

**ANNUAL REPORT OF UROMI JUSTICE DEVELOPMENT PEACE AND CARITAS
INITIATIVES, CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF UROMI, FROM JANUARY – DECEMBER,
2020**

SUBMITTED TO

**MOST REV. DR. DONATUS A. OGUN (OSA)
BISHOP OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF UROMI,
EDO STATE, NIGERIA.**

JANUARY, 2021

OUR VISION

A peaceful and developed society where there is peaceful co-existence and promotion of human rights and empowerment of the people for meaningful living.

OUR MISSION

To alleviate poverty and promote integral development through the motivation and empowerment of the less privileged / oppressed and challenge unjust structures that enhances injustice, hatred and backwardness in Nigeria.

OUR CORE VALUE

Integrity

Accountability

Transparency

Excellence

FOCUS GROUP

- The rural populace
- The economically deprived and vulnerable families, Unemployed youths, women and widows living amongst the poorest of the poor in the society.
- Inmates in prison and ex-inmates.
- People stigmatized with deadly disease.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To promote human right as enshrined in the charters of human rights.
2. To co-operate with people of other faith and persuasion on issues of common social concern and uplift human conditions without discrimination or segregation.
3. To bear witness to the liberating Gospel of Jesus through continued prophetic action for the promotion of Justice, Development and Peace in the society.
4. To promote human right as enshrined in the UN Charter and Banjul declaration of Human Rights.
5. To form animated groups to participate in their own development for peaceful co-existence.
6. To co-operate with international agencies, government and NGOs for integral development.

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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
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	Catholic Chancery Complex, Uromi Diocesan Chancery, Egbele, Uromi, Edo State, Nigeria.
Postal Address	P.M.B 7, Uromi, Edo State
E-mail	uromijdpci@gmail.com ,
Telephone:	+2348053328588, +2348034930414, +2348071894292
Website	Jdpciuromi.org
Auditors	1. Grant Thornton chartered Accountants Emgn, Benin Branch 2. Edforte, Fortne, Ehiagwina & Associates 141 Benin-Auchi Road Ekpoma, Edo State
Bankers	• UBA BANK PLC Mission Road, Uromi • ECOBANK PLC Mission Road, Uromi • FIDELITY BANK PLC Mission Road, Uromi • Unity Bank PLC Mission Road Uromi • Union Bank PLC Mission Road Uromi
Staff Strength	14
Number of Community Volunteers	67
Project Executed	17

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

We are indeed very grateful to Almighty God for the wisdom, inspirations and the knowledge bestowed upon both Staff and Board of Trustee of Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) to carry out her interventions in the year 2020 despite challenges posed by the corona virus.

The year 2020 could have been described as a dark year, in the 21st century. 2020 happened to be a remarkable year in which even a child in the womb would not forget, as it was marked with serious setbacks in the world history and great challenges that redesigned the social relationship among all humanity in the entire universe. The Corona Virus (COVID-19) which was first discovered in Wuhan, China at the end of 2019 shocked humanity when it spread all over the world in 2020. When the first case of COVID 19 was recorded in Nigeria in March 2020, there was panic and confusion among the Citizenry. There were setbacks as most Nations of the world recorded lots of deaths as the virus kept spreading. This eventually led to the declaration of the situation as a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). To curtail the situation countries of the world began to take drastic measures such as shut down or lockdown of economic and social activities.

There are a lot of lessons to be learnt from 2020 that actually humbled humanity. Up until now, we are still groveling to find meaning and rescue from the clutches of the global pandemic (covid19).

It was sad that all the attempts made by the Nigerian government did not substantially help the situation. They could not responsibly come out to address the issues of Covid19, even the said provision of palliative support to her citizens was fronted with irregularities as those who were affected at some point felt abandoned. We are indeed grateful to God for His graciousness and the resilience spirit He has blessed us with, by which we have returned to the path of recovery in the country.

The Year 2020 also witnessed the ENDSARS saga. It was a pure peaceful movement that tried to overhaul the entire nation, address police brutality, and improve the well-being and welfare of both the police and the civilians. This is as a result of the fact that the police over the years, have been over-centralized, under-equipped, overworked and suffered political interference. Also, Police personnel were poorly trained, badly paid and under motivated and they also lack moral support from the government to carry out their work, and they on their own, vent all of these anger on the populace, of which the entire nation woke up to say the brutality must end in 2020. If it was well managed and the hoodlums were not hired to disrupt the peaceful protest, it would have led to a turnaround of a positive approach for Nigeria politics and government. But it was bad to the point that civilians were killed at lekki which was known as lekki massacre, and that was what brought halt to the peaceful protest which was meant to checkmate some of the excesses of the government of the day.

Even today, we are not out of the situation, kidnapping is on the increase, innocent people are being kidnapped and killed by kidnappers and most times they go scot-free and that is the situation we find ourselves in this country, and that is the atmosphere of which we work in Nigeria. Twice in 2020, Nigeria went into recession which made it quite difficult to carry out interventions.

We are indeed very grateful to Almighty God for giving us the opportunity to carry out some interventions that helped us to bring relief and succor to indigent persons in Uromi Diocese which is our main target and focus group.

Some of the activities carried out by Uromi JDPCI were on human rights as sponsored by Misereor; which was geared towards reducing incidences of Human Rights violation, ranging from rape, widow inheritance, gender-based violence, unlawful detention and other abuses. Our focus is on ethical orientation of our people to have value for human being and to respect all other people's rights

We were involved in the Edo State Gubernatorial elections held on the 19th of September 2020, by organizing peace accord to promote violence free election and by observing the election. We thank God that the election was very peaceful and the winner was declared without bloodshed or setback in the political arena of Edo state.

We implemented varied activities in addressing the issues of human trafficking, such as provision of one year full educational support to one hundred and seven secondary school students in Edo Central Senatorial District. 43 Caregivers were also supported with NGN150, 000 naira to improve their livelihood. 90 Youths (returned migrants and potential migrants) were supported in business enterprise. Community stakeholders were engaged in dialogue sessions to on the need to be responsive to the plights and need of victims of human trafficking so as to prevent re-victimization

In all, we thank the Bishop Most Rev Dr Donatus Ogun (OSA) for his support and encouragement through which we are able to sustain our interventions. We are grateful to all our partners: Misereor who has been our first founder, ECPAT France and Luxembourg, Italian Bishops Conference, Caritas Nigeria, US Department of State (US Embassy), Swiss Hand Foundation Open Hand, UNHCR's Telling the Real Story and others for their continuous support for our interventions at various levels. We thank the priests, religious, the Monarchs, community leaders and the good people of the Catholic Diocese of Uromi for their support all through the year. By and large, I am grateful to the staff and management of Uromi JDPCI for a job well done.

Thank you to you all.

Very Rev Fr Dr Fidelis Arhedo,
Executive Director, Uromi JDPCI

INTRODUCTION

Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI), Catholic Diocese of Uromi, presents her annual report which covers the activities of the Organisation from January–December 2020. We are indeed grateful to God for the grace provided to conclude the year with utmost fulfillment despite the challenges posed by the outbreak of the global pandemic (COVID19).

Uromi Justice, Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives, Catholic Diocese of Uromi, was established in the year 2006, as a social arm of the Catholic Diocese of Uromi saddled with the responsibility to promote justice and peace, encourage meaningful development, provide succour for the less-privileged thereby upholding the liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ. Uromi JDPCI does this by identifying and addressing the social ills of our time concretely in line with the life and teaching of Christ. Uromi JDPCI is posed to fulfill her mission to the target beneficiaries on the basis of rights and needs, and not based on religion, race or ethnicity.

Uromi JDPCI is part of the national network of JDPC in 57 Catholic Dioceses in Nigeria. It's coordinated nationally by the Catholic Secretariat based in Abuja, Nigeria. The co-ordination is further broken down to Provincial, Diocesan and Parish levels.

Uromi JDPCI in the course of the year (2020) steered a number of interventions geared towards positive impact and meaningful development in the lives of the rural populace especially amongst the vulnerable and the oppressed in the society with a lot successes recorded.

In line with the vision to promote social justice and improve the knowledge and consciousness of the rural populace on human rights, Uromi JDPCI in partnership with MISEROR Germany embarked on a human rights education and paralegal scheme intervention to help create awareness on human rights as well as track human rights violations. In the course of the year, four quarterly meetings and four trainings were held, in addition to bi-annual conference, sensitization on gender equality, commemoration of child protection and world human rights day as well as community sensitization on prevention of human rights violations.

On the good governance scene, Uromi JDPCI in her continued partnership with MISEREOR Germany and Caritas Nigeria conducted peace accord across the five LGAs in Edo Central Senatorial District. This was organized in form of town hall meeting with stakeholders to promote peaceful and violence free 2020 gubernatorial election in Edo State. Uromi JDPCI also engaged and trained election observers who were deployed to observe the 2020 Edo State gubernatorial elections in Edo Central Senatorial District.

Uromi JDPCI sustained the collaboration with Caritas Nigeria and ECPAT as well as intensified her efforts in curbing the menace of human trafficking and irregular migration in Edo Central Senatorial District. The collaboration with Caritas Nigeria was on the platform of the Sustainable Measures Against Trafficking in Persons (SMAT-P) which aimed at sensitizing school children, and community members on the need for safe migration while discouraging human trafficking in all its forms and empowering vulnerable households through provision of grants for income generating activities to caregivers, scholarship for 109 secondary students. Also, linkages and

referrals were created for returned migrants who were formed into support groups, thus, enhancing meaningful and productive living to reduce their susceptibility to human trafficking.

Uromi JDPCI also collaborated with ECPAT France in an intervention on Anti Human Trafficking tagged; Don't Pay with Your Life" which is aimed at ending trafficking among in-school adolescent girls in Edo Central Senatorial District through educational support for the students and economic support for the caregivers so that they could be retained in school and not get lured by human traffickers. A total of 43 households were supported in this reporting year. Uromi JDPCI also monitored beneficiaries of Don't Pay With Your Life and the PACKING Project in a bid to ensuring that beneficiaries businesses were thriving as they were given grants for small scale businesses.

Uromi JDPCI regular visits to the inmates at Ubiaja Correctional Center to provide the inmates with support in the area of legal counselling, welfare, and health were halted due to COVID19 prevention protocol. However, regular contact was sustained through telephone

Although Uromi JDPCI remains in the business of empowering the rural poor through her micro credit schemes which is currently serving 1092 persons with outstanding successes recorded so far. More importantly staff capacities were built on different areas with support from MISEROR, ECPAT and Caritas Nigeria.

We wish to appreciate our partners and Funders; Misereor, ECPAT France and Luxembourg, Swisshand Foundation, Catholic Caritas Foundation of Nigeria, UNHCR's Telling The Real Story, Volunteers, US Ambassador Small Grant-US Embassy, and the Monarchs in Esan Land for their support to our programmes.

Special thanks to the Bishop of Uromi Diocese, Most Rev. Dr. Donatus A. Ogun for his involvement in all our interventions and the entire Diocese of Uromi for their support towards achieving the set objectives and goal of Uromi JDPCI. May God bless and reward you all abundantly----- AMEN!

HUMAN RIGHT EDUCATION AND PARALEGAL SCHEME

Trainings on Human Rights

In a bid to continually build the capacity of the Paralegals and Human Rights Advocates for effective response to human rights violations in their communities, Uromi JDPCI conducted four trainings within the year 2020. The purpose was to improve the knowledge and understanding of the Paralegals and Human Rights Defenders in the provision of counselling, technical support and guidance to community members in the pursuit of justice and the prevention of human rights violations.



A cross section of participants at the training

The first training was on the legal system and basic legal terms: such as the rule of law, separation of power, arrest, detention and bail procedures, affidavits, Jurisdiction among others. The training which was facilitated by Bar. Daniel Akhidenor was meant to create a better understanding of the legal system and its operations so as to encourage the reporting of violations to the appropriate authorities without the fear of uncertainty. A total of 114 participants- 59 males and 55 females which includes; the 5 Human Rights Supervisors, Paralegals, human rights advocates and Staff of Uromi JDPCI attended the training.

The participants expressed appreciation and satisfaction on the knowledge gained nothing that the presentation used real life experiences in illustrations and explaining issues for their understanding. They noted that the presentations were well understood as they were effectively delivered by the facilitators and are better armed with the knowledge requisite to promote human right response in their communities.

The second training was on Gender Equality and Gender Based Violence with the purpose of building the knowledge and capacity of Paralegals and Advocates on Gender Equality and Gender based Violence so as to enable them promulgate active participation of women in civil, cultural, economic, social and political life of their various communities as well as promote mass reorientation and enlightenment of communities members on issues of gender based violence and how to intervene when violations occurs or are premeditated. The training was held at the chancery hall from the 15th -17th of June 2020 and the presentations were facilitated by Barr ORIERE E.S, Michael IYORIOBHE and Very Rev Fr. Dr. Fidelis ARHEDO. A total of 109 participants (56

male -and
53female) were
in attendance at

the training



Barr Orere during his presentation



Very Rev Fr Dr Fidelis Arhedo giving the opening remark

which was organized on Local Government basis so as to accommodate only 20 persons per session due to the restriction imposed as a result of Coronavirus pandemic.

It was emphasized that gender inequality was against the dictates of **Section 42 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**.

Besides being illegal, gender inequality has far reaching implications/effects on the female (victim) as well as the male and the society at large wherein Victims of gender discrimination often experience harassment which can lead to increased depression and anxiety on their part and such depression and anxiety do not only affect the victim but also extends to others around her whether in the home or at work. Also, it leads to increase in stress level of the victim, which can



Barr. Orere giving his presentation on gender based violence

lead to greater chances of physical illness. Most often, discriminated individuals never reach the level needed for a high-status position or job in the society. Gender inequality kills the spirit of self-motivation and ingenuity in individuals because it makes people to see themselves to be of no relevance in a system.

