



UROMI JDPCI Newsletter

A Quarterly Publication of Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (JDPCI) VOL. 32 NO. 40 JUNE 2024 EDITION

INTRODUCTION

Uromi JDPCI is deeply committed to the promotion of justice and peace, the fostering of meaningful development, and the provision of support to the vulnerable members of the society. Our diverse initiatives reflect this dedication, as we strive to advance comprehensive human development through inclusive and engaging programmes that unite key stakeholders.

In our Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme, we commemorated the international day against Child labour and abuse. We conducted quarterly learning sessions with adolescent human rights clubs across 26 secondary schools in five Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Edo Central Senatorial District and also organized quarterly meetings with paralegals and human rights advocates in 30 communities within the Edo Central Senatorial District, culminating in a robust discussion and experience sharing.

Through our Migration and Countering Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) desk, we executed a variety of activities aimed at reducing human trafficking in Edo State. These efforts included facilitation of child protection committee meetings in 10 communities, quarterly learning sessions with Child Champions both at the school and community levels and biannual caregivers/parent forum. We also had an engagement

meeting with the Edo State Taskforce against Human Trafficking.

In collaboration with the Integrated Child Health and Social Services Award, our initiatives included Operation Triple Zero (OTZ) and gender norm sessions for adolescents living with HIV/AIDS, alongside programmes designed to empower female students and support caregivers.

Our micro-credit scheme has provided soft loans to small and medium-scale enterprises and active farmers across the five LGAs of the Edo Central Senatorial District, resulting in numerous success stories.

Under the Correctional Center Apostolate, we offered spiritual and counseling services for inmates at the Ubiaja Correctional Center.

In our Environment and Climate Change intervention, we commemorated the International Mother Earth Day and World Environment Day. These were used to raise awareness on tree planting initiatives as part of climate change mitigation strategies.

Finally, Uromi JDPCI conducted sensitization campaigns in parishes to strengthen JDPC activities at the parish level, promoting justice, development, and peaceful coexistence within the parishes and the broader community.

HUMAN RIGHT DESK

HUMAN RIGHT EDUCATION AND PARALEGAL SCHEME

COMMEMORATION OF INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR AND ABUSE

On May 30, 2024, Uromi JDPCI hosted a significant event to commemorate the International Day against Child Labour and Abuse. This event was used to reaffirm Uromi JDPCI's unwavering commitment to protecting the rights and well-being of every child.

The event raised awareness about the importance of promoting the well-being and safety of children. Also, it served as a reminder of the necessity of ensuring that children have access to life's essentials and a nurturing environment in which to flourish.

The event with the theme "Children are our future, the more we invest in them, the better the future will be" emphasized the need to see children not only as recipients of care and protection but as essential

contributors to society's future.

Key participants at the event included Traditional Leaders, Religious Leaders, Representatives of Local Government Chairmen, Educationists, Community Women and Youth Leaders, Principals of Schools, Community Paralegals from 35 communities, Students from 27 secondary schools within Edo Central Senatorial District, and members of the press.

Highlights of the event featured a keynote address by the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI Very Rev Fr Dr Fidelis Arhedo, where he called on the government to invest in the education of Children and return to the glorious educational system of the past



The Winner of the Essay Competition



UROMI JDPCI

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 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	Faith-Based Non-Governmental, Non-For-Profit, 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, Correctional Center Apostolate and Legal Aid services, Peace Building, Micro-Credit, and Caritas, TB and HIV/AIDS care and support, HIV Counseling and testing, Livelihood and Food Security, Migration and Countering Trafficking in Person, and OVC programming
Project steered	Conflict Management, Training of Electorate, Election Observation, Budget Monitoring, Community TB Care, HIV/AIDS Awareness Creation and counselling, 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, Galvanize Action for Effective Trafficking in Persons Response, Act Against Child Trafficking in Nigeria.
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.
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Auditors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grant Thornton chartered Accountants Emgn, Lagos Branch 2. Edforte, Fortne, Ehiagwina & Associates 141, Benin-Auchi Road, Ekpoma, Edo State
Bankers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · UBA BANK PLC Mission Road, Uromi · ECOBANK PLC Mission Road, Uromi · FIDELITY BANK PLC Mission Road, Uromi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · UNITY BANK PLC Mission Road Uromi · UNION BANK PLC Mission Road Uromi · ZENITH PLC Mission Road, Uromi
Staff Strength	24
Registered Volunteers	72
Project Executed	26

