will not allow her child to embark in such risky journey” Another woman shared her experience on how she lost her child in the high sea while travelling to oversee”

Some of the market people thanked the team for coming to educate them on the effect of human trafficking and irregular migration, saying that we should keep the good work and they hope to see us soon again.

#### ***Sensitization to Uke and Ukoni Communities***

As part of efforts to ensure that Community members are aware of the high risks of trafficking associated with irregular migration and are in capacity to inform others, Uromi JDPCI engaged intensive sensitization and awareness creation in communities and took the message of the dangers inherent in human trafficking to community members in Uke in Esan West LGA and Ukoni in Esan North East LGA. The purpose was to enlighten community members about the menace of human

trafficking and Irregular Migration so as to reduce their susceptibility of falling prey to human traffickers as well as discouraging them from supporting and facilitating irregular travels. In the course of the sensitizations in the various communities, The Project Team raised the need for Participants to stop human trafficking and irregular migration. They were made to understand the exploitative nature of human trafficking, the types of human trafficking, its effects and consequences on the individual, their families and the community at large and their roles in preventing the menace as well as a call to action to end human trafficking in their communities, shaming and bringing Traffickers to book. After the sensitization exercise at Uke, one of the community women



Cross Session of Participants during the sensitization at Uke Community



During the sensitization at Ukoni community

who saw the displeasure in some of the participants faces as they were expecting some instant financial assistance from the project team, encouraged them by making them understand that everything should not always be centered on money and this knowledge they had gotten from us on human trafficking and irregular migration will be used to enlighten others and make them see the reasons to discourage human trafficking.

At Ukoni Community, a member of the community told the team and other participants present that the fear of God needs to be instilled in parents, children and youths who are intending to travel out through illegal means and for illegal purposes. In his words, “if they have the fear of God in them, they will know and come to believe that human trafficking is indeed bad and should be stopped.” Another member of the community appreciated the team for coming and noted that the knowledge gotten from internal trafficking would be duly utilized.

### ***Anti-Human Trafficking Club Meetings***

The project team of Uromi JDPCI conducted learning sessions



Agba Grammar school having their session

with members of the anti-human trafficking clubs across 8 Government Secondary Schools namely: Igueben College and Igueben Grammar school in Igueben Local Government Area, and Obiaza mixed secondary school and St. Johnbosco



Emaudo Secondary School club meeting

secondary school in Esan South Local Government Area, Emaudo Secondary School and Eguare secondary school in Esan West LGA, Arue Secondary School and Agba Secondary School in Esan North East, Annunciation Secondary School and Irrua Girls

Secondary School in Esan Central LGA. The students were taught the criminality of the act of trafficking persons and the right of children to be free from every form of human trafficking and exploitation. The students were also thought the various ways in which traffickers can be identified and the bodies they are to report any case of human trafficking to. Using the child's right law in force in Edo State, the student was taken through section 33 which states that any form of exploitation of a child was an offence and punishable under the law with a fine of 50000 or a term of five years or both.



Annunciation Catholic College Irrua

In the end of the club meetings, the students became more knowledgeable about the menace of human trafficking and irregular migration. This was ascertained through their responses to the knowledge assessment questions presented to them during the club's



Obiaza Mixed Secondary School club meeting

productive knowledge sharing sessions.

### ***Community Dialogues***

Within the Period, Uromi JDPCI conducted community dialogue sessions on human trafficking and its associated problems with members of Uhe community in Igueben LGA, Ahia community in Esan South East LGA, Egbele community in Esan North East and Ukpenu Community in Esan West LGA.