It was stressed that a community that practices gender discrimination would sooner or later earn bad reputation for herself and the resultant effect is that; not many will be willing to have relationships with persons from such communities.

The Facilitator thus emphasized the equality of male and female in relation to gender and in clear terms, he depicted that gender inequality was an act against God's will. He admonished all to embrace gender equality by ensuring that children, whether male or female are given equal opportunity to manifest their potentials and encouraged to choose careers of their choice. He stated that more women should be encouraged to participate in civil societal activities for the development of communities, elimination of gender stereotyping through structured participatory activities involving both sexes without discrimination, put in place wide range of laws to punish would be offenders and violators of persons' rights on the basis of gender inequality and increase the knowledge amongst the young that every man and woman is born with his/her own uniqueness.

The third training was on Child Abuse, Neglect, and other sexual offences and Case Management. This training was held for Paralegals and Human Rights advocates on the 19th - 21st August 2020; wherein Participants were extensively taken through presentations on "Child Abuse, Child Protection and Case Management". The training took place at the



Facilitator making a presentation during training

Chancery Hall, Egbele Uromi and was facilitated by Barr Omozogie Osas; and Mr Michael Iyoriobhe; Program Manager, Uromi JDPCI. Synopsis of the presentations at the three days training includes; the concept of child abuse, the forms and causes of child abuse, the factors inhibiting disclosure, the effect of child abuse, system involvement in child abuse cases, the therapeutic strategies in healing from child abuse, the concept of Child Protection and Case Management, Child protection concerns, the components of case management and the technical capacity for case managers. Attendance at the training was a total of 114 participants (60 males and 54 females)

The facilitator emphasized that children bring joy and delight to their families and those around them and they serve an essential role within their community as they become the future leaders of the nation. Despite the joy associated with the birth of children many



Group photograph after one of the trainings

remain victims of abuse, violence and exploitation because they are weaker in size, stature, and mental capabilities. It is therefore imperative for individuals working with children to be able to protect them and recognize instances of child abuse and neglect when they come across it.

The fourth training was on Family Law and was held on the 18th to 20th of November 2020. Outline of the training presentations included; the concept of Will-Making, Inheritance, Next of Kin and Women in Marriage. The training was delivered by Barr Mrs. Akewe, E.C. Attendance at the training was 114 Participants, made up of 59 males and 55 females comprising the Supervisors of the 5 Local Government Areas, Staff of Uromi JDPCI and Paralegals and Advocates of 26 Human Rights Clubs across Edo Central Senatorial Districts.

A will was explained as the expression by a person on a document of his or her desires as to the disbursement of his properties after his demise. It was stated that before enforcing a Will, such wills would be admitted in probate, with the following conditions in place:

- It must be testamentary: that is, its effects commence only after the death of the maker.
- It must be executed as provided according the applicable laws
- It must be voluntary which meant that the testator must possess a sound disposing mind at the time of making the will.



Group photograph after another training

Will Making was said to have the following advantages: Provides opportunity of choosing personal representatives of the Testator, opportunity to decide whom gets what, how and when by the testator, Provides some good chances that beneficiaries would not be cheated after his or her demise, provides assurances of

continuity of what the Testator holds dear after his demise and a level of assurance of peaceful co-existence within the family at his death.

However, it was explained that when a deceased dies intestate, a grant of letter of administration would be sought and granted at the end of caveat.

The training looked at other critical areas such as inheritance, next of kin and levirate marriage. It concluded that the best way to secure the future of children was by raising them well and giving them quality education as well as making wills

Community Sensitization on Human Rights

Uromi JDPCI engaged the community stakeholders across the 26 communities on intervention in Edo Central Senatorial District. The purpose was to enlighten the community members, improve their knowledge, understanding and consciousness of human rights operations and then encourage their



Sensitization at Obiyon Secondary School

wiliness to report human rights violations in the various communities. This was part of the plan to eradicate ignorance and enhance human right knowledge in the target communities. The sensitization was targeted at the community leaders, Opinion leaders, men and women as well as the youths in the selected communities. Their attention was drawn to the existence of paralegals and human rights clubs established in their various communities to track and report human rights violation. A total of 2871 persons (1061 male and 1810 female) were reached in the 26 communities and 12



Sensitization at Egbele community

schools visited

The sensitization also discussed some cultural practices that perpetuate gender inequality in the various communities such as:

Widow inheritance: this has to do with the practice of compelling the wife to marry her deceased husband's sibling, step children or relative at the death of the husband. The Edo State law prohibiting the ill treatment of widows was used during this sensitization, to enlighten the



Sensitization at Ukhun Community

people on the consequences of such practices. They were



Sensitization at Okhuesan community

also told that such acts gender based violence, because no man is compelled to marry his wife's sibling at the death of the wife. It was emphasized that such cultural practices were against human rights because it does not give the widow the freedom to speech, and choice as such it takes away her dignity and leave her as a mere commodity.

Some of the community elders tried to offer explanation on the practice of widow inheritance, its important to the community and the women. They argued that such acts were necessary to keep the widow in the family of the husband, so she can mingle with other community members without fear of abomination. Another line of argument was that, in the days of old, widow inheritance done to retain the prestige, identity and dignity of a woman in the community, since women were not expected to return to their fathers' houses after marriage. As such if a widow is not inherited then, she remains the wife of a ghost and do not have a name. Neither can she associate with other women in the community, nor participate in any community meeting or social gathering because of the fear of attachment to the ghost(of the deceased husband).

However, many of the participants agreed that such cultural practices were no longer relevant and that the original intention has also been abused, hence some of them were gradually disengaging from it. They added that with this sensitization and the document (Law Prohibiting ill treatment of widows) the project has shared with them, the process of abolishing it will be hastened.



Community sensitization at Efandion community

Some of the community elders insisted that it was something they inherited, as such they will hold onto it. Uromi JDPCI reminded them that the state law will not excuse them, if anyone has the courage to report such violations, as the purpose of this sensitization was to save them from the wrath of the law because the cultural practice of widow inheritance is against the law of the state.

Some of the communities also remarked that their elders were already reviewing the practice, such that only women who want to be inherited will be made to do so, while those who do not want it will be allowed to be according to their choice. By implication, they are allowing for freedom, choice and association

Female's Right to Inheritance: the need to allow female children inherit property in their fathers' estate was also put forward. This denial of women's right to inheritance also occurs in the husbands' estate. If the female are consider as children, they have equal rights in their father and husbands' estates. This was also debated by participants in the various



Legal Officer addressing members at Okhuesan

communities. While some think that all children should have

equal access to the parents' property irrespective of sex, some think it amounts to waste as most women who married outside their parents community usual sell such property, especially if they are landed property. Because they do not need it as such will not develop them in their fathers' community. They were also reminded that even male children sell such property too, as such an act was not enough reason, because there are many other things that can be useful to the female children outside landed property.

They were encouraged to develop the habit of **will writing**, as this will enable them share their property among all their children and wives. Some of them noted that with the explanation provided, it was quite noble to consider female participation in inheritance of family property since they are all children and even play greater role in the care and support for their parents at old age.

School Sensitization: In a bid to extend the human rights sensitization to all areas in the target communities, the Paralegals, human rights club members and the Supervisors



Sensitization at Eguare primary school



Sensitization at St John's College Ubiaja

visited schools in some communities to sensitize them on the need to report human rights violation so as to be able to curtail it. In most of the schools visited issue of defilement, rape and sexual harassment were discussed. The students were encouraged to report any harassment to the school authority, the paralegals and human rights club members in their various communities. They were reminded that unless they report, abusers will continue abusing them, to prevent violation there is the need to report violators. A total of 7 secondary schools were visited for sensitization. A total of 1204 persons (681 female and 523male) were reached

Visit to security Agencies by Human Rights Club Member: human rights club members in Esan West and Esan South East LGAs visited the Divisional Police Headquarter to inform them of their presence in the LGAs and emphasized the need



Sensitization at Egoro Amede Primary School

for partnership in the prevention of human rights violation. Those in Esan West went further to visit the Police Area



Sensitization at Eguare Secondary School, Ekpoma

Commander's Office and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corp. This was done to make referral and reporting of violation easy.

Sensitization on Gender Equality

The cultural practice of widowhood rites and widow inheritance as observed in most Nigeria traditional society; particularly in Esan land is as old as human beings due to the inevitability of death. Even though widowhood is a condition shared by both men and women, differences in experience along gender lines have made it more of a woman's problem. While the man enjoys social support and goes through minimal widowhood rites, the woman is not so spared. The ordeals widows go through at the demise of their husbands in many Esan communities are better imagined than expressed". Thus, the motivation behind Uromi JDPCI' gender sensitization on ill-treatment of widows/widows inheritance which is part of the activity for the Human Right Education and Paralegal Scheme Project. The sensitization was done across the five local government areas of Edo Central Senatorial District



Group photograph with Participants at Esan North East LGA

on the 11th, 12th, 13th, 18th and 19th of August, 2020; to examine issues around widowhood practices and widow inheritance, its origin and its numerous negative effects on widows and dialogue with community members on the need to expunge them from Esan communities and embrace practices that are fair to all, with the goal of contributing towards the peaceful coexistence of the village community and promote social justice and respect for human rights. Participants were extensively enlightened on the stance of the Law on ill-treatment of widows and widowhood inheritance and each community were presented a copy of the inhuman treatment of widows' prohibition law 2001 for reference and guide. A total of 557 persons (307males and 250 females) made up of community Chiefs, Community Leaders, the CWO, Men, Women, Youths, Human Right Club Members and their Supervisors participated in the exercise with Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo; Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI and Michael Iyoriobhe; Uromi JDPCI Program Manager as the Facilitators. The schedule of the sensitization in the different Local Government Areas was as follow:



A participant making his contribution during the sensitization at Esan North East LGA

Igueben: 11th August 2020 at Christ the King Catholic Church Hall Ebelle, Igueben

Esan Central: 12th August 2020 at St. Anselm Children Hall, Irrua

Esan North East: 13th August 2020 at Amedokhian Community Hall, Amedokhian

Esan South East: 18th August 2020 at St. Mathias Catholic Church Ewohimi

Esan West: 19th August 2020 at Eguare Community Hall, Ekpoma.

While debating on the issue of widowhood rites and widow's inheritance, some participants in Esan North East Local Government Area stated that communities around the Local Government Area were still very much into the practice and explained that widows were usually subjected to put on one particular black cloth for seven days without bathing after which they are made to carry a constructed burden on their head very early in the morning of the 7th day to throw the burden away into the bush. Subsequently, the widow is summoned by the elders of the family and interrogated as to the properties of her husband which are shared between her husband's relatives. She is then inherited by a male in the family and allowed to remove her mourning cloths after 3 weeks.



Some Participants claimed that widows are not forced into marriage with their deceased husbands' relatives and their consent were sought and usually given. Others pointed out that such consents were given due to the fear of the consequences and ill treatments meted on any widow who refuses to succumb to the dictates of her deceased husband family members such as neglect and alienation from the family and not being allowed to participate with other women in community activities. Some participants also argued that these activities were most often disregarded by the few enlightened and economically powerful without any consequence from custodians of the customs and traditions in the community whereas; the economically deprived members of the community are subjected to these unfair treatments, and therefore segregate to favour the wealthy as against the underprivileged members of the community which ought not to be.

The Local Government Human Right Supervisor; Oriere E S Esq, called on women to stand up to protect their rights, adding that in most cases, it is the women especially the very elderly in the communities that champion the enforcement of these practices. He advised the women to go back to their various quarters and sensitize



Barr Oriere making his contribution during the sensitization in Esan West LGA



A participant making his contribution at Esan West LGA

their fellow women

such that the elderly women in the community can take the lead to speak to the men against such maltreatment and seek for a change of these barbaric practices. The Vice President of the Market Women Association

stated that in some family settings, women are not allowed to participate during decision making in the

family and by extension, the general community. Her duty is to obey the directives from the male elders in the community. Most women who are selected by the male elders to enforce their

directives sees it as the only avenue to be relevant in the community and as such does it with so much enthusiasm.

One of the Youths from Emaudo Community, admonished the other Youths; Whether Christian or Pagan to be actively involved in community affairs such as participation in elders' council meeting where they can have the opportunity to share intelligent views, make logical suggestions to elders and influence the desired change for the betterment of their communities. He also appealed that copies of The Inhuman Treatment of Widows (Prohibition) Law 2001 should be shared with community members, read and analyzed during elders meetings so as to enlighten them on the provisions of the law and the consequences of disobeying the Law.

The participants appreciated the efforts of Uromi JDPCI, to promote unity, morality, justice and fairness which they believe would result to peaceful co-existence and development in the community by the time gender equity and equality is practiced. They were encouraged to organize more sensitizations of this nature so that people can be continually abreast of these issues and the provisions of the Law as many were still living in ignorance. .

Commemoration of International Day of Child Protection

In Commemoration of the International Day of Child Protection, Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiative conducted a sensitization in Ewossa and Eguare-Ekpoma Communities on the 6th and 24th July 2020 respectively to sensitize Community Members on the importance of child protection and the need to always report abuses to appropriate authority so as to curtail the violation of Children's right and promote their protection against all



forms of abuses. Uromi JDPCI chose these communities based on request from community members to conduct such sensitization in their communities to increase awareness and encourage reporting of violation by community members.

At Eguare-Ekpoma, a participant raised a concern that often times, the relevant authorities tend to frustrate and truncate the process of Justice in rape cases. He therefore asked what could be done to remedy the situation.