where children had the necessary resources and a good environment for learning. A compelling presentation on the event's theme was made by Dr. Peter Aikore, a distinguished educationist and retired principal, who stated that investing in children establishes a foundation for growth and resilient societies, capable of breaking the cycles of poverty, marginalization, violence, and conflict. As such, he encouraged parents to train their children diligently and motivate them to study, noting that intellectual development occurs naturally when children engage in learning. An engaging essay competition among school-children was also conducted to give the children the opportunity to showcase their knowledge in contribution to the elimination of child abuse. The winners of the competition (first, second, and third) received attractive prizes, with consolation prizes awarded to the 8 students who participated in recognition of their efforts.



The award presentation ceremony saw each of the top three winners receiving a prestigious plaque for their school, along with cash prizes of NGN50,000, NGN30,000, and NGN20,000 respectively. Additionally, all eight participants were honored with consolation prizes, consisting of a school bag, 10 branded notebooks, and 2 biros each. Acknowledging the broader participation, all students who attended the event were given 2 branded exercise books and a biro each. All of these exemplify Uromi JDPCI's commitment to investing in the future of children.



On behalf of the students, the winner of the Essay competition appreciated Uromi JDPCI and her Partner; MISEREOR Germany for their commitment to investing in the future of children and promised to work hard in achieving success in life and contributing to the common good of the society.

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QUARTERLY LEARNING SESSION WITH ADOLESCENT HUMAN RIGHTS CLUB

Uromi JDPCI has continued to facilitate learning sessions with Adolescent Human Rights Clubs in 25 secondary schools across Edo Central Senatorial District. These sessions are designed to empower young people with knowledge about their rights, raise awareness about Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), equip them with skills to protect themselves and support others experiencing violence or abuse, and foster a culture of respect for human rights.



educated on these rights and their daily implications, enabling them to become better advocates for themselves and others. Emphasis was placed on the right to personal dignity, encouraging respect for oneself and others. Additionally, discussions on privacy and family life highlighted the importance of respecting personal boundaries and confidentiality, fostering mutual respect.



Understanding the right to protection from violence and discrimination helped students recognize the importance of personal safety and the need to stand against bullying, sexual, physical, or psychological abuse, ensuring equal treatment for all children regardless of their background or characteristics. Real-life examples were provided to deepen their understanding of these issues.

Held across five Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Edo Central Senatorial District, the sessions saw participation from 561 students, comprising 179 males and 382 females. Recognizing that many new members had joined the groups in the various schools, this first session in the new project phase introduced students to the fundamental rights and freedoms of a child, including freedom from discrimination and protection from abuse. They also learned about the meaning of SGBV and the topics that would be covered in the 10 facilitated sessions.



It was noted that many club members were new due to the graduation of older members. This underscores the need to sustain and enhance the learning sessions to keep adolescents informed and engaged with current human rights issues. This empowerment enables them to effectively advocate for their rights, combat



SGBV, and promote a culture of respect and equality among their peers.

There is a growing interest and awareness among young people regarding human rights issues, evidenced by the increased participation in the learning sessions. This suggests a rising engagement and motivation among adolescents to advocate for respect, equality, and accountability. Consequently, there may be a need to expand resources to accommodate this growing interest and effectively nurture their advocacy for human rights.

Some students shared insights on how the Human Rights Club has impacted their lives. They mentioned that the club helped them understand their rights, avoid deception, and differentiate between sex and gender.

They also noted an increased understanding of SGBV and basic human rights, enabling them to make informed decisions.

One member shared a success story of advising a man in her community who used to beat his wife. She explained that his actions were a violation of the woman's rights and discussed relevant human rights laws, leading the man to agree to stop the abuse.