At Uhe community, majority of the participants had very low understanding of what human trafficking was all about and based on the discussion carried out, they realized the exploitative nature of human trafficking against the victims, as well as the possibility of harboring traffickers in the community hence the need to be vigilant. However, they believed that victims of human trafficking were mostly females in danger of sexual exploitation and that trafficking in males were rear. One Participant admitted that the community needed to have an organized structure, saddled with the responsibility of protecting community members from becoming victim of human trafficking, as the current practice for protecting oneself was on individual bases which were not inclusive because it entailed the survival of the fittest syndrome. In buttressing this point, one of the participants narrated how she personally intervened in an incident that almost resulted to the trafficking of her sister through personal monitoring and because she had no community support, the perpetrator of the human trafficking was not brought to book. Participants then admitted the need to build such anti-human trafficking group in the community.



During the dialogue session at Ahia community

At Ahia community, majority of the community participants displayed adequate knowledge of some of the dimensions of human trafficking and pointed exploitation as a critical determinant in human trafficking. However, they were cleared of the misconception that a victim's consent to be trafficked absolves the trafficker from being punished.

Arising from the need for community to have safety net that protect people from being trafficked and seeing that perpetrators are adequately punished, the Community came to a conclusion that it was important for them to have a structure that protects young people from falling prey to human traffickers and report identified Traffickers to the appropriate authorities.

At Egbele community, participants showed high level of understanding of the exploitations embedded in human trafficking and as a result its implication against the victim. However, they did not understand the extent to which exploitation could vary. To them, the exploitation surrounded in human trafficking was only prostitution and as such believes that only females were victims of human trafficking. In the course of discussion, the horizon of the participants was broadening and they realized that both sexes could be victims of human trafficking either internally or externally. They also understood that victims of human trafficking could undergo various forms of abuses such as sexual, physical, emotional and even economic abuses.



The DOP Of Uromi JDPCI addressing the participants during the dialogue at Egbele Community  
Photo Credit: Uromi JDPCI

During the discussion, participants resolved to have a community structure to keep surveillance as Anti-human trafficking agents.

At Ukpenu community, participants showed to have some ideas around the activities carried out by human traffickers however, they were not aware of the terminology human trafficking. They also had poor knowledge of such happenings within the community as most of them were skeptical about such acts in practice in the community. But in the course of the dialogue, participants admitted that such occurrences were rampant within the community. One of the participants shared her experience on how she allowed her daughter to go for a Christmas holiday with a relation of hers and the holiday then extended into trafficking. She explained that it was her daughter who told her over phone conversation that she would love to remain with the relation claiming that she was well taken care of in all ramification, only to discover that such information was false after paying a visit to her daughter. She said that she immediately withdrew her daughter from her relations place and on getting home, inquired why the daughter gave her false information. It was only then she realized that each time she called to enquire about the welfare of her child; the child underwent threats of physical abuse from that relation who kept monitoring the phone call conversations.



The Assistant Director of Uromi JDPCI addressing the people at Ukpenu Community Photo Credit: Uromi JDPCI

Participants acknowledged the need to be vigilant henceforth and the Edo-State NAPTIP hot line was shared to the participants to report cases of trafficking in persons.

## **GALVANIZE ACTION FOR EFFECTIVE TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS RESPONSE AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL IN EDO STATE**

### ***Inception and Planning Meeting with Cluster Members***

The need to activate and institutionalize trafficking in persons response at the LGAs of Edo State gave rise to Uromi JDPCI in partnership with Palladium SCALE to implement a two year (2022-2024) trafficking in persons response intervention titled “Galvanize Action for Effective Trafficking In Persons Response at the LGA (Local Government Area) level in Edo State with funding from USAID.

To commence the project implementation in Edo State, Uromi JDPCI conveyed an Inception and Planning Meeting on Monday the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2022 with her six (6) cluster members drawn from across the three senatorial districts of Edo State and includes: JDPCI Auchi and Willi Johnson Foundation (WJF) covering Edo North Senatorial District, Ideal



**The Director of Programs during his presentation on the overview of the SCALE project**  
Photo credit: Uromi JDPCI

Development and Resource Center (IDRC), Girls Power Initiative (GPI) and Edo-State Taskforce against Human Trafficking (ETAHT) covering Edo South Senatorial District and Jose Maria Escreva Foundation Ekpoma covering Edo Central Senatorial District together with Uromi JDPCI; the project anchor.



**Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI addressing the cluster during the meeting**  
Photo credit: Uromi JDPCI

The inception meeting was tailored towards facilitating a clear understanding of the project and its deliverables amongst cluster members in addition to developing actions plans and assignment of roles to the various clusters in order to achieve an effective implementation and a hinge free management of the project.

### ***Strategic Advocacy Engagement Meeting with 4 (Four) Critical Stakeholders: The Chief Judge of Edo State, Ministry of Budget and Planning, The Clerk of Edo State House of Assembly, and The Ministry of Local Government Affairs, Held In Benin City.***

Riding on the commitment to galvanize action for effective trafficking in person response at the grass root, the Localizing Trafficking Persons Response Cluster (LOTIP-R) Cluster anchored by Uromi JDPCI conducted 4 (four) strategic advocacy engagement meetings with some of the Stakeholders mapped out by the project in realizing her advocacy objectives. The Stakeholders engaged during the period (8<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of June 2022) includes: the Chief Judge of Edo State, Hon Justice Joe Itsebaga Acha, the Ministry of Budget and Planning, the Clerk of Edo State House of Assembly (EDHA), Mr. Audu Y. Omogbai and the Ministry of Local Government Affairs.

The engagement meetings were held in Benin City during which the various stakeholders were intimated about the project plans while advocating their support towards the attainment of the project advocacy objectives which includes the Legislative review of the Edo State Trafficking in Persons Prohibition Law 2018 to make

provision for the activation of LGA TIP (Trafficking in Persons) response units, Establishment of the Victims of Trafficking Trust Fund & Victims of Trafficking Trust Fund Committees as stipulated under section 67 and 68 of the Edo TIP Law 2018 and Increased budgetary allocation for the Edo State Taskforce Against Human Trafficking (ETAHT) to enable them meet their current responsibilities and other responsibilities in view upon the establishment of the Local Taskforce Against Human Trafficking at the Local Government Areas

The outcome of these engagements were marked with lots of goodwill by the various stakeholders who pledged commitment to push for and support the project goal.

Hon Justice Joe Itsebaga Acha, the Chief Judge of Edo State commended the Cluster over the project Initiative, particularly on the objective of seeing to the establishment of local taskforce at the LGA level which he described as an innovative and a very important approach to expand frontiers in reaching the rural people who find it difficult to easily access protection agencies due to their locations in the cities. He hoped that with time, the intervention would be extended to wards and the communities. He thus expressed the Judiciary's readiness and willingness to work and partner with the cluster in the areas of enforcement of the law, adding that their doors would always be opened for such partnership and needed support



Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo presenting the advocacy message to the Chief Judge

At the Ministry of Budget and Planning; Mr. Kingsley Ogbedu, the Director Administration who represented the Honourable Commissioner expressed satisfaction over the Clusters' collaboration with the Edo State Taskforce Against Human Trafficking, noting that the plans to have the local taskforce at the grass root was a



Cross session of Participants during the advocacy engagement meeting with ministry of budget and planning

laudable initiative and pledged the Ministry's commitment to provide the necessary support to ETAHT. Likewise, the Director of Budget; Mr. Oseh Michael noted that the Ministry was a collation house for budgets submitted by MDAs and thus advised that ETAHT should make deliberate effort to include all their planned activities in their budget and give strong justifications for their budgeted activities. He assured the Team that they would on their own part give the necessary support to see that the budget scales through. Similarly, the Director of planning; Mrs. Ebuwa Odeh reiterated the need for CSOs to collaborate with MDAs during the budget formulation process so that they can provide the needed guidance and make necessary input to the budget before it gets to

the collation house-Which is the Ministry of Budget and Planning.