The representative of Ekpoma Police Area Commander; SP Gideon Azuonwu in his contribution stated that not up to 10% of child rape and defilement in the community were reported because of the erroneous mind-sets of community members who believe that justice would not be served after making reports; and even the few cases reported are usually impelled by the victim's extended family members, community leaders and even traditional rulers in the community who

push to see that the case is withdrawn from the State and handled by the custodian of the traditions in the community who usually do not have jurisdiction to handle such matters and many a time judge in the favour of the culprit. He explained that the victims were usually incited with fear and undue influence which makes them pull out of the case. He admonished participants to report cases and allow the police to handle the case and monitor it. He admonished the people not to succumb to persuasion from anyone but should report violations to appropriate authorities. Participants at the sensitization included community chiefs, representatives from the security agency, community leaders, women leaders/ market women as well as community youths with a total of 160 (male 71, female 89) participants, across the two communities- Ewossa and Eguare Ekpoma and 5 project staff.



Commemoration of World Human Right Day

Uromi JDPCI joined the rest of the world to commemorate the world human right day which is celebrated every December, 10th. The theme for this year was Recover Better: Stand Up for Human Right with HRH Zaiki Victor Agbonmere Ehizogie, the Onojie of Ogwa and President Uromi Area Customary Court as the Guest Speaker who was ably represented by Bar Inegbebo. Other dignitary at the ceremony were a state counsel and representative of the Ministry of Justice Bar Mrs Josephine Inegbebo, representatives of the Nigerian Police force, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corp, Department of State Security, Community Chiefs, Community Leaders,



Group photograph of key participants at the event

Paralegals, supervisors, Executive Director and staff of Uromi JDPCI. 110 persons were in attendance.

In the opening remark, the Executive Director Very Rev Fr Dr Fidelis Athredo explained that the aim of commemorating the day's event was to appreciate human rights internationally

especially the ones which the local laws were yet to domesticate and address. He laid emphasis on the dignity of the human person irrespective of differences in sex, economic background, location, tribe, race, politics and religion of persons; stating that all were one and the same in every sphere, without distinction. He said the only differences that existed in man were her biological makeup as was preordained by God from the beginning so that man and woman can complement each other.

He further buttressed that the determination of man was not in his accidentals, but in his dignity as a human being and nothing else thus, issues of gender inequality based on sex, was parochial. He enjoined all to see female children as equal to male children for the purposes of allowing even opportunities.

The guest speaker His Royal Highness and President of the Esan North East Customary Court, Zaiki Ehizojie Aigonmere Victor; the Onojie of Ogwa kingdom, as represented by Barrister Inegbebo noted that World Human Right Day was set aside by the United Nation General Assembly to commemorate the adoption of the universal declaration of Human Right (UDHR) in 1948. This celebration was marked every 10th of December. He explained that it was a massive millstone in the promotion and enforcements of human rights all over the world, because it emphasized the non-discrimination of human beings irrespective of race, colour, religion, language or sex.

He further explained that human rights were necessary to provide all persons with the basic dignity they need to live peacefully without undue oppression and discrimination, stating that the rights of citizens are enshrined in the Constitutions of each country.

He enumerated human right according to the Nigerian content of the constitution to include; Right to liberty, equality, respect for the human life etcetera. He explained that the constitution



One of the community heads responding to the killing of End SARS Protesters as a violation of human right



The representative of the Police Force while appreciating Uromi JDPCI for her effort in promoting human right

did not only guarantee these rights but also takes action against individuals who violates them.

He lamented the loss of the fundamental rights of the citizens especially the core right- right to life, by citing the lawlessness of the Nigerian Government that took place on the 20th of October 2020, where Peaceful Protesters of the End SARS were murdered in cold blood. He explained that with such happening, the rights of citizens seemed not to be guaranteed anymore. He therefore asked a rhetorical question which was if Nigerian can claim to still have right in the present circumstance.

He also explained that media protections were no longer guaranteed in the country, as they have been caged and subjected to all forms of persecutions and threats.

He concluded by stating that Nigeria as a country would only recover better from the evil pandemic that has ravaged the country when discriminations of all kinds were stopped,

inequalities addressed, participation and solidarity encouraged, the rule of Law complied to and sustainable developments promoted.

Participants pointed that the end SARS protest which was a peaceful one was hijacked by hoodlums, suspected to be powered by the government of Nigeria who could no longer stand the heat of the protest as it became an international concern. They therefore resolved that all citizens both the government and the governed ought to stand up to their responsibilities and promote the rights of each person irrespective of sex, race, tribe, religion or status.

Finally, Participants appreciated the efforts of Uromi JDPCI for all activities they have embarked upon to ensure that all community members especially at grass root level were protected from violation of their rights. Participants prayed that their efforts would not be in vain rather it would yield success.

Quarterly Meeting of Paralegals

Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) held four quarterly meeting of the Paralegals in the Human Right Education and Paralegal Scheme project within the year. The first was held on the 13th of March 2020, the second was on the 26th of June 2020, the third was on the 9th of September, 2020 while the fourth quarterly meeting was on the 16th of December, 2020. All the meetings were held at the Chancery Complex, Egbele Uromi with the 57 Paralegals, 5 Supervisors and 5 members of the project team. The meeting provided a platform to review the activities of the human rights clubs in the various communities, identify their challenges and make useful recommendations for improvement. It also serves as avenue for experience sharing and shared learning towards achieving best approach and practices in our interventions.

The emphases at the quarterly meetings were on intensifying community sensitization to create awareness and enlighten the people on the need to report violations, especially when it concerns



A Section of participants at the quarterly meeting

children and women in their community. This is because they were most vulnerable to violations and abuse. The Executive Director

Very Rev. Fr. Dr.



Paralegals during quarterly meeting

Fidelis Arhedo, in his opening remark at the various meetings reaffirmed that the duties imposed on the paralegals and the human rights club members were voluntary in nature, done for the sake of God with no expectation of human reward or appreciation. He reminded them of the fact that

they were the voices to the voiceless who are mostly the poor and economically deprived persons in the society.

At the second meeting, he added that the fight for human rights was devoid of all religious, ethnic or political affiliations, instead, it was a unanimous call to fight against evil in the society irrespective of culture, creed or race. He enjoined all participants to be transparent, fair and wise in their dealings as well as sustain the motive of the scheme for a better society in the present and future. He enumerated cases of Human Right Violations currently been tackled by the Human Right Clubs and Uromi JDPCI in Esan Central, Esan West and Esan North East Local Government Areas and thus appreciated paralegals for their assiduous efforts in promoting human right activities in their communities and urged them to carry on tirelessly. The meeting was also used as avenue to plan some activities for the following quarter. Some of which were sensitization on gender equality with a focus on ill treatment of widows and widow inheritance.

At the third meeting, participants used the opportunity to provide feedbacks on the recently concluded activities such as; Sensitization on ill treatment of Widows and Widow Inheritance as well as the Peace Accord For a held across the five LGAs. Other issues deliberated at the meeting included; the Human Right Education and Paralegal Scheme Biannual Conference, the outcome of the Project Evaluation and Uromi JDPCI's Plans to observe the 2020 Edo State Gubernatorial Election as citizens' observers.

The fourth quarterly meeting focused on a review of the achievements of the various groups within the year as well as the outcome of the biannual conference and the gubernatorial election. The meetings also resolved on some improvement plans for the coming year 2021, which outlined some key activities to include a review of quarterly meeting venues from chancery hall to communities within the various LGAs, sustain capacity building for improved knowledge, sustain efforts at commemoration of key events as a form of sensitization among others.



The Paralegal from Ewohimi giving the report of his club's activities

Supervisory Visits to Monthly Meetings of The 26 Human Rights Clubs in Edo Central Senatorial District

As part of efforts to provide monitoring, mentorship and tracking of the activities of paralegals



Egoro Amede Human Rights club at monthly meeting

and human rights advocates as well as their progress and challenges,



Ebelle Human Rights club at monthly meeting

Uromi JDPCI conducted supervisory visit to the 26 human rights club across the 5 LGAs in Edo Central Senatorial District. This is in recognition of the importance of technical support to the achievement of the goal of the Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme project. A total of 300 monthly meetings were supervised within the period of this report. The supervision was done by Uromi JDPCI project team in collaboration with the LGA Supervisors who coordinate their various Local Government Areas



Amendokhian Human Rights club at monthly meeting

At the various meetings, the members discussed the outcome of the various activities they have embarked upon in the community which include, community sensitizations, school sensitizations and market sensitizations; and in most cases it



Ivue Human Rights club at monthly meeting

was realized that the impacts made were positive while in few occasions, there exist, some level of disparities amongst community members on the message of the Human Rights Clubs, which were on gender equality in inheritance, cultural practices, child protection, women inclusion in decision making among others.

Also some Paralegals and human Right Advocates who participated in training conducted step down training for the other members of the human rights club. This was to keep them better informed and enlightened on key concepts of Human Rights particularly the ones in tune with the Nigerian Constitution so guaranteed.

More so, cases of Human Rights violations were successfully treated through ADR to the satisfaction of the complainant.



Ewu Human Rights club members after meeting

At Eguare-Ekpoma, the Human Right Club, successfully handled a case of a minor who was alleged to have



Ewatto Human Rights club members after meeting

been battered by his school teacher, resulting to fracture of the leg; members of the Human Rights Club took up the case, reported to the appropriate authority and the

teacher was punished and made to bear the responsibility for the hospital bills. The parent of the child expressed gratitude to the Human Rights club and noted that they were satisfied with the resolution

The Human Rights Clubs haven successfully organized monthly meetings, have been able to meet part of the Objectives of the Human Rights and paralegal Scheme due to the known and recorded impacts made by the various Clubs. It is believed that with more efforts, the Human Rights Clubs would be able to successfully influence the society at large to embrace a more civil way of living, for the growth and development of all persons.

Bi-Annual Conference of Paralegal

Uromi JDPCI held her second bi annual conference for Paralegal and Advocates of the Human Right Education and Paralegal Scheme Project on the 29th of September 2020; to review activities and interventions that have been carried out in the Project as well as engage relevant stakeholders in addressing the challenges in the promotion of human rights. In attendance at the Conference were; Human Rights Supervisors, Paralegals and Human Rights Advocates across the 26 target communities, the Area Commander of the Nigeria Police Force; Uromi Command, Officers from the Department of State Security Services, representatives from NSCDC Uromi, Community Chiefs and Elders as well as Staff of Uromi JDPCI with a total of 110 persons, comprising 70 males and 40 females.

The Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI; Very Rev Fr. Dr. Fidelis AHREDO in his keynote address stated that, the Conference was put together to review activities and interventions that have been carried out in the Project in contributing to the peaceful coexistence of the community as well as to allow for a holistic discourse with relevant stakeholders on the challenges and



Participants standing while taking the opening prayers



The Executive Director giving the key note address

obstacles in tackling human rights violations and the way forward. Very Rev Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo appreciated the key actors of the intervention whose efforts had gone a long way to impact meaningfully in addressing human right violations across Esan communities. He reiterated that despite the pro bono services rendered by the Paralegals and Advocates of the Human Right Clubs in their various communities, they were not discouraged in the conduct of their activities, adding that they were always accessible when the need arose. He encouraged them to continue in the same Spirit for the defense of truth and justice as such, community members would continue to enjoy their inalienable rights and freedoms.

He explained that the goal of the project is to contribute towards an improved peaceful co-existence of the village community and promote social justice and respect for human rights with specific objectives of training Human Rights Members and Paralegals to Track, Document and Intervene in Cases of Human Rights Violation and Provide Advice to Victims of Human Rights Violations, Ensuring Community Members have Improved Knowledge and Consciousness of Human Rights and are more willing to Report Human Rights Violations and to promote active participation of women in civil, cultural, economic, social and political life of their communities.

He gave a rundown of the achievements that have made since the commencement of the project and thereafter recounted a number of incidences that were addressed through the intervention while noting that a total of seven rape cases were monitored by Uromi JDPCI wherein six of such cases were in court while one of the rape cases has been decided by the court with the accused sentenced appropriately. Also, a case of child abuse/assault and one case of neglect/abandonment were reported to Uromi JDPCI who in turn reported to the police and assisted the victims to seek justice.



ACP OTABOR making his contribution at the Conference



Some participants at the event

Participants were very impressed with the work done so far in the Project and showed satisfactory remarks. One of such remark was made by Assistant Commissioner of Police Nosa Otabor; the Area Commander of the Nigeria Police Force, Uromi Command who applauded Uromi JDPCI for bringing to light the Human Right Education and Paralegal Scheme Initiative as well as making effort in preventing and intervening in human right violations. He also said that he was delighted to be in the midst of the Supervisors and Paralegals whose efforts in reaching out to communities were yielding the expected results. He urged them to keep up with their good works while assuring every one of the supports from the security agents.



A Participant asking a question

He recommended that young people from different quarters and schools should be



Chief Odijie while addressing Participants

incorporated in to the project; stating that youths within the ages of 16-22 were the major perpetrators of sexual

violations. He lamented the loss of moral values in the current youths and advised that they should be involved in human right issues. More so, he recommended the active involvement of community stakeholders as voice in the campaign.

In view of the foregoing, the Program Manager of Uromi JDPCI, IYORIOBHE Michael applauded the ACP for his contribution and stated that the Organization was already working



Group Photograph with Participants at the end of the conference



The Program Manager giving the vote of thanks

towards the same direction as plans were in motion to extend the human right campaign to schools by next year through the institution of human rights clubs in schools to educate and train them on the content of human rights and how to report human right issues. He noted the need to create a child friendly center in the Police Station where children can confidently report issues of human right violations and also solicited their continued support in the investigation and prosecution of human rights violations. Furthermore, he explained that the organization has continued to collaborate with community stakeholders as their role in achieving the expected results as it concerns the project cannot be over emphasized.