Additionally, students expressed that human rights education has equipped them to address issues within the school, such as standing against bullying. One student noted that being a club member made him an advocate for peace and against the oppression of female students.

QUARTERLY MEETING WITH PARALEGALS AND HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES

In June 2024, Uromi JDPCI conducted quarterly meetings with paralegals and human rights advocates from the 35 Community Human Rights Clubs across the five Local Government Areas (LGAs)



in Edo Central Senatorial District. This gathering marked the inaugural meeting for Phase 3 of the Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme

project. Implemented across 35 communities within the five LGAs, the project aims to address local human rights issues and challenges, promoting dialogue and learning from shared experiences.

The primary objective of these meetings was to provide a platform for paralegals to discuss and dialogue about human rights issues and challenges specific to their respective communities. It also aimed to facilitate learning from the lessons shared by



others, thereby enhancing the overall impact of the project. Additionally, the quarterly meetings served as an opportunity for impact assessment and the provision of technical support to the various groups. These sessions also functioned as learning opportunities for



experience sharing and capacity building, where participants could benefit from the experiences shared by their peers within their



LGAs. The project team further utilized these sessions to offer coaching on case management and strategies to ensure their work leaves a

lasting legacy for future generations.

The meeting saw the participation of paralegals and human rights advocates from the 35



community-based Human Rights Clubs, along with supervisors and heads of the Department of Social Development from the

five LGAs in Edo Central Senatorial District. A total of 400 individuals (238 males and 162 females) attended across the five LGAs. Participants reported on activities conducted in their respective communities and exchanged knowledge and ideas on best practices to address challenges encountered during interventions.

Among the notable achievements reported were several impactful interventions by different communities. The Efandion community facilitated the return of out-of-school children, ensuring they



resumed their education. In Akho, community elders, influenced by the local Human Rights Club, abolished the practice of forced-widow inheritance, aligning



with the Monarch's decision. Other communities, such as Eror and Ewatto, intervened in cases of domestic violence and wife battery,

demonstrating the efficacy of the clubs in addressing critical issues.

In the Ivue community, the Human Rights Club intervened in a case of child maltreatment where a child was deprived of food by their guardian. This intervention highlights the club's role in protecting vulnerable children within their communities. Uzea community focused on advocating for the protection of their water source to prevent further instances of water poisoning and pollution, showcasing their proactive approach to safeguarding community health.

The Ewu community resolved family conflicts through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), demonstrating a peaceful and effective approach to handling domestic disputes. The Idumebo Human Rights Club assisted a woman who had been physically abused and sent away by her husband, helping her gain access to her shop and providing legal support as her case was taken to court with representation from Uromi JDPCI.

In Ukhun community, the Human Rights Club resolved a dispute between a father and son that had resulted in the child being neglected by the father. This intervention underscores the importance of family unity and the protection of children's rights. Additionally, the Ukpenu community intervened in a case of physical abuse that resulted in impaired hearing, showcasing their commitment to addressing and preventing violence.

The Ebelle and Ewossa communities also played significant roles in handling cases of domestic violence and neglect. These interventions illustrate the widespread impact of the Human Rights Clubs in promoting safety and justice within their communities.

In his opening remark, the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo expressed his appreciation for the commitment and zeal demonstrated by the paralegals and human rights advocates during the previous phase of the project. He urged them to sustain their passion and dedication in the new phase. Fr. Arhedo emphasized the importance of honesty and transparency, noting that these values are essential in creating a lasting legacy for future generations. He also highlighted the need for paralegals to promote social inclusion and integration within their communities, stressing that all human beings, regardless of religion, economic status, or social standing, are equal. Communities must view every member as a human being first, before considering any societal stratifications.

The quarterly meetings not only provided a platform for discussing human rights issues but also fostered a sense of community and shared purpose among the participants. By learning from each other's experiences and receiving technical support, the paralegals and human rights advocates were better equipped to address the unique challenges in their respective communities. This collaborative approach is essential in ensuring the success and sustainability of the Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme project, ultimately leading to stronger, more resilient communities that uphold and respect human rights.