The Clerk of Edo State House of Assembly, Mr. Audu Y. Omogbai reiterated that his office and the House in general was disposed to supporting issues that seeks to improve humanity. He assured the Team of the needed support to push for the advocacy objectives though the House was currently on recess and would resume fully on Monday the 21<sup>st</sup> of June, 2022. He advised the Team to leverage on sitting days to engage other members of the house since majority of the House members would be available on such days. The Clerk also sensitized the Team on the procedures and stages of bill signing, expounding that private members sponsored bills were easier and faster to push compared to government sponsored bills. He indulged the Cluster to present their proposed inputs and submit a draft to the house so that they can push for two or more members to sponsor the bill. He emphasized that the Proposal be submitted timely so that the sitting 7<sup>th</sup> Assembly can start and finish it before their tenure expires to avoid starting afresh with the next Assembly.



Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo presenting the advocacy letter to the Clerk of EDHA

At the Ministry of Local Government Affairs, the Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Dorcas Idehen appreciated UROMI JDPCI, other cluster members and CSOs present for this great initiative stating that the issue of human trafficking was a familiar terrain which requires all hands to be on deck to mitigate. She commended that the interventions of Uromi JDPCI and other bodies working in the terrain are recognized and applauded by various stakeholders including the Ministry hence they would not hesitate to provide the necessary support in pushing for the activation of the Local Taskforce once it is approved. She hinted that the bill to translate the Edo State taskforce against Human Trafficking into an Agency started with the erstwhile State Executive before it was dissolved. However with the permission of the Hon. Commissioner, she expressed commitment to find out the current status of the bill and push to see that the Agency is cascaded to the various Local Government levels so that together we will fight human trafficking and its ills in the society and Nigeria as a whole.



The Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI while presenting the Advocacy letter to the Hon. Commissioner

The Hon. Commissioner; Hon. Monday Osaigbovo also appreciated the team for her wonderful initiative to fight human trafficking from the grassroot. He raised the need for all actors to come together to fight the ills of human trafficking because the situation has moved from bad to worse and if not properly looked into, it might pose a great threat to our country Nigeria. He promised that after the meeting, he will meet with the council chairmen from the different Senatorial district; they will digest the content on the advocacy message and will spring into action as soon as the law is amended.

***Advocacy Entry Visits to Critical Stakeholders in Etsako West Local Government Area- The LGA Acting Chairman, The Oturu of Auchi, The Woman and The Youth Leader of Etsako West LGA***

The Cluster also progressed with advocacy entry visits to stakeholders in Etsako West Local Government Area which includes; the acting chairman of Etsako West Local Government Area, the Otaru of Auchi and the Women Leader and the Youth Leader of the LGA. The visits were made on Thursday, the 9<sup>th</sup> of June



During the visit to the traditional leader of Estako west LGA: The Otaru of Auchi

2022 to formally present the project to them and secure their support

towards a successful implementation of the Project in the Local Government.



During the visit to the Acting Chairman of Etsako West LGA

In the course of the meetings, the various stakeholders gave assurances of their collaboration and expressed interest and enthusiasm to support the project implementation in Etsako West LGA. Thus, having obtained their backing and buy-in, it is needless to say that the project would achieve the expected success in Etsako West LGA



Cross session of Participants during the visit the Youth Leader of Etsako West LGA  
Photo Credit: Uromi JDPCI

## **ORPHAN AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN DESK**

### ***INTEGRATED CHILD HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES AWARD (ICHSSA II)***

#### ***Operation Triple Zero (OTZ) Club Meetings for Adolescents at Uromi Central Hospital, Esan North East And Irrua Specialist Teaching Hospital, Esan Central LGA***

In view of empowering adolescents and young persons living with HIV between the ages of 10 -17 years to take control of their health, Uromi JDPCI in alliance with Association for Reproductive and Family Health (ARFH) on the ICHSSA -2 Project organized OTZ meetings at ISTH, Esan Central and Uromi Central Hospital, Esan North East LGAs of Edo state on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May and 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2022 respectively.