Chief Odijie of Eguare-Ekpoma Community advised everyone never to take for granted; the promotion of human right of persons in the community irrespective of who the violator may be, while other Stakeholders appreciated the efforts of the Organisation in upholding human rights in Esan Communities.

A concern was raised from the bible injunction which allowed for surrogate marriages, especially when a man dies without having children and allowing such woman to be inherited by the brother of the deceased woman.

In response to this, the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI explained that the dictates of the Old Testament practices as contained in the bible were expunged by the coming of the Son of God, according to Galatians 4v4-5 which states that He came to redeem those under the Jewish law so that we all might become God's Children.

He also explained that Nigeria Laws do not accept the practice of bigamy. Adding that subjecting a widow to marry a relative of her deceased husband was a breach of trust made to her by the husband's family at the marriage ceremony since she never entered into any agreement to be transferred from one man to another on the demise of her husband. He thus encouraged that practices that are fair to all should be embraced.

GOOD GOVERNANCE DESK

Peace Accord for Edo State 2020 Gubernatorial Election

In line with Uromi JDPCI's goal of encouraging meaningful development and promoting peaceful co-existence five eminent stakeholders' fora were conveyed across the five Local Government Areas in Edo Central Senatorial District. The purpose of the meeting was to establish a peace accord and dialogue with relevant stakeholders on possible ways to promote and ensure a peaceful gubernatorial election in the various communities in Esanland. The event took place between the 3rd and 9th of September, 2020 at the following venues: Eguare Ekpoma Town Hall, Catholic Chancery Hall



Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo educating Participants at the Esan South East LGA on Electoral offences and the penalties



Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo addressing Participants at the Peace Accord Forum in Esan Central LGA

Egbele Uromi, St Anselm Children Hall

Irrua and the Palace of the Onojie's of Igueben in Esan South East, Esan West, Esan North East, Esan Central

and Igueben Local Government Areas respectively. A total of 320 participants (195 male and 125 female) made up of INEC Officials, Security Agencies, Major Political

Party Leaders and their Members, Community Leaders, CBOs, the Press and Staff Members of Uromi JDPCI were in attendance.



Cross session of Participants at Esan Central LGA.



Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo presenting buckets and soaps to community representatives in Igueben LGA

The Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI, Very Rev Fr. Dr. Arhedo Fidelis in his opening remark explained that the fora was aimed at calling on relevant Stakeholders in the Political scene to clearly define and state that they will work for a common mission to allow peace to reign in the gubernatorial election. This he said was necessary to enable the citizens come out freely to cast their vote without fear of intimidation. He admonished the various parties present at the fora by distinguishing citizenry from idiot and tribe person as self-centered personality. There should be no room for the idiot or the tribe people who could hijack the peaceful process of the election. He added that although we anticipate violence free, peaceful, fair and conclusive election, it was important to douse the tense atmosphere of

violence that was building up towards the election. Very Rev. Fr. Fidelis Arhedo reminded the people that we all are Edo People with a common vision of making Edo State a better place in the forthcoming election, reiterating the fact that it was important that we all work in synergy for a violence free and credible election by placing the protection of life above material interest.

Uromi JDPCI used the opportunity to conduct voters' education in collaboration with INEC officials in some LGAs, especially in Esan Central LGA where the Electoral Officer was personal present with some of her staff to anchor the sensitization. Some Election offences and their corresponding penalties as published by INEC were made known to stakeholders so as to



The Program Manager addressing Participants at the Forum at Esan West LGA

keep
them
abreast
of the
issue as



Group photograph of participants at Esan South East

ignorance was not to be considered an excuse.

As it was the era of COVID 19, the participants were reminded of the guiding principle as regards the dreaded virus, this was to prevent the spread of the disease. The principles include: regular washing of the hands with soap and water, the use of hand sanitizer, the use of face mask, and observation of social distance. It was noted that INEC would provide hand sanitizers at the election ground and would ensure that the smart card reader was continuously sanitized. Participants were admonished to be humane by allowing the aged and disabled to cast their vote first.

Uromi JDPCI supported the various communities at the event with two buckets each and four liquid soap with which they were to get water to wash their hands on the day of the election. This was part of her effort help communities adhere to the INEC regulation on voting during COVID 19.

Haven taken full cognizance of the need to create and promote a peaceful/conducive environment in the Edo Central Senatorial Districts during the 2020 Gubernatorial Election for the purpose of promoting Unity, Harmony, Peace, Development and Security to members of the public, the Administrative Secretary of Uromi JDPCI; Erhabor Harriet read out the provisions of the 2020 Peace Accord which were duly signed by the LGA Party Chairmen and Youth Chairmen and was witnessed by the following bodies; Traditional Council, Christian Association of Nigeria, Civil Society Organization, Community Based Organization, INEC, Security Agents and Uromi JDPCI.

Mr Iyoriobhe Michael explained that the document was not to be used as a legal document for litigation but to show commitment to a peaceful election. He further explained that the signatories were written not in any preference but in alphabetical order.

Esan South East Local Government Area

In Esan South East LGA, the participants appreciated Uromi JDPCI for coming up with such forum and went ahead to advice the leaders and elders of the various communities to carry the



PDP Party Leader signing the Peace Accord Agreement in Esan South East LGA

message to their subordinate. They also emphasized the need to conduct themselves in a manner that is noteworthy in the Election. He stated that irrespective of political affiliations, people of Esan land should see themselves as one. Another participant recommended that the various community leaders should use town criers to pass this message of Peace around the various communities in Esan Land.

Esan West Local Government Area

A participant, who appreciated JDPC for taking out time to hold the peace accord forum, suggested that the village leaders in each community should advice their members to embrace peace in the forthcoming election saying that politics should not be about parties but about development.

Also, a woman from the Local Government Area advised all present not to be self-centered or selfish but to think of the interest of all. She further said that the peace accord message should be taken to the community leaders who will in turn pass the message to their subjects.

The representative of the Nigeria Police Force while appreciating all for coming told each political party represented to put the interest of everyone in



A Participant while making his contribution at the Forum in Esan West

mind and refrain from seeking selfish political

gains, in order to ensure development in the country.



Party representative signing the Peace Accord Agreement at Esan West LGA

Similarly; another participant said that if Security officials carry out their duties effectively, then the fear of electoral violence would be a thing of the past. Elaborating further, he stated that the police men and soldiers should mount road blocks to prevent unnecessary movement on Election Day.

The Executive Director noted that while it was pertinent for the security agents to be on deck during the election, it was also very important that electorates comport themselves in a manner

deserving of good citizens and by so doing, reduce the work load of the security agency. Furthermore he advised all political parties represented to conduct issue based campaign and decrease from being abusive as such was responsible for the clashes that were observed in some part of the state.

Some participants were of the opinion that electoral violence could also arise from vote buying by political agents on Election Day wherein majority of the voters who are poor usually get lured into such enticement.

In responding to the above the Executive Director



Another Participant while making his contribution at the Forum in Esan West

advised all present to change their orientation



Group photograph by Participants in Esan West LGA

towards accepting bribes from Political Agents as it limits meaningful development in the State as well as decreases accountability and good governance in the side of the elected governments.

Igueben Local Government Area

A chief of Igueben who appreciated the opening remark of the Executive Director and the entire staff of Uromi JDPCI assured all present that the 2020 election would be peaceful.

The PDP Youth Leader in his contribution said that that the neutrality in interest of the security agents would go a long way in making the election fair and peaceful.

The Divisional Police Officer of Igueben Local Government Area reassured the people that there would be strict compliance to proper rules and discipline by the Security Agents; both those within as well as those who have been deployed from other States for the purpose of maintaining order in the election. Furthermore, he complained of the past happening during election wherein citizens raised false alarms of electoral crime, which distracts the security personnel on deck. He appealed to participants present to spread the message of



Group Photograph with Participants at the Peace Accord Forum in Igueben LGA

desisting from spreading rumors of insecurity during election, so as to enhance efficiency in



The DPO Addressing Participants at the Peace Accord Forum in Igueben LGA

the side of the Security Agents on ground.

Finally the participants submitted that everyone should work for peace in achieving the goal of the event since monopoly of violence does not rest on a particular person.

Esan Central Local Government Area

The Local Government INEC Executive Officer informed all participants of the level of preparedness by INEC; stating that the Commission already had access to the non-sensitive electoral materials



Group Photograph with Participants at the Peace Accord Forum in Esan Central LGA

and the sensitive materials would be distributed to the various election centers in the Local Governments Areas a day to the election. She also enlightened every one of the novel ZIP PAD also known as Z-FILE



The DSS making his contribution at the forum

polling unit to the

commission.



The INEC EO addressing Participants at Esan Central LGA during the Peace Accord Forum



Cross session of Participants at the Forum in Esan Central LGA

She said the technology was introduced to ensure transparency in the election and to guard against rigging by overzealous Political Party Agents.

The representative from the DSS emphasized the importance of conducting peaceful elections for growth and development. He explained that violence in elections leads to retrogressions not just during the election but after the elections. He urged everyone to embrace peace for the betterment of all and sundry.

Conclusively, political parties represented assured participants that they would adhere to the provisions of the Peace Accord Agreement that they have all signed.

Edo State Gubernatorial Election

Pre-Election

In responding to the Edo State governorship election which was announced long before the outbreak of the Corona virus, Uromi JDPCI kept close observation of the process which presented new challenges with the outbreak of Corona virus and then the need for new regulations and guidelines became inevitable.

The political situation in the State was tensed and the fear of possible violence on Election Day was roaming the air. This fear was premised of certain factors such as the Personality clash between the incumbent Governor and his predecessor who was then the National Chairman of

the ruling party before he was removed from the position as the National Chairman of the All Progressive Congress (APC) by a court judgement affirming the suspension made by the local ward chairman of the party in the local government area of the national chairman.

The disqualification of the Governor and his Deputy from contesting on the platform of APC which led to the Governor and his Deputy cross carpeting to the major opposition party; Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP). This situation created a strong rivalry between the people loyal to the former governor and those loyal to the incumbent governor of the State. There were several open confrontations reported within the period with some leading to the use of guns and dangerous weapons on each other thereby causing bodily harm and injuries to the members of the public.

There were also accusations and counter accusations of the destruction of each other's bill boards, circulation of hate speeches, burning of caskets with the inscription of rival political parties signifying the death and burial of such parties among others vices capable of scaring the electorate from participating in the election.

As part of efforts to mitigate these situations Uromi JDPCI conducted Peace Accord across the five Local Government Areas in Edo Central Senatorial District. This was used to engage the relevant stakeholders such as the INEC, Police, DSS, NSCDC, political party leaders, political party youth leaders, community leaders and other non-state actors like the media, Nigeria Bar Association, CBOs and CSOs on the need to intensify sensitization and address factors that were fueling violence through the signing of peace accord as a tool to mitigate the violence tendencies.

The event which took place between the 3rd and 9th of September draw relevant stakeholders and the two major political parties (APC and PDP) signed the Peace Accord while the security agencies, traditional institutions, CSOs and CBOs signed as witnesses to the Peace Accord.

During Election

Uromi JDPCI then proceeded to engage, train and deploy fifty (50) election observers to 49 units in 25 Political Ward across the five LGAs in Edo Central Senatorial District. Among these 50 observers, 15 were accredited by INEC while 35 were citizens' observers.

Opening: all the observers reported that INEC officials and security personnel arrived at the various polling units before 08.30am and that the INEC adhoc staffs were at least 4 in all the polling units observed. The official set up the cubicles, showered ballot papers and boxes to voters in the present of party agents and security agents. Most of the observers reported that the COVID 19 protocol and how election will be conducted was announced to the people. At the various polling units it was observed that INEC provided facemasks/shield but many of the officials did not wear them. However, infrared thermometers and hand sanitizers were used on the voters by the adhoc staff. Each of the polling units had at least one card reader which was used during the election. It was also reported that the poll officers recorded the total ballot issued before the actual voting commenced. The polling units were set up to allow voters see the

process with the ballot box placed in the public view. Majority of the observers reported that they saw persons soliciting for votes on the Election Day and that there were vote buying in almost all the polling units observed. At least 4 political party agents were seen in all the polling units.

Accreditation and Voting: Accreditation and voting were done simultaneously and it started in most units between 08.30am and 09.00am. The observers reported that voters were on the queue from where they were taking one after the other to cast their votes. Their PVCs were checked and that only those whose name appeared on the register of voters were allowed to cast their votes. It was also reported that voters did not use their phones in the cubicle and that the smart card reader worked effectively. It was also observed that no voter voted without being authenticated by the card reader. Some of the observers noted that the Adhoc staff did not consider accessibility for persons with disability in setting up the polling units as most of the platform were raised making it difficult for persons with disability to access the cubicle. All materials were available in adequate quantity as no shortage of materials was reported by any of the observers and voting went on smoothly in all the polling units observed, except for Esan South East ward 6 unit 8 where an attempt was made to snatch ballot box but was met with resistance from the security agents who prevented the hoodlums from going away with the ballot box.

Close of Poll and Vote Count: voting officially ended by 02.30pm but all those who were on the queue before 02.30pm were all allowed to cast their votes. After all those on the queue voted, the poll was officially closed while sorting of ballot papers started, after sorting the ballot were counted and the final results were recorded in the appropriate forms. The agents of the various political parties thereafter signed the result sheets. The INEC officials snapped the result sheets with their phones for possible uploading to the Z-file. Most of them could not send in the presence of the observers as the INEC official said that there was no network to send at the polling units.

Ward Collation Center: The observers at the ward 4, and 5 collation centers in Esan North East and Igueben ward 1 collation center confirmed that the outcome of the election in the units where they observed were what was reported in the ward collation centers.