MIGRATION AND COUNTERING TRAFFICKING IN PERSON ACT AGAINST CHILD TRAFFICKING IN NIGERIA (AACTING PROJECT)

Within the reporting quarter, Uromi JDPCI held quarterly meetings to strengthen child protection groups at the community level, facilitated quarterly learning sessions with Child Champions both at the school and community levels and conducted its biannual caregivers/parent forum. All of these were aimed at enhancing efforts to combat child trafficking in the Act Against Child Trafficking in Nigeria (AACTING) Project. The project's goal is to contribute to reducing the prevalence of child trafficking especially for the purpose of sexual exploitation in Edo State with the support of ECPAT France and Luxembourg,

Strengthening Child Protection Groups at The Community Level

In April 2024, Uromi JDPCI held quarterly meetings with Community Child Protection Groups established in 10 communities across the five Local Government Areas in Edo Central Senatorial District. The meeting provided an avenue to gather feedback from the



During the meeting at Emaudo community

Community Child Protection Groups, regarding their efforts and involvements in fostering the protection of children against

child trafficking in their communities. It also sought to gauge their progress in fulfilling their collective duties, identify areas requiring support, and offer



Child Protection Committee at Amendokhian

continuous capacity enhancement to optimize the groups' performances. The groups visited include the Child Protection Group in Usenu, Idunwele, Ebelle, Igueben, Emaudo, Ujoelen Amedokhian, Efandion, Ubiaja and Okhuesan. A total of 101 members; 52 males and 49 females participated in the meeting across the 10 groups visited.

During the meetings with the various groups, the communal nature of their intervention to protect children from trafficking was emphasised. Members were encouraged to approach their roles with dedication and commitment, utilising the knowledge gained from training to enhance their engagement. They were urged to actively engage in awareness-raising efforts and establish a visible presence as watchdogs against human trafficking in their communities to foster trust and encourage community members to report cases and incidents of child trafficking to them. Additionally, they were tasked with paying courtesy visits to the



Divisional Police Officers within their Local Government Areas to introduce themselves and establish collaborative efforts with the Police in addressing human

trafficking issues. Members were also briefed on the project's progress, including the establishment of relevant structures in the local government to combat child trafficking, the formation of community child champion clubs, engagements with key influencers, and capacity-building workshops.

Feedback from some of the groups revealed their engagements in awareness-raising efforts which sensitized traders and community members about the perils of human trafficking. One of the groups also reported their intervention in escalating the trafficking of a 19-year-old girl who was deceived by the Aunt's soon-to-be husband; to be offered a job opportunity in France, but was instead trafficked to Mali. With the involvement of NAPTIP and the community watch group, the case was reported at the divisional police level and was transferred to the State CID, and through the support of the girl's parents, she was successfully returned from Mali in May 2024.

The groups were tasked to intensify sensitization campaigns in their respective communities, targeting

various segments such as churches, other schools in the area yet to be reached, groupings of women, transporters, traders, the council of chiefs, and other active community associations which the groups agreed to do.

Quarterly Sessions with Child Champion Clubs in 10 Schools and 10 Communities



Interactive learning sessions were conducted for members of the Child Champion Clubs in ten government secondary schools and 10 communities across the

five Local Government Areas of Edo Central Senatorial District. These sessions aimed to educate children and young people about the risks associated with child trafficking, equip them with skills to identify potential trafficking scenarios and prevent them, and provide guidance on how to report such incidents to appropriate authorities. Emphasis was placed on their crucial role in combating trafficking within their



communities by taking on the role of peer educators in spreading the knowledge about child trafficking to their peers. The topic covered in the sessions was the overview of child trafficking, during which participants learned relevant terminologies, including the definition of a child, what constitutes child trafficking, and the different forms of child trafficking.

A total of 216 persons made up of 155 females and 61 males participated in the session. Out of which 114 (88 females and 26 males) were students while 102 (67 females and 35 males) were reached in communities.



The sessions clarified the legal definition of a child as a person under the age of 18, as such solidifying the Children's understanding of who a child is which they were uncertain of before the session.