Following the registration of the participating children, a recap of the last held OTZ meeting was done by one of the CLHIV, where she informed her peers that OTZ means Operation Triple Zero- of which the first zero stands for zero missed appointment, the second; zero missed medication and the third zero viral load. Explaining zero viral load to be a state where HIV is undetectable in the blood of an HIV infected person and as such untransmittable; owing to strict adherence to ART, the children were counseled to adhere strictly to their medication.

The facilitator explained that among other objectives, the Integrated Child Health and Social Services Award aims at increasing access to health care and treatment of Children Living with HIV/AIDS. She revealed that adolescent and young people living with HIV face complex challenges dealing with



a chronic illness amidst the physical, emotional, and psychological development changes of transitioning from childhood to adulthood hence the need to increase access to treatment and health care. She further stated that the HIV epidemic among adolescents and young people is characterized by relatively high incidence and sub optimal treatment outcomes, including a relatively high loss to follow-up, low adherence to treatment and low viral suppression, hence the need for OTZ club, a movement which engages adolescent and young persons as active stakeholders and partners in their health by promoting a responsive service delivery model. While admonishing the participants to always be in meeting attendance, she revealed that OTZ club offers a comprehensive HIV treatment literacy package which empowers CLHIV to be self-health managers. The meeting facilitators also brought to the awareness of the children the importance of personal hygiene and what it entails as it also contributes to boosting their immunity.

The sessions were wrapped up with the children having a better understanding of the importance of OTZ as well as maintaining proper hygiene.

### ***Formation of Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) in Five Communities***

In view of improving the financial security of vulnerable households within the scope of the ICHSSA 2 Project, through the improvement of the means of livelihood of caregivers by way of cultivating a savings and loaning culture at the community level. Uromi JDPCI facilitated the formation of 8 VSLA groups in 8 communities within 4 LGAs of Edo Central Senatorial District. The Communities include Ugbokhare, Atuagbo, Iki and Akho communities in Esan Central LGA, Eguare and Ihunmudumu communities in Esan west LGA, Okhesan community in Esan South East LGA, and Eror Community in Esan North East LGA



During VSLA formation in one of the Communities

### ***Review Meetings with Community and Facility Case Managers***



The Executive Director, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo admonishing CVs on the need to stir up enrollments

As part of activities to retrospect on how performance could be improved, Uromi JDPCI held two her bi-monthly review meeting with Community/Facility Case Managers on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 2022 and 10<sup>th</sup> of June, 2022 at the chancery hall, chancery complex, Egbele, Uromi.

The meeting was aimed at reviewing performance, process

and strategy in meeting the project's target with special focus on aggressive case finding and enrollment.



The Program Officer anchoring a session during one of the review meetings

## **MICRO CREDIT DESK**

Uromi JDPCI has continued to provide empowerment to small scale enterprises and active farmers within Edo Central Senatorial District through her micro credit scheme which provide soft loans with very minimal interest rate for economic development. The soft loans are given to groups (Poor Women and Men) who are active in business and small scale commercial agricultural activities to enable them boost their business which would ultimately lead to an improvement in their livelihood conditions. The Scheme has empowered over 1631 persons across 140 groups with 69 active groups

Within the period, eight new groups were formed across the Scheme and members of the groups were trained and disbursed soft loans for their business activities. Refresher training was also conducted for seven existing groups who have completed their loan cycles with the interest to continue with the scheme while nine groups were reimbursed.

## **INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING**

### ***Training on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Art-Based Intervention***

Uromi JDPCI participated in a refresher training on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Art-Based Intervention organized by International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Benin which spanned from 8<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> of May 2022. In the course of training, Community-Based Approach intervention to MHPSS were extensively discussed including Socio-Relational and Cultural Activities and Creative Art-Based Activities; which has capacity to transform suffering, negative experiences and collective wounds in artistic production. The importance of sport and play and its relevance to MHPSS interventions were also expounded as well as community Based Counselling.