ANTI HUMAN TRAFFICKING DESK

This desk comprises of several intervention that were conducted by Uromi JDPCI in collaboration with some local and international organizations geared towards the prevention of human trafficking and irregular migration, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims in Edo Central Senatorial District. Among such interventions were:

Don't Pay With Your Life Project sponsored by ECPAT France, ECPAT Luxembourg

Sustainable Measure Against Trafficking in Person (SMAT-P) sponsored by Italian Bishop Conference through Caritas Nigeria and Coordinated by JDPC Benin Province

Parent-Caregiver Dialogue session on the Prevention of Human Trafficking and Irregular Movement in Three LGAs; sponsored by UNHCR's Telling the Real Story Project

Community Leaders Dialogue on the Prevention of Human Trafficking and Irregular Movement in Three LGAs; sponsored by UNHCR's Telling the Real Story Project

DON'T PAY WITH YOUR LIFE (DPWYL)

DPWYL Program is operated by ECPAT, France, ECPAT Luxembourg, GPI Benin City and Uromi JDPCI with support from AFD, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of Luxembourg. In this intervention (Don't Pay With Your Life project) Uromi JDPCI supported forty three beneficiaries with One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira each to set up Income Generating Activities. This support was done in two tranches after which their children were also supported with a one year educational scholarship including the provision of all necessary school materials to the tune of fifty thousand naira. Monitoring visits were also conducted to beneficiaries in previous project (PACKING) as well as the forty three beneficiaries in this project while both beneficiaries were engaged in discussion on Children's personality, communicating with children, punishment and discipline among others with a bid to improve their capacity for improved caregiving which would reduce susceptibility to human trafficking and irregular migration.

Empowerment of Beneficiaries of "Don't Pay With Your Life Project (First Tranche)

Uromi JDPCI organized a ceremony on the occasion of the disbursement of funds to the beneficiaries of the "Don't Pay with your life" project. The ceremony for the disbursement of first tranche of the grant was spread over two days (9th and 10th of June, 2020) due to the Nigerian Government restriction on the number of people to be gathered in an instance as a result of the global pandemic. A total of 43 (for the two days) beneficiaries/caregivers got monetary support for



Cross section of beneficiaries during the opening prayer

income generating activities to the tune of one hundred thousand naira each, being the first installment of the project grant. This was to enable them engage in income generating activities and be able to take care of the educational needs of their children. By so doing the children could be retained in school as such, assuage their livelihood situations and vulnerability to human trafficking. Present at the ceremony were; the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI; Very. Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis ARHEDO, Staff of Uromi JDPCI and representative of Girls Power initiative (GPI), Mrs. Ruthmary OBASANMI, the program Coordinator; Michael Iyoriobhe and other project staff



The program manager welcoming caregivers to the ceremony

In the opening remark, the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI; Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis ARHEDO, stated that the intervention -“Don’t Pay with your life” was targeted at blocking the influx of young girls on the road to Europe, Asia and other parts of the world through the desert and the Mediterranean Sea which is very risky. He noted that it was discovered from findings carried out, that most children involved in this risky venture were

from poor and vulnerable homes, whose parents had failed in their responsibilities in taking care of their children, he however pointed out that it might not have been the fault of some parents in this category, due to the lack of economic means to handle obligations. Youths who risk their lives to Europe in a bid to make it in life would have preferred to remain in Nigeria if only they had someone to support them in the education domain and other business domains in life.

He pointed out that the “Don’t Pay with your life”



Beneficiary receiving cheque from the Executive Director

project is in a way, a continuation of the PACKING intervention which started in 2017 through 2018



Beneficiary receiving cheque from the Executive Director

in reaching out to

vulnerable households in a bid to checkmate the prevalence of human trafficking in Edo State.

In reaching out with the “Don’t Pay with your life “intervention, he explained that Uromi JDPCI partnered with ECPAT and GPI to stamp out trafficking in Edo State, wherein over a hundred vulnerable households were assessed across the five Local government areas of Edo Central Senatorial District and 50 of them emerged successful based on their degree of vulnerability. He further explained that on this occasion, the first batch of beneficiaries made up of 43 caregivers of 43 children/wards from vulnerable homes would be empowered with the sum of one hundred thousand naira (#100,000) as take up grant and will later receive the second and final disbursement which is fifty thousand naira (#50,000), making the total grant, one hundred and fifty thousand naira (#150,000) with which they would start up businesses and care for the school needs of these children. He added that the 43 children would also be given one year educational scholarship package to the tune of fifty thousand naira(#50,000). The empowerment, he said was a social enterprise which would eventually take the beneficiaries from the level of vulnerability to human trafficking and prostitution to income generating activities with measurable social impacts. He noted that these activities were geared towards finding lasting solution to the issue of poverty which makes them vulnerable to traffickers and other vices.



Good will message by Ruthmary Obasanmi; GPI representative

He admonished the caregivers to encourage their children to focus on their education, get a degree or other tertiary degree or advance functional skills that will prepare them for the future.

In conclusion, he thanked ECPACT for partnering with Uromi JDPCI and appreciated Girls Power Initiative for considering Uromi JDPCI at the initial stage to be a part of the process.



A beneficiary appreciating and praying for ECPAT and Uromi JDPCI

In her goodwill message the Coordinator of Girls Power Initiatives Grace Osakwe represented by Ruthmary

OBASANMI;



A caregiver receiving the grant award

of the girl child.

advised beneficiaries to utilize the money to be disbursed to them judiciously so as to make profits for the training

After the goodwill message, a grant award of one hundred thousand naira (#100, 000) was presented to each of the caregivers.

The caregivers beaming with joy rendered praises and prayers of Blessing to ECPAT France, ECPAT Luxembourg and Uromi JDPCI for the empowerment. They stated that the business training received from Uromi JDPCI to become business models for the purpose of retaining their children in school as well as the grant to carry out their business plan was a huge relief to them. They promised to be diligent, innovative and employ strategies learnt in business venture so as to gain the needed economic power to see their children through school as well as providing for their needs. They rejoiced and danced as many of them received credit alerts on their mobile phones even before the end of the ceremony and indeed attested that ECPAT and Uromi JDPCI kept to their word.

The activity ended successfully with the caregivers ready to start their respective businesses with the grant received and as such, empowered to carry out their parental responsibilities towards their children.



Group Photograph with beneficiaries



The Second Tranche of Empowerment Grant to Beneficiaries of “Don’t Pay With Your Life Project

Uromi JDPCI on Friday the 27th of November 2020 disbursed the second tranche of the empowerment grant to twenty (20) out of the initial forty-three (43) Caregivers of the “Don’t Pay with your life Project” that benefited from the 1st installment of the empowerment for Income Generating Activities. These 20 Beneficiaries were deemed to have successfully utilized their first installment of the grant in Income Generating Activities as was observed during the three phases of supervisory visit and monitoring made to their businesses, hence



Cross section of the Beneficiaries during the disbursement of the 2nd instalment of empowerment



Very Rev Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo addressing the Caregivers at the event of the disbursement of the 2nd instalment of empowerment

they were given the second part of the monetary support which was to the tune of fifty thousand naira each so as to expand their respective business activities to enable them take care of their children and the educational needs of their children. By so doing their children could be retained in school as such, assuage their livelihood situations and vulnerability to human trafficking. A total of 20 Caregivers and Four of the Project Staff were present for this activity which was held in Uromi, Esan North East LGA.

In the keynote address presented by Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo; the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI, he congratulated the Caregivers for the outstanding successes recorded so far in



Group Photograph with the Beneficiaries

their respective businesses; adding that only twenty of them were called to benefit from the second installment because they have productively and effectively utilized the first



The M&E Officer addressing the Caregivers at the event

monetary support that was given to them for business activities. He noted that it was pitiable that some of the Beneficiaries were yet to fully put the money received to good use despite the trainings and mentorship they received on business management, reiterating that such Beneficiaries would not access the balance monetary support until they record reasonable progress and success in their businesses. He appealed to the Beneficiaries to help counsel others who were lagging behind to become active in business so that they can also access their remaining money.

Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis admonished the beneficiaries to remain committed to their businesses, taking it as the best job they could ever get in the world.



One of the Beneficiaries happily acknowledging the receipt of her grant

He also taught them some business profiting tips and advised that they leverage on the upcoming festive period (Christmas) to



Another Beneficiary heartily acknowledging the receipt of her grant

stock and sell items that would be in high demand.

They were also advised to cultivate and maintain savings culture for rainy days. Particularly, they were cautioned that the 2nd installment of the grant they were to receive was not to be kept in the bank rather it should be used for the expansion of their businesses while emphasizing that

monitoring visit to their businesses and home would continue. He also stated that they would receive the grants in their accounts before the close of the day adding that anyone who was not credited should put a call across to him so that the challenge could be promptly rectified.

Erhabor Harriet thanked the Beneficiaries for their firm resolve to see that they excel in business and commended specifically for the tremendous growth in their businesses. She reminded the Caregivers of their responsibilities to their Children and urged them to work tirelessly to see that their children go through school and grow into responsible Adults in the nearest future.

The Beneficiaries were joyous; stating that the Organization kept true to all her promises made to them and in their words; “Never have they seen such happen in their Lifetime”. Some of the beneficiaries confirmed that they have received the alert of the sum of Fifty Thousand Naira in their account before the close of the event and thereafter signed the requisite documents to acknowledge the receipt of the money.

Provision of Education Materials to “Don’t Pay With Your Life” Beneficiaries in Edo Central Senatorial District

As part of efforts to promote access to school, school retention and progression in school for Adolescent girls in Edo Central Senatorial District, Uromi JDPCI in the “Don’t Pay With Your Life” Project supported forty one in school adolescent girls with one year scholarship. This was done to checkmate the prevalence of human trafficking among in-school Adolescent Girls within the scope of the project so as to make them less susceptible to human trafficking. Consequently on the 3rd of November 2020 41 selected Beneficiaries across 28 Government schools were awarded a one year full scholarship in their designated schools. The items covered by the



Cross Section of the Beneficiaries during the event

scholarship included payment of development fees, PTA and Examination Fees, complete set of school assigned text books, 15 branded note books, brand new school sandals and school bags. In addition, 9 of the students in SS1 were given a set of school uniforms while WAEC enrollments fees were paid for 19 students in SSS3. The presentation of school materials was done with a ceremony which brought all the beneficiaries together at a central location in Uromi while the WAEC enrolment for the 19 beneficiaries in the final classes in the secondary school was done in the various schools of the students

concerned.

The Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI; Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo in his keynote address explained that the purpose of the gathering was to provide education support to the selected beneficiaries who often had difficulties meeting up with the essential education

requirements such as text books, note books, school uniforms, school bags as well as other necessary development fees.

He noted that he was happy to have partnered with ECPAT France and Luxembourg to provide a one year scholarship to the Beneficiaries and empowering their Caregivers in Income Generating Activities so that they can continue to provide their educational needs after the first one year.

He stressed the need for the students to be very focused and attentive in their studies so as to achieve the goal of greatness and become meaningful and impactful actors in their families as the larger society. He informed them that the stage in which they were in, was filled with lots of distractions from peers, usually marked with youthful exuberance which may lead to destructions and shattered dreams if they failed to apply necessary caution.

Very Rev. Fr. Fidelis Arhedo cautioned the children to shun any invitation to go into prostitution both home and abroad. He asked them to not let beauty and relationship be a distraction because that is not their purpose right now.

Furthermore, he assured the students of the standard content in the text books gifted to them stating that all necessary knowledge needed to be obtained by all students in the curriculum irrespective of schools, environment or locations were contained in the textbooks. Therefore none of them had any reason



During the presentation of school materials to the Beneficiaries

to lack requisite facts and understanding in any given subjects and as such expect academic excellence from them in both internal and external examinations.

The Beneficiaries were thereafter called out to receive their books and school materials. They and their Parents expressed deep appreciation to the Executive Director, Uromi JDPCI, ECPAT France and ECPAT Luxembourg for the unmerited favour given to them out of everyone else. The Beneficiaries promised to read their books and to be responsible and disciplined Children.



Group photograph with the Beneficiaries



The Beneficiaries displaying their school materials

Focus Group Discussion with Beneficiaries in Edo Central Senatorial District

Uromi JDPCI held a focus group discussion with the caregivers of the selected beneficiaries of the Don't Pay with Your Life project and the caregivers who were empowered under the PACKING project across the five Local Government Areas of the project intervention in Edo Central Senatorial District. The joint meeting provided a platform that brought the beneficiaries together to form a support group that would become the mouth piece and advocates in their various communities to sensitize their fellow caregivers as well as their wards on the ills of human trafficking. It was also emphasized that the need for the joint meeting was to allow the potential beneficiaries to get acquainted with those that were previously empowered so that they could become a support group who would join



The facilitator addressing participants during the focus group discussion in Esan South East

voices to speak against human trafficking in their respective communities and to also promote mentorship in business between the old beneficiaries and the newly selected beneficiaries. It was noted that the group discussion will be held once in every two months for the first six months thereafter it would be once in a quarter. It was also noted that various topics around parenting skills, child development, human trafficking and irregular migration would be discussed. The project team then encouraged all of them to participate actively in the support groups as they will be required to be agents of sensitization in their various communities.

The first group discussion was focused on the subject of



Facilitator addressing the caregivers

“parenting responsibility” was held between 25th and 28th of February, 2020.

Participants were



The facilitators responding to issues raised by participants in Esan Central Local Government Area

taught who a parent or a caregiver is, the responsibilities that parents or caregivers have towards their children in building a healthy and prosperous community, the things that influences how children are raised and parenting styles. The discussion also looked at how parenting style affect and influence the decision of their children and ward, especially as it concern human trafficking and irregular migration. The discussion which was very participatory; involving role play and brainstorming was facilitated by two of the project staff (Michael Iyoriobhe and Erhabor Harriet). The focus group discussion was held in each of the five Local Government Areas with 100 persons made up of caregivers and project staff in attendance.