It was also noted that child trafficking is never the child's fault, as children are inherently incapable of giving consent to being trafficked or exploited. Vulnerable girls and boys,





especially those who are homeless, immigrants, or from marginalized communities, were noted to be at the highest risk, stressing

that Children were more affected by trafficking as 27% of all human trafficking victims worldwide are children and that both girls and boys were vulnerable.

Participants discussed why children are particularly susceptible to trafficking, and factors such as ease of manipulation, coercion by parents, youthful vibrancy, and a lack of understanding of the implications of trafficking and exploitation were highlighted by the children.



In conclusion, the children were allowed to recap what they had learned and were tasked with sharing the knowledge gained with at least two individuals in their communities. They enthusiastically committed to this responsibility, which shows a growing interest in the club sessions. They were encouraged to meet every month to give feedback on their task and discuss other avenues to create awareness among their peers within their communities.

Biannual Forum with Parents/Caregivers

On the 25th of June, 2024, Uromi JDPCI facilitated the first biannual forum with parents/caregivers. The programme brought together 40 parents/caregivers of the child champions from the 10 communities within the project scope. They were specifically targeted to



strengthen the ongoing awareness efforts among the child champions by ensuring their parents also understand and help prevent child trafficking. The forum

thus served as a platform to educate parents and caregivers about the prevalence and dangers of child trafficking, how to recognize signs and indicators of trafficking in their own children and others, and the preventive strategies they can implement.

The goal was to create a community-wide network of vigilance and support, where parents, caregivers, and adolescents work



together to prevent and report suspicious activities related to human trafficking in their communities.

During the session, parents were introduced to the concept of child trafficking, including both internal and external trafficking. They learned about the various activities children can be trafficked for, the criminality of child trafficking, and its effects on victims, using recent relatable cases within the communities to illustrate the prevalence and dangers of human trafficking.

Crucial information was provided about sexual exploitation and other forms of exploitation and their impact on children and families. Recent trends where children are manipulated into exploitative activities through online interactions were highlighted. Stressing that these interactions often start with children being manipulated into sending explicit photos, followed by blackmailing them into leaving their homes, and subsequently trafficking them for further exploitative work, often without their parents' knowledge. To



protect their children, parents were advised to caution them about online interactions, particularly with strangers.

To further emphasize the critical lessons on the dangers of child trafficking, a video documentary highlighting a recent case of children trafficked from Imo State to Ghana for sexual exploitation was shown to parents. This powerful visual aid vividly illustrated the real and present threats facing children and reinforced the need to keep them safe from exploitation.

Feedback from the session revealed that some of the caregivers had not considered child trafficking as a criminal offense punishable by law, as some perceived it as a means of helping people. They also became more enlightened on the various dimensions of exploitation a victim could be exposed to and affirmed that people in their communities were still ignorant of these issues and saw the need for increased awareness. The parents committed to reaching out to other parents in their communities with the knowledge gained to contribute to the prevention of child trafficking.



A total of 48 persons (35 females and 13 males) comprising the parents, Caregivers, field officers, and the project staff participated in the

activity.

GALVANIZE ACTION FOR EFFECTIVE TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS RESPONSE AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL IN EDO STATE (GATIP) PROJECT

Follow-Up Engagement with The Edo State Taskforce Against Human Trafficking

A follow-up engagement was conducted by the LOTIP-R Cluster with Dr. Godwin Morka, the acting head, and consultant of the Edo State Taskforce against Human Trafficking on Tuesday 23rd of April, 2024 at the Edo Heritage Hotel, Benin City.



The primary objective of this engagement was to obtain feedback on the ongoing law review of the Edo State Trafficking Law and particularly ascertain if

our advocacy asks concerning the establishment of Local Response Units have been considered in the law. We further sought to amplify the need for the activation of the Victims of Trafficking Trust Fund and its committee as soon as the Law is in place, as well as identify strategic capacity-building initiatives and support mechanisms for staff of the Edo State Taskforce Against Human Trafficking to enhance our advocacy goal and objectives.