On the 8th, 11th and 12th of June, 2020 Uromi JDPCI conducted the second session of the focus group discussion with the caregivers of the beneficiaries of the Don't Pay with Your Life project and the caregivers who were empowered under the PACKING project across the five Local Government Areas of the project intervention in Edo Central Senatorial District. The subject of discuss during the meeting was "Understanding children's Personality". The caregivers were thus taken through the following topics: The meaning of Personality? The basic types of child personalities, How Parents should respond to their children based on their personality type, children's stages of development and how to meet their needs differently depending on the developmental stage and how to address the needs of children with disabilities. The sessions were very participatory and involved role play and brainstorming with Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo, Michael Iyoriobhe and Erhabor Harriet as the facilitators. A total of 85 caregivers across the five Local Government Areas attended the focus group discussion with 4 project staff.

The third session of the focus group discussion with the



Some participants at the meeting

beneficiaries (Caregivers) of the Don't Pay with Your Life and PACKING

projects was held across the



Facilitator addressing participants

five Local Government Areas of the project scope in Edo Central Senatorial District from the 28th - 30th September 2020. The sessions which were facilitated by Uromi JDPCI Don't Pay with Your Life Project Team in the respective Local Government Areas was aimed at teaching Participants on how to effectively communicate with their Children and set limits for them so as to promote understanding between Parents and their Children and to enable Parents guide their Children towards the desired behavior. Thus, the topic "Communicating and Setting Limit" was extensively treated in the respective Local Government Areas with sub topics as: the importance of setting limits, how to set proper limit for their children, how to listen and talk with Children, how to improves communication and reduce the physical distance between Caregivers and the Children, the need to be firm in enforcing limits for a child and carrying through with consequences set. A total of 100 persons (94females & 4male) in attendance



Some participants at discussion

The fourth session of the focus group discussion with the target beneficiaries being the caregivers of the Don't Pay with Your Life and the PACKING projects across the five Local Government Areas



A caregiver making a contribution

of the project intervention in Edo Central Senatorial District was held between 16th and 18th of November, 2020.

The sessions took place in five different locations spread across the five LGAs with discussion focused on “Disciplining and monitoring” which is an important parenting skill. The following sub topics were then explained to the participants; Understanding Children’s Misbehaviors and possible reasons for misbehavior, the concept of discipline and punishment including their differences and outcomes, the positive ways to discipline children, the importance of monitoring children and the best way children can be monitored. Michael Iyoriobhe and Erhabor Harriet facilitated the sessions using very participatory methodology involving group discussions, case studies and brainstorming sessions. The focus group discussions had a total of 100 persons made up of 97 females and 3 males in attendance

In all the sessions, participants expressed satisfaction and pleasure with the methodologies, as it was educating, explicit and informative. They expressed optimism of the impacts the lesson would create in their various homes, and promised to imbibe the lessons gained.

Monitoring Visit to Beneficiaries of Livelihood Support (PACKING and DPWYL Project)

Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiative (Uromi JDPCI) Partnered with ECPAT France and ECPAT Luxemburg to prevent the susceptibility of adolescent girls in Edo Central Senatorial District to human trafficking by promoting school retention among 50 in- school adolescent girls through the empowerment of their caregivers in Income Generating Activity (IGA) in order to meet



A beneficiary in her Crey fish shop

their school needs and general welfare. Within the reporting period



A beneficiaries showing her Akpu preparation process

(January-December 2020), Uromi JDPCI carried out monitoring visit to 50 beneficiaries of the PACKING project and the 43 beneficiaries so far empowered in the Don’t Pay With Your Life Project to ascertain status of their chosen IGA and to provide technical support for them where necessary. A total of 93 (50 PACKING and 43 DPWYL) beneficiaries were visited within this period. It was discovered that they were all in business and their children were all in school except for those children who have written their WEAC examination which marked the conclusion of their secondary school. One out of the three children told us that she passed her examination and that she has been admitted into the College of Education to study Political Science

In the course of the visit, one of the Caregivers told the project team that she was able to register her daughter in after school lectures; a feat she was unable to accomplish prior to the empowerment. She noted that her daughter was very happy about the achievement as it will help her cope very well with the lapses occasioned by inadequate teachers in the school. She added that her family's feeding patterns has also improved to some extent since she started the business with the grant she received from the Don't Pay With Your Life Project.

Another beneficiary also stated that in the past three months, she has made a profit of twenty thousand naira savings. She added that she also does subsistence farming



The caregiver with a member of the team in her shop during the monitoring visit

from where she meets the nutritional needs of her family as such reduce over



A beneficiary with her goods in her store

dependence on her business for basic food, thereby making room for stability and growth of the business. When she was asked what she plans to do with the second tranche of the grant. She said she would invest her balance grant into garri business. The daughter was still in school and has just written her Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination as such she is now in SS1 in Egoro- Amede Secondary School.

It was discovered during the monitoring visit that one of the beneficiaries whose business was the sales of fairly used clothes has moved to a different business line which is sales of food items, drinks and provisions. According to her, she was no longer getting the desired patronage in her clothing business as such, she was experiencing a diminishing cash inflow in the business and her capital was stuck in the unsold clothes, hence her decision to move to another business line. She used the sum of sixty thousand naira from her savings to start her new business and sells between eight- ten thousand naira on a



A beneficiary with palm fruits to produce palm oil

weekly basis. She hopes to expand the business and get a refrigerator for cooling her drinks with the second instalment of the grant. Meanwhile she plans to sell the remaining clothes at clearance prices during the festive period so



FA beneficiary with M&E and her goods in her store

that she could recoup her capital.

The Caregiver also sells groundnut and banana. The daughter has resumed a new session in school and was seen in good health.

It was gathered during the monitoring visit that one the beneficiaries' daughter often missed school during market days to assist her mother in the market. The Caregiver was cautioned never to allow her

daughter to be absent from school on account of assisting her in the market while noting that the daughter could help her out in the business during weekends. She acknowledged this and apologized to her daughter who was so happy about the intervention.

Some Caregivers complained that the high rate of inflation in the country was posing a big challenge to their business because of the incessant and indiscriminate hike in prices of goods in the market. They were encouraged to pay good attention to market information so as to be aware at all times about changes in price. This they were told will enable them adjust their prices to meet current situation in which case they would not run at a loss.

Regrettably, the Team was informed during the Monitoring visit to Aile Patience residence that the Caregiver; Aile Rose died and has been buried.



M&E Officer in the late beneficiary's house

The Team sympathized with the Family for their loss while the Beneficiary's eldest son stated that the Caregiver's business would continue despite her demise as the Family has resolved that her daughter (the student Beneficiary) would take over the business after her Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination.



The husband of a beneficiary with M&E officer

Meanwhile the wife of the eldest brother would support in the business in the time being to sustain it and support his sister in school. The young girl (beneficiary) has resumed school and has been enrolled



A beneficiary processing Garri

for the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination by the DPWYL project.

SUSTAINABLE MEASURE AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (SMAT-P)

This is a continuation of the intervention of Uromi JDPCI sponsored by the Catholic Bishop Conference of Italy through Caritas Nigeria aimed at the prevention of human trafficking and the reintegration of victims in Esan South East and Esan Central LGAs. The intervention has as part of its components the prevention of human trafficking and irregular migration through sensitization in the communities, markets, churches and schools as well as the provision of psychosocial support to victims through the formation of victims' support group in the two target LGAs. The project in the previous year took a step further strengthen livelihood of 96 households by supporting them with the sum of fifty thousand naira each



Sensitization at Ujabhole community in Esan Central



Sensitization at Idogbo in Emu

to set an income generating activity of their choice while 27 youths were enrolled into vocational skills acquisition centers.

To sustain this intervention in this reporting year, Uromi JDPCI carried out sensitization on the ills of human trafficking and Irregular Migration in twenty communities, two churches, five markets and eleven schools in Esan South East and Esan Central LGAs. A total of 1,843 persons made up of 771 male and 1,072 female were reached. Regular victims' support group meetings were held in both LGAs, coupled with the conduct of routine monitoring visits to the empowered beneficiaries.

Community Sensitisation

A total of 20 community sensitizations were conducted in this year and the purpose was to enlighten the people on the need for safe migration while discouraging human trafficking and irregular migration. It was emphasized that people are often trafficked for exploitation purposes thus the team advised that instead of embarking on a journey that would make them to be exploited,



they should engage in productive and meaningful activities to have their livelihood improved. A



documentary was shown to highlight the dangers of human trafficking and irregular migration to the people and why they should not embark on such trip. A total of 676 persons made up of 338 males and 338 females were reached.

Church Sensitization

A total of two churches were visited for sensitization in the period under review. The members were also given some enlightenment through words and



Members watching the documentary

documentary film show were they listen to the narration of those who have been victims, their ordeals and advice to the people. They watched with keen interest the pains of those who have been victims and thereafter asked questions to clear their doubts. A



The team speaking to members of the church

total of 290 persons (90 m & 200f) were reached in both churches

Market Sensitization

In the same vein Uromi JDPCI SMAT-P project team conducted sensitization on the dangers inherent in human trafficking and irregular migration in 5 community markets in Esan Central Local Government Area. The sensitization featured film show on the danger of human trafficking and participants watched the video clip which described the dangers involved in travelling through the desert and Mediterranean Sea, and the plights of those who were trafficked. They were then advised to either send their children to school, make them learn a trade or a skill so as to give them a meaningful live. A total of 191 persons made up of 27 male and 164 female reached



Sensitization at the market

School Sensitisation



Usugbenu Primary school, Usugbenu, Irrua

Uromi JDPCI carried out sensitization on the ills of human trafficking and Irregular Migration in eleven schools: New Dimension Primary and secondary school, Christ Like primary and secondary school, Idinwe primary school Ewatto, Idumu-Iyasele primary in Ewatto, Leaders of Tomorrow School, Illushi, Irena Secondary School, Ewatto, Ididigba Primary School, Usugbenu, Heritage Group of School, Irrua, Ewohimi Secondary School, Irena Primary School, Ewatto and Uneah Secondary School, Ibore. The project team emphasized the aim of the visit which was to enlighten the students on the need for safe migration while discouraging human trafficking and irregular migration. It was emphasized that people are often trafficked for exploitation purposes thus the team advised that instead of embarking on a journey that would lead them into



Sensitization at Heritage Group of School



Sensitization at Ewohimi Secondary school

exploitation, they should engage in productive and meaningful activities to have their livelihood improved. A documentary was shown to highlight the dangers of human trafficking to the people and why they should not embark on such trip. A total of 686 students made up of 316 male and 370 female were reached



Irena Secondary school Ewatto

Anti Human Trafficking Club Meeting

Uromi JDPCI followed up with the anti human trafficking clubs formed in four secondary schools in Esan Central and Esan South East Local Government Areas with 60 members made up of 30 male and 30 female. The schools were Annunciation Catholic College, Irrua, Irrua Girls Secondary, Uhomebho



The club members of ACC, Irrua

Secondary School Ewatto and Agadaga Secondary School, Ewohimi. The clubs in the various school selected from among

themselves presidents and



Discussion in Anti Human Trafficking Club

secretaries to manage their meetings and activities while Uromi JDPCI provided technical and logistic support for the effective running of the various clubs. The clubs meet twice every term, however meetings for this year were only held in the first term before the outbreak of the corona virus which led to the closure of schools for a long time.



Club members chanting the newly composed anthem

During one of the technical visit to the clubs, the project team admonished the club members to be more vigilant and be ready to always sensitize their peers at home and in communities on the dangers



Members of the club during meeting

inherent in human trafficking and irregular migration and that if they get any information about traffickers, they should report to the team so that such person could be reported to NAPTIP. The need to discourage internal trafficking was emphasized as children who have been trafficked internally could fall prey to rape and defilement which they are not able to tell others but their peers. The team said it almost would look like a work not done if students who hear about human trafficking are still molested. A member of the club noted that students in the school are being sensitized continuously by members of the clubs and as such, some students come to seek advice from the president or any of the club member on issues such as if they should live with someone they do not know of which they were told not to follow any person they do not really know to avoid be exploited.

At Agadaga secondary School, Ewohimi, the president of the club gave a summary report of the activities the club has carried out to includes: School debate where prizes were given to winners,

sharing of club members into groups with topics assigned to each, to go and research and make presentation on the topics. The topics shared amongst the groups are: A time ruined, is a time not gained, the right of a child. Also, the members sang a melodious anthem which they composed for the Anti human trafficking club

Monitoring Visit to Schools



Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo presenting the school bag and sandal to a beneficiary at Ewu senior grammar school

Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiative (Uromi JDPCI) sustained monitoring visit to 8 (Schools) in Esan Central and Esan South East Local Government Areas to monitor the progress of the



Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo presenting the school bags and sandals to beneficiaries at Ewu junior grammar school

present to the various students the school bags and sandals that were purchased for them by the project. The schools visited were: Ewu Grammar School (junior and senior), Idunwele Girls Secondary School, Irrua Girls Secondary School (junior and senior) Annunciation Catholic College (junior and senior), Ewatto Grammar School, Unity Secondary School and Okaigben Secondary school Ewohimi. A total of 70 school bags were given out to the 70 beneficiaries across the schools.

The Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo who presented the bags and sandals as well as school uniforms to the students urged them to ensure that they study their books so as to emerge successful in their academic endeavors. Adding that by the end of the term, the team would visit the school to evaluate their performance for the term and also promised to reward any of the beneficiaries who would make a



Presentation of bag and sandals to a Student in Idunwele Girls secondary school



A beneficiary at Irrua Girls Senior Secondary school receiving her bag and sandal

very good result. He stressed that they should ensure that their performance this term surpasses their previous performances as they have been provided with the needed school materials (textbooks and notebooks) which were

given to them prior to the visit. He also admonished the teachers to take special



A beneficiary at Annunciation Junior Secondary school receiving his bag and sandal

interest in the students and help monitor their progress in school and ensure they come to school with their books.

The Principals thanked the team for contributing to the academic advancement of the students and noted that some parents of the beneficiaries came to the schools to show appreciation for the books and tuition fee provided previously and even requested for the address of the office (Uromi JDPCI) to enable them come in person to appreciate the office for the good deeds.

Distribution of Education Materials to Students

As part of efforts to contribute towards the prevention of human trafficking and Irregular migration in Edo Central Senatorial District, Uromi JDPCI in collaboration with Caritas Nigeria with support from Italian Bishop Conference provided education materials to sixty eight (68) students (22M & 46F) in seven secondary schools across two Local



An ACC. Student who just

A student of Irrua girls receiving her study pack

Government Areas (Esan Central and Esan South East LGAs). The beneficiaries were from the following secondary schools: Ewatto Grammar school with 20 students (7M &13F), Uhomebho Secondary school with 15



Tprogram manager presenting school materials to a beneficiary in Iduwele girls.

students (9M & 6F), Agadaga Secondary school with 10 students (2M & 8F), Ewohimi Secondary school with 11 students (2M &9F), Annunciation Catholic College, Irrua with 2 students (both male), Irrua Girls Secondary school with 5 students (all female), Idunwele Girls secondary school, Ewu with 5 students (all female). The categories of students who benefitted were: 4 JSS1 students, 12 JSS2 students, 13 JSS3 students, 14 SS1 students, 14 SS2 students and 11 SS3 students. The materials given to them as education support include: complete sets of textbooks, a



Group photograph with Irrua Girls Student

dozen of exercise books, a pair of school uniforms, school sandals, sport wears and cardigans (for schools that use them). We also paid for their PTA levy, development and other levies as approved by the Parent Teachers Associations (PTA) of the various schools. Uromi JDPCI SMAT-P project also paid for the WEAC



Principal acknowledging receipt of items

enrolment of 11 the benefitting students who were in SS3 and junior school enrolment for 13 students who are in JSS3.

In Esan Central Local Government Area the presentation of the school materials were done at the various schools in the present of the school Principals. The students were advised not to engage in irregular migration for any reason as the purpose of the support they got was to ensure tha they do not fall victims of human trafficking as a result poverty or inability to meet their school needs. They were reminded that their basic responsibility at this time was to study hard so as to become responsible people in the society.

In Esan South East LGA, the students from Ewatto grammar school and Uhomebho secondary school assembled at the Palace of the Onojie of Ewatto kingdom to receive their materials. While the students from Ewohimi secondary school and Agadaga secondary gathered at the palace of the Onojie of Ewohimi Kingdom to receive their school materials. Present at the presentation ceremony were the Onojie of Ewohimi, chiefs from Ewatto kingdom, the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI, the Principals from the various schools, students from the schools, staff of Caritas Nigeria and Uromi JDPCI staff.



Onojie of Ewohimi Director, Caritas and Ewohimi Secondary school students in a group photograph

The Executive Director, Uromi JDPCI, Very Rev Fr Dr Fidelis Arhedo, in his opening speech said that the reason for



Onojie of Ewohimi, Director, Caritas and Agadaga Secondary school students in a group photograph

irregular migration and

human trafficking among other push factors were poverty, ignorance, lack of teachers in schools, lack of opportunities and inequality in the society. Therefore the organization has taught it wise to provide vulnerable children with school materials as such text books, note books, school shoes, school uniforms with full scholarship for one session, which covered payment for PTA, lectures, registration fees and enrolment for both junior and senior WEAC for those in their final year. This was



Executive Director presenting school materials to student of Ewatto Grammar school



Fr and Onomen presenting school materials to Ewohimi secondary school student

done in order to bridge the lacunars that the children may have in their educational lives. The executive director went on to tell those present that the foundation for excellence in all aspects of life was good education, as such he admonished the children to be serious with their studies and always consult their books for better clarification.

He appealed to the communities to assist in getting community teachers for the various schools in the villages so as to fill the vacuum that has been created by inadequate teachers in the schools.

In the same vain the principals present also advised the selected children to make good use of this very rare privilege by being very studious and also advised them to take proper care of the books. They thereafter appreciated Uromi JDPCI and her collaborators who made the said exercise possible. The students were also comforted by their principal that they should always have in mind that God almighty has made provisions for them in life despite their condition and prayed that opportunities of this kind continues to roll in.



Fr and Onomen presenting school materials to Uhomebho secondary school student

One of the chiefs present while expressing his profound gratitude to Uromi JDPCI and her collaborators advised the students to always study their books. He asked them to continuously develop themselves by way of reading as learning never stops so that they will be responsible people in the society and pleaded with the teachers to help in molding the children.

The State program manager of the SMAT P project, Bar. Onome Oriakhi, emphasized that the education support was from the Italian Bishops Conference who resolved to help Nigerians because of the high rate of irregular migration and human trafficking owing to the high level of poverty, ignorance and bad formation. She then encouraged the children to make judicious use of the opportunity that has being given to them.

Likewise, the Traditional Ruler of Ewohimi Kingdom, His Royal Majesty Lord Peter Ojiefu Usifo who was present at the event also appreciated the SMAT-P project for the kind gesture and told the children to make good use of this golden opportunity while advising them to desist from



Onojie of Ewohimi presenting school material to Agadaga secondary school student

irregular migration, human trafficking and early marriages. He particularly prayed

for all the students



Onojie of Ewohimi presenting school material to Ewohimi secondary school student

while he made the first presentations to them and gave his royal blessings to the activities of Uromi JDPCI in his kingdom.

Monitoring visit to SMAT-P IGA Beneficiaries in Esan Central and Esan South East LGAs

Following the schedule plan by the organisation to visit the caregivers whose capacity were built and supported with grant for income generating activities aimed at improving the livelihood of the households so as to reduce their vulnerability to human trafficking and irregular migration, Uromi JDPCI project team visited 96 beneficiaries from the Sustainable Measures Against Trafficking In Persons (SMAT-P) Project. The purpose was to ascertain their current position in



A beneficiary with her fruits for sale

their chosen businesses, provided technical support where necessary counsel them on the need to resist any form of attempt to lure their children into human trafficking or irregular migration. The beneficiaries expressed appreciation to Caritas Nigeria and Uromi JDPCI for the support they were given and noted that it has changed a lot of things in their lives in no small measures. They however regretted the outbreak of the corona virus which they said also affected their livelihood and the amount of money available for them to continue business. A greater part of them expressed hope that they can continue to manage their business with the little one remain and however appealed to the project team to remember them if there was any little way to support business affected



A visit to beneficiaries at Illushi market

by the global pandemic because a little more support will make life better for them as they did not plan for the corona virus as such did not expect to be so negatively hit by the pandemic. They also gave thanks, that the money was available to survive them during the pandemic noting that life would have been worse without it. As a result of the pandemic, some of them were out of business.

Those who were out of business complained of lack of fund to return to business but their survival were basically centered on produce from their farm which were more of yam and cassava. A total of 19 beneficiaries representing 19.8% were currently out of business of the total of 96 persons who accessed their funds while 77 beneficiaries representing 80.2% were still in business as at this reporting period.

In the same vein, the team embarked on monitoring to the beneficiaries of vocational skills in their places of training. The beneficiaries were observed to be doing well, while those who had challenges with their trainers were assisted to resolve it.

In most of the shops visited, the trainer commended the commitment of the trainee and reported that the beneficiaries have completed training but are either serving their trainers or working for the trainers pending when they will be able to set up their own shops.

The trainees expressed their appreciation to the SMAT-P project for the opportunity given to them to learn vocational skills which can make them better people in the future and also appealed for possible assistance to start their own business.

Victim Support Group

Uromi JDPCI sustained the provision of psychosocial support to returnees in Esan Central and Esan South East LGAs using the victims support group meetings as a platform. A total of six meetings were held in each of the LGAs within the year, with an average of 10 participants in each of the meetings.

The victim support group in Esan Central was linked to the Great Esan Returnees Association (GERA). This was part of the effort to sustain their reintegration as well as expand their frontiers to access support on their own. The members in both LGAs and many other returnees were also linked to the STEM project which was implemented by Caritas Nigeria for training on vocational skills and provision of start-up kits as livelihood support to the beneficiaries. A total of 75 (29 M & 46 F) beneficiaries in Edo Central Senatorial District who were referred by Uromi JDPCI got



President of Great Esan Returnees speaking to members

supported, and we sustained monitoring on them through volunteering services for the STEM project.

The members were further encouraged to strive for self-help by first developing themselves and advancing the



Group photograph of members after meeting

skills that they have as no external help can make them happier than what they can achieve on their own. The need for synergy and cooperation in their everyday life was re-emphasized while they were reminded that there was no limit to acquiring skills and that as a body they have come to stay so as to continually advance the course of their members in political social and economic sectors.

PARENTS-CAREGIVERS DIALOGUE SESSION ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MOVEMENT

Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiative (Uromi JDPCI) in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR's) Telling the Real Story project conducted a parent-caregiver dialogue session on human trafficking and Irregular Movement in three Local Government Areas, namely; Igueben, Esan Central and Esan West on the 17th, 18th and 19th of March 2020, respectively. The meeting was aimed at equipping parents and caregivers in the target areas with the right information on the menace of human trafficking and the reasons they should desist from permitting and encouraging the trafficking of their wards. Thus, the Participants who comprised of High Chiefs, Head of Religious Associations, Pastors, School teachers, Principals and parents were shown video clips of the ordeals of the victims of human trafficking, using the testimonies of survivors to speak to caregivers-parents on the issue of human trafficking and irregular movement. The sessions were facilitated by the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI; Very Rev. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo, Michael Iyoriobhe; the Program Manager of Uromi JDPCI and Unyime Johnson; Associate Project Officer of the UNHCR's Telling the Real Story project and were very participatory with varied responses, comments and contributions from participants in the respective L.G.As. A total of 171 persons- 94 females and 77 males were reached across the three Local Government Areas.



Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo during his opening remarks in Igueben

In the Opening remark, the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI; Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo applauded participants for honouring the invitation and said he was elated in coming around to discuss issues of human trafficking with the people and emphasized that the Enojie have been strong bone behind his intervention as JDPC Director in Uromi Diocese.



A cross section of participants in Ekpoma Esan West LGA

He expressed gratitude and noted that it was privilege to have “Telling the Real Story” in our domain, a project which the UNHCR has been undertaking for past two years in Edo State with the mission to tell the real story of human trafficking and Irregular Migration. He explained human trafficking by looking at three segments- the act, the means and the purpose. Oftentimes, he said people are told unrealistic stories of abroad full of good ideologies and good opportunities. Thus, many people are being deceived and coerced to travel through pressure from parents and peer groups.

He noted that the team was not against travelling overseas, as all humans are migrants, moving

from one destination to another for different purposes. But if people must travel abroad, they should follow the right way and not involving in unguided and unaided migration through the desert and seas endangering their lives and future. He stressed that the government has failed its citizenry by not providing job opportunities for young people and creating enabling environment for the people to flourish, however the present government of Edo State is working tirelessly to empower young persons in a bid to curb human trafficking and irregular migration. He reiterated that we cannot continue to watch our children being trafficked or moving out on their own to Europe through dangerous terrains where they are enslaved. Hence the gathering together of parent/caregivers to talk and dialogue on the issue of human trafficking and irregular movement from the perspective of the caregivers/parents in Igueben; looking at what we can do to address this global malady and how we can create hope for our younger generation to believe in Nigeria. He therefore indulged participants to contribute to the discussion.

Progressively, an overview of Telling the Real Story project was given by Unyime Johnson; UNHCR representative on telling the real story project. She welcomed participants and explained that Telling the Real Story (TRS) is a project that began in 2016 in countries like Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea



A cross section of participants in Irrua, Esan Central LGA

where it was observed that young persons were moving outside their countries; as most of them were victims of war and others were refugees. Hence



Participants watching the video screening with keen interest in Igueben LGA

they decided to cross over to Europe; but were not doing it in the right way. TRS coming into Nigeria was necessitated through the 2017 CNN report that talked about what Nigerians and other Africans were facing in Libya and thus in 2018, TRS came on board in Nigeria and was extended to Edo State in particular. Telling the Real Story is all about informing our young boys and girls on the dangers of Irregular movement and human trafficking, reaching out to parents and telling them that they should not push their children out to human traffickers because of the dangers it possess on their wards. She stressed that the project is not saying that we should not encourage our children to move, but its saying that people should migrate the right way. Rather than make themselves subjected to trafficking in midway to Europe, they should identify their purpose of travelling from the beginning, organise for their regular travel using the right modalities by getting their passport, visas and other supporting documents. She reiterated that a lot of people even graduates have been deceived to migrate with the promise of getting jobs in Europe which often proved false. Thus, if our children must travel for job purposes, such jobs must have been advertised, then they will apply, interviewed for it and called to resume. She warned that nothing good comes easy and when a story appears too good, it could actually be false.

Immediately after the overview, the participants watched video screening of survivors of human trafficking telling the real story of their journey to Europe and their experiences and ordeals.