Dr. Godwin Morka emphasized that efforts were well underway to transition the Edo State Taskforce against Human Trafficking into a Migration Agency. This transition involves drafting legislation to formalize the Migration Agency, a process currently in progress. He revealed he was

already including some of our asks into the draft five-year strategic plan for the Migration Agency, being championed by the International



Organization for Migration (IOM), encompassing strategic partnerships and institutional development. This plan includes expanding the Agency's reach beyond the city center by establishing Senatorial and Local Government Offices, adding that it is also captured in his conceptual framework for the Agency. He viewed the Cluster's request as crucial to further support its integration into the law, which is expected to be enacted by August 2024. The meeting had a total of 9 participants (4 males and 5 females) in attendance.

ORPHAN AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN DESK

The Integrated Child Health and Social Services Award (ICHSSA 2) Project is a four-year initiatives implemented in the Edo Central Senatorial District by Uromi Justice, Development, and Peace/Caritas Initiative (JDPCI), with support from the Association for Reproductive and Family Health (ARFH) and funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The project's primary objective is to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on vulnerable children and their households through a comprehensive multi-programmatic approach. In the recent quarter, the project conducted strategic activities aimed at attaining the project goal.

Among the activities conducted within the quarter were HIV testing and screening for 797 (400F 397M) persons across the project LGAs in Edo Central Senatorial District. A total of 128 (73M 55F) Children Living with HIV/AIDS (CLHIV) were supported with the sum of 3000 each to access various facilities for their drug pick up while 76 (44M 32F) CLHIV were supported for viral load uptake. The project also supported 47 CLHIV enhanced adherence counselling within the reporting quarter. This has led to, greater ART adherence, greater viral suppression amongst these CLHIV, and a better understanding of their treatment literacy.

Operation Triple Zero (OTZ) session

Uromi JDPCI conducted three Operation Triple Zero sessions at Uromi Central Hospital, Esan North East, and Irrua Specialist Teaching Hospital Esan Central on March 22, 2024. The session was attended by 213 (98



males and 115 females) children living with HIV. These sessions created an avenue for the CLHIV to be mentored on Leadership skills, Peer

mentorship skills as well as their rights and responsibilities. Thus equipping them with information for self-reliant in the management of their health condition and enhancing the sustainability of the project while keeping them informed on their rights and responsibilities as they commemorated Children's day.



Fish roll making ongoing

where a total of 166 (154F 12M) caregivers were reached with skills to improve their income-generating activities (IGAs). The caregivers were taken through the skills of soap making, how to make perfume, air freshener, fish roll, buns, and Puff Puff. This was to improve their streams of income for a more sustainable means



Financial literacy training on going



Food demonstration at Uzenema

of livelihood. In the same vein, financial management training was conducted for a total of 51(48F 3M) caregivers within the reporting quarter. The training helped to strengthen their capacity in the areas of finance management, equipped them with skills for the identification of business opportunities and record keeping.

Food Demonstration



Food demonstration at Eguare Uzenema

Two food demonstration sessions were held at Eguare and Uzenema communities for 60 caregivers (55F 5M). The purpose was to improve nourishment for children ages 0-5 years. The sessions addressed the critical aspects of early childhood nutrition and shared insights on best practices for ensuring the healthy development of young children while taking them through practical session for providing an adequate diet for children. The sessions gave them a deeper understanding of how to meet the nutritional needs of their young ones and equipped them with practical tools and strategies to implement more nutritious meals at home using locally available food stuffs.



Emaudo Secondary School

Gender Norms Training in Schools

Uromi JDPCI conducted a 10-hour gender norms training for 300 (174F 126M) in-school children of the

following secondary schools: Efandion Secondary School Uromi, Agba Grammar School Uromi, Eguare Secondary School Ekpoma, Idumuza Secondary secondary and Emaudo Secondary School. The purpose was to create gender norms awareness and imbibe appropriate gender norms practices in the children.

No Means No Session

Uromi JDPCI empowered a total of 120 female students ages 9-13 of Obiyon Secondary School, Divine Encounter Academy, Obhili Secondary School, and Rising Star Academy all of Esan North East LGA with essential knowledge and skills related to consent, boundaries, and sexual violence prevention. This was done through the No Means No platform; resulting in student-advocate and ambassadors educated and equipped with the necessary tools to navigate interpersonal relationships and address issues related to consent as well as prevent sexual violence using physical skills.



NO means NO session in Divine encounter secondary school



NO means NO session at rising star

Training on Post Gender Based Violence Care

3 staff of Uromi JDPCI were trained on post-gender-based violence (GBV) care, thus improving their knowledge and skills necessary to provide first-line support services to survivors of gender-based violence.

Monitoring Visit

Uromi JDPCI carried out monitoring visit to a total of 134 CLHIV households and 10 Caregivers empowered with business start up kits across the project LGA, within the reporting quarter thus providing psychosocial support and community adherence counselling to the concerned beneficiaries as well as financial literacy education. While providing social protection for a total of 125 orphans and vulnerable children through the provision of birth certificates.

Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA)

The organisation also supervised and coordinated atotal of 30 VSLA meetings, attended by a total of 211communities members (counting per head perappearance) from 3 VSLA groups in Esan centralLGA. The groups saved a total of 733,000 with a loan out of510,000; amounting to a cumulative savings of1,277,500 and a cumulative loan out of 925,000. This initiativeallowed for the availability of income for the support of theirbusiness expansion leading to improvement in their living standard and household economy.

MICRO CREDIT DESK

Uromi JDPCI remains dedicated to supporting rural farmers and small traders in Edo Central Senatorial District through various microcredit schemes, aiming to alleviate poverty in families and communities. During the recent reporting period, the organization conducted regular visits to beneficiaries for empowerment and provided technical support in the form of financial literacy to enhance their business management. We established three new groups with 17 members and reimbursed fourteen groups comprising 90 members.



The Micro Credit Scheme is providing prospects for groups of individuals to enhance their livelihood opportunities through sustainable small enterprise development. The scheme is increasing their access to reliable sources of capital for business development and reducing their economic vulnerability. The scheme has also been instrumental in promoting financial inclusion by integrating previously unbanked individuals into the formal financial system thereby enhancing their financial security.

CORRECTIONAL CENTER APOSTOLATE

Spiritual and Counselling Services for Inmates in Ubiaja Correctional Center

Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (JDPCI) recently visited the Ubiaja Correctional Center to provide essential legal and spiritual counseling. The team aimed to identify inmates with minor offenses who lack the means for legal representation, facilitating their access to necessary legal services. An advocacy meeting was also held with the new Officer in Charge of the facility. In total, ninety-one (91) male inmates, including one person with a disability, benefited from this outreach.

Spiritual Counseling

Uromi JDPCI conducted two impactful sessions of spiritual counseling for the inmates at Ubiaja Correctional Center. The themes of these sessions were "The Importance of a Resolute Spirit and Trust in God" and "Conquering Shame and Guilt." The discussions emphasized the necessity of making firm decisions to avoid returning to a life of crime and encouraged inmates to overcome feelings of shame through meditation, positive thinking, anger management, and future planning.

Several inmates shared that these sessions have brought them closer to God, helping them realize that crime destroys lives and leads to no positive outcomes. Many expressed their commitment to

not seeking revenge against their offenders after serving their sentences.

Legal Counseling

The Uromi JDPCI legal team provided legal counseling to thirty-one (31) inmates, assisting those with minor offenses in assessing their cases for legal guidance and potential representation in court. This initiative aims to promote fair hearings and ensure access to justice for all inmates.

Courtesy Visit

During the visit, the team advocated for ongoing collaboration with the Correctional Center by meeting with the new welfare officer. He expressed gratitude for Uromi JDPCI's dedicated efforts within the Correctional Center Apostolate and pledged his support for the organization's initiatives to ensure effective service delivery.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Uromi JDPCI remains steadfast in addressing inmates' legal and spiritual needs by offering legal guidance and spiritual counseling. These efforts foster hope, encourage self-improvement, and promote a positive outlook for the future among those incarcerated.

ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE

Commemoration of The International Mother Earth Day



Uromi Justice Development and Peace Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) carried out community sensitization and public awareness rallies centered around the theme "Planet vs. Plastics" to commemorate International Mother Earth Day. It was aimed to increase public understanding of environmental issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution and to advocate for a collective effort to protect and preserve the earth. Approximately, 200 market women, men and

youths were reached. The event took place in the Central Market, Uromi, Esan North East Local Government Area on April 22nd, 2024.

Uromi JDPCI implored individuals and organizations alike to undertake proactive measures toward environmental preservation through effective waste management by adopting sustainable lifestyle choices such as responsible waste disposal and management practices, fostering a shift in attitudes towards waste reduction and recycling, and fostering actions that promote environmental conservation and sustainability.



Uromi JDPCI further discouraged the habit of discarding waste on roads or in gutters under the misguided belief that rainfall would facilitate its removal which is a common practice in the locality. The importance of waste segregation, communal clean-up initiatives, and fostering public awareness by intervening when witnessing indiscriminate waste dumping were underscored as pivotal steps toward fostering a clean environment.

World Environment Day

Uromi JDPCI marked the 2024 World Environment Day with a vibrant gathering of religious leaders, traditional rulers, local government representatives, and parish JDPC members. This year's theme, "Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought Resilience," with the slogan, "Our Land, Our Future. We Are Our Generation Restoration," set the stage for impactful discussions.



The Executive Director's keynote address, 'Mitigating Climate Change in Edo State: A Call to Action' emphasized the profound impact that climate change is having on our environment which



Pope Francis describes as our "common home". He called on community involvement and action in restoring eroded lands, blocked channels, and waterways, discouraging indiscriminate waste disposal, deforestation, bush burning, and destruction of natural inhabitants, and embracing climate-friendly activities, such as tree planting, proper waste management, and solar energy. He mentioned that Uromi JDPCI in collaboration with the Catholic Diocese of Uromi planted 1,322 seedlings in churches

and other public places at a subsidized rate in 2023. In 2024, Uromi JDPCI has further bought and made available 491 seedlings still at a subsidized rate.

The participants expressed enthusiasm and made commitments in the drive for environmental stewardship while sharing the benefits of planting trees. Uromi JDPCI look forward to building on this momentum and fostering a deeper connection with nature in our communities.

Awareness Creation on The Effects of Climate Change

Uromi JDPCI visited St. Theresa's Catholic Church, Ukoni on the 30th of June 2024 to raise awareness on the effects of climate change while encouraging tree planting as one of the sustainable practices to mitigate the impact of climate change. The event was also used to solicit financial support for the procurement of seedlings to sustain the tree-planting exercise in the Catholic Diocese of Uromi. A total of 517 persons were reached and some of them made financial contribution to support the tree-planting campaign.



During the campaign, Uromi JDPCI emphasized the vital role of trees in restoring degraded lands, enhancing biodiversity, and combating climate change. Participants were encouraged to engage in tree planting, with a focus on fruit trees, so as not to only contribute to mitigating the effect of climate change but also helping to alleviate food insecurity and reduce the high cost of food in the locality.

PARISH JUSTICE DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE COMMISSION (PARISH JDPC)

Uromi JDPCI conducted meetings and inauguration ceremonies for Parish JDPC members in six Parishes, namely; Christ the King Catholic Church Opoji, St. John Catholic Church Idumabi, St. Raymond Catholic Church Uwalor-Oke, St. Parick Catholic Church Ebhoiyi, St. Theresa Catholic Church Ukoni and Sacred Heart Atani. The purpose was to educate members on the responsibilities of parish JDPC, its functionality and their expectations. A total of 53 persons made up of 33 females and 20 males were reached.

In the course of the meeting, members were taken through the manual for setting up Parish JDPC comprising of the roles and responsibilities of Parish JDPC and the format for conducting meetings. It was emphasized that the work of Parish JDPCI is that of services to humanity that require dedication and commitment. In each of the Parishes, focal persons were appointed to pilot the affairs of the associations as agreed by all. Participants were grateful for the knowledge gained and promised to organize themselves for a more effective impact in their various Parishes and communities.