In the video, the Survivors narrated how they were introduced to human traffickers by their friends and relatives and deceived that they were going to do legal jobs abroad. But on getting to Libya, their traffickers changed towards them and some of them were sold out and forced to work in brothels; sleeping with different men. Others were forced into prostitution by their



Group photograph with Participants at Igubeben Local Government Area

traffickers who had earlier promised that they would do decent jobs in Europe which were all lies. They could not say no, because they threatened them with guns, flogged and starved them. They had nowhere to run to because of the terrain of the place and so they kept

working as sex slaves. Some of them got infected with diseases and got pregnant

in the process. Later on, they were put in an over-crowded rubber boat and taken to Europe through the Mediterranean Sea where some lost their lives. They were eventually rescued and taken to refugee camps by the Italian government but their traffickers helped them to escape from the camps. Their situation became worse when they left camp to meet their Madams who took them to the streets to prostitute and they remitted the money made to them while they lived in debt bondage because their traffickers insisted that they pay every dime they spent in taking them overseas, a debt they could not finish paying. Some narrated that prior to their journey, they were taken to shrines where they swore oaths with their bodies, hence lived in perpetual fear that the oath will work against them if they refuse to do the bidding of their madams. Most of them prostituted over a year and were exploited in different ways which got them frustrated and devastated and then, they decided to run away from their madams. However, the aftermath of the prostitution, still lingers, as many are still living in nightmares of their experiences, some went insane and others faced with psychological traumas, having bad dreams and the likes. One common fear they all complained about; was fear that their traffickers will bring harm to their parents and siblings at home.

The Participants with keen interest watched and listened to the experiences of these survivors and expressed great pity and heartbreak on the ordeal faced by their children. At the end of the video screening, the dialogue session was taken where participants were asked questions of which they gave responses, made comments as well as



Group photograph with Participants at Esan Central Local Government Area

contributions.

After the dialogue session, Very Rev. Fr. Fidelis Arhedo appreciated participants for their comments and responses. Then after, he talked on parental value, emphasizing that the older generation valued children more than anything else, but the society today, practice the contrary, as parents and caregivers no longer place value on their children. He recalled some cultural names with deep meaning that connote value for children; names such as **Omonefe**, meaning a child is greater than wealth and riches, **Omoafeba**, meaning wealth is only an addendum to a child, in other words wealth is useless without children, **Omonigho**, a child is greater than money. He urged Participants to make a difference in their communities by valuing their children, guiding them rightly and not pressurizing them to go out and make money like their fellow peers whose source of wealth cannot be traced to any legal venture. He emphasized that **Onoromonduhomo Obhawo** (meaning parent who sacrificed his child for any reason cannot boast of being strong or noble) because **Omo'aluna** (meaning it is your child you labour for) He stressed that parents should not support their children in bad things like enrolling them in Miracle centres to write examinations unknowing to them that they are sowing seeds of Fraud in the children. He advised that the good values of the society should be upheld. Children should be supported in their educational endeavours and be made to have a sense of relevance in the home as research had shown that most young girls from families where the females are been marginalised, migrated irregularly to make money abroad so that they could become relevant and respected in their homes.



Group photograph with participants at Esan Central Local Government Area

Chief Irabor, M.O; the Oliha of Igueben Kingdom and representative of the Onojie of Igueben admonished participants to take the message they have heard to their various quarters and encouraged Parents to care for their children so that they will be able to fulfil their destiny. He prayed the

ground to swallow anyone who wishes to continue human trafficking in

Igueben Kingdom and also prayed against ritualist and their activities in Igueben. He recalled the expression of Late Arch-Bishop Benson Idahosa; that there is no height that cannot be reached, but requires treading on the path of hardwork and dedication.

In conclusion, Very Rev. Fr. Fidelis Arhedo encouraged men and women to work-hard to help and uplift their families and admonished the Chiefs to fight and uphold the truth at all times.

COMMUNITY LEADERS DIALOGUE ON THE PREVENTION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MOVEMENT

Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR's) Telling The Real Story Project conducted Community Leaders dialogue on the prevention of human trafficking and Irregular Movements in three Local Government Areas, namely; Igueben, Esan Central and Esan West on the 7th, 9th and 14th of December 2020, respectively. The activity was designed to bridge the knowledge gap identified during a prior dialogue session with Parent/Caregiver on the dangers of human trafficking and Irregular Movement; with a view to improve the effective response to the prevention of human trafficking in Edo- State.

The activity also provided a platform for the constitution of a community dialogue committee to serve as community safety net in responding to issues of human trafficking and Irregular Movement within target communities thus a total of 9 committees were formed across 9 communities.

The Participants who comprised of Community Chiefs, Community Leaders and Elders, Community Women Leaders and Community Youth Leaders were enlightened on the dangers inherent in human trafficking and irregular movement wherein they watched with keen interest real life documentaries of the ordeals of the survivors of human trafficking. They were thereafter led to dialogue on the way forward in curtailing and eradicating the menace from their communities so that young people could be rescued from the web of traffickers and guided to make informed and factual migration decisions if at all they intend to migrate.

The sessions which were facilitated by The Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI; Very Rev. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo and the Program Manager; Michael Iyoriobhe had a total of 180



Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo
Addressing Participants in Esan West LGA



Participants of Esan West LGA listen
to the experiences of victims via
projected film

persons comprising 100 Males and 80 Females in attendance across the three Local Government Areas.

In the Opening Remark, The Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI and the Convener of the programme; Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo explained that human trafficking and irregular migration has been catastrophic in the lives of the victims as they are often subjected to all manner of exploitation and servitude and are seen as nuisance in the host Countries since they breach migration policies of these countries. He noted that though hardship persist in the Nigeria society due to the failure of the Government to make the country better habitable for her people, yet such should not be a yardstick for our youths to endanger their lives; travelling through dangerous terrains such as the Mediterranean Sea and the Desert to Europe in search of greener pastures. He Reiterated that all; both at the home front and at the community level must work

together to find a lasting solution to the problem so that our young ones will not have to opt to leaving the country to sojourn in foreign lands as slaves.

He recounted a number of interventions carried out by Uromi JDPCI in contributing her quota to alleviating the sufferings of indigent and vulnerable



Cross session of Participants at the event in Esan Central LGA



Participant contributing

households across Edo Central Senatorial District to make them less susceptible to human trafficking and irregular migration. More so, he noted that the Organization had commenced documentation of 30 vulnerable Youths in Igueben Local Government Area who has been selected to be trained and empowered in various skills of interest.

Very Rev. Fr. Fidelis Arhedo explained that the Dialogue Session aims at discussing with community leaders on how they can help mitigate the issue of human trafficking and irregular Migration within communities by setting up community structures and mechanisms that would work to address and curtail the aforementioned issue of discourse.



The Executive Director, addressing participants at igueben LGA

He lamented that the community has over the years lost their values and goals of which they were known which includes integrity, communal living; inter family interest, security checks and protections. Adding that this has necessitated uneven wealth to be celebrated and desired by children and youth over hard work and education. He further bewailed that parents had lost their roles as role models and builders of right values and morals as they often indulge their Children in illegal activities and even sell their properties to send their Children abroad illegally.

He therefore called on all Community Leaders to wake up and stand as watch dogs to stop the nefarious activities of Traffickers within their communities and help to guide the young generation in the right direction rather than celebrating their illegal ways of acquiring wealth such as cyber theft, money rituals, irregular migration and so forth. More so, he hoped that the outcome of the dialogue would help resuscitate the lost glory and the dwindling influence of the community over her occupants. He enjoyed everyone to be participatory and attentive during the discussion.

Moving forward, Participants were exposed to varied video documentaries (courtesy of Telling the Real Story project) of bad experiences relayed by survivors of human trafficking and irregular migrants, as an evidence to the hardship such persons undergo in the voyage.

One Common Factor deduced from the testimonies of the Survivors was that they left home to Europe with the mindset to do legal work that would earn them wealth to better their families. Also, the promising future they envisaged before embarking on their journey turned sour as they were enslaved, starved, kidnapped, raped, neglected and exploited in all ways and in extreme cases repatriated with diseases. In most cases the victims never reached their choice destinations instead they became stranded in other Africa countries like Libya with deplorable states worse than their country of Origin, Nigeria.

To this end, the Participants realized the futility in the journey and sought for solutions to the tragedy of human trafficking and irregular migration.

The Facilitator accurately made a distinction between human trafficking and irregular migration while noting that an irregular migrant could subsequently become a victim of human trafficking.

During the dialogue session, one of the Participants explained that human trafficking is characterized by human influence in which children are deceived to make hasty migration decisions whereas irregular migration is borne out of personal desire. It was also noted that this was part of the reasons people do not report human trafficking and irregular migration issues to community leaders and that when any member of the community tries to report, they are labelled enemies of progress



PARTICIPANT MAKING HIS INPUT

On this, one of the Chiefs emphatically stated that if one decides to report another fellow in the community who plans to have his/her Child trafficked,



The Oliha of Igueben Responding to a question been raised

such a person would be looked upon as an enemy. While buttressing his point, he stated that most parents and victims were oblivious of the true intentions of the traffickers therefore; any attempt to intervene against human trafficking and irregular migration would be seen as acts of jealousy. It was also stated that due to the involvement of some community elders who sponsor their Children to migrate irregularly, it would be difficult for such Elders to respond to the issues when reported since they encourage the menace directly or indirectly.

Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo reiterated that the only way to encourage people to report issues of human trafficking and irregular movements was for community members to recognize and understand that human trafficking and irregular movements is evil and endangers lives. Additionally, Michael Iyoriobhe explained illustratively that one cannot justify an evil act because people are suffering. He noted that the Organisation was not against people migrating

regularly, but was against people being forced, coerced or deceived to migrate illegally hence the need for community Leaders to stand up in their communities to rescue such victims.

on the existence of community structure for the prevention of human trafficking, the Oliha of Igueben, who represented the Onojie of Igueben related some of the steps that has been taken by the Onojie to address Human Trafficking in the community such that he has nullify all oaths that were used to hold victims in bondage. This was a similar thing done by the Oba of Benin .



Participants seeing the documentary of victims of human trafficking and irregular Movement

He ardently stated that the community had lots of role

to play in ensuring the eradication of the problem by

creating a group, who would be known to be responsible for checkmating those irregularities. Other contributors urged parents to take responsibility over the proper and moral upbringing of their children, so that the community would not be filled with youths who are irresponsibly and foolishly minded.

Another suggested that more sensitizations against human trafficking should be carried out at all level of social gatherings such as schools, markets places, work places and even churches so that the problem of ignorance resulting to deceits would be addressed.

Yet again, a participant claimed that those likely to embark on such journeys were the hoodlums, drug addicts and the never do well in the community. He noted that such Youths were usually difficult to address because they are problematic to the



A community head making his inputs

community.



Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo Addressing the Participants



Dialogue in progress

Very Rev Fr Dr Fidelis ARHEDO responded that such persons are not powerful than the Community, adding that they can be counseled on the need to deviate from their wayward lifestyles.

Onomen Oriakhi Esq, the Program Manager of Anti Human Trafficking Unit of Caritas Nigeria addressed the participants on the adverse effects of human trafficking and irregular migration on the victims, the parents, the community and even the economy. She explained the need for the active participation of the community in the fight, while assuring them of the support of governmental bodies put in place to handle matters related to human trafficking and irregular migration such as NAPTIP, ETAHT.

The dialogue sessions ended with the formation of 3 Community Committee for Prevention of human trafficking in each of the three LGAs with members spread across Community Chiefs, Elders, Community women leaders and community youth Leaders. However, it is recommended that adequate training should be done for members of these committees on the rudiments of human trafficking and irregular migration as well as how to perform their duties as committee members so that they can help sensitize other members of their communities and discharge their duties as watch dogs effectively.



Cross session of participants in Igueben LGA



Cross-session of participants in Esan Central LGA



Cross session of participants of Esan West LGA

Community enlightenment and awareness on human trafficking and Irregular migration is very needed in Igueben LGA as there still exist a wide knowledge gap on the concept of human trafficking and irregular migration among the citizens as was observed during the dialogue session.

MICRO CREDIT

In the course of the year, activities geared towards empowerment of the less privileged in the society through provision of soft loans for enterprise development and enhancement of the production as well as livelihood opportunity of farmers were carried out.

Formation/Training:



Members of Praise Group and PROMIC Officers during formation/training at Atani

In line with the objective of the scheme, sensitization visit was done in

communities



Cross section of PROMIC Officers and members of Akugbe Cooperative Society 3 during formation/training at Idoa

where there was little or no awareness of the scheme

hence; four (4) new groups with twenty nine (29)

persons were formed and trained under the PROMIC 1 scheme. Under the PROMIC 2 scheme, eight (8) new groups with sixty two (62) persons were formed and trained while refresher training was conducted for four (4) existing group with thirty one (31) members. In the Group Micro Credit Scheme, three (3) new groups with sixteen persons were formed and trained while refresher training was conducted for two (2) existing groups with nineteen (19) persons. Under the Agric PROMIC scheme, nine (9) new groups with eighty six (86) farmers were formed and trained while refresher training was conducted for eight (8) existing groups with sixty eight (68) farmers. Also, four (4) new groups with thirty three (33) farmers were formed and trained under the Agric Micro Credit scheme while refresher training was conducted for nine (9) existing groups with seventy six (76) farmers.

Registration/Confirmation of Account Details:



Members of Praise Group Atani during registration/confirmation of account details

As part of activities to disburse/reimburse the newly formed group as well as existing group



Members of Akugbe Cooperative Society 3 Idoa during registration/confirmation of account details

members, confirmation of account details was carried out so as for them to go through the bank schedule and make necessary corrections (if any). Also, the sum of five hundred naira (₦500) was collected from members of the newly formed groups as registration fee and 10% of the loan application amount as savings/collateral.

Collection of Repayment/Refund of Savings:

In accordance with the provisions of the scheme and the groups' collection date, collection of repayment was done monthly and at the end of agreed period. Thus; in the PROMIC 1 scheme, a total sum of one million, five hundred and thirty one thousand, seventy naira (₦1,531,070) was realized as repayment for the



Some members of a group during collection

year and a total sum of one hundred and nineteen thousand, two hundred and seventy naira (₦119,270) was refunded as savings to groups/members who no longer want to continue with the scheme after the completion of their repayment. Under the PROMIC 2 scheme, a total sum of four million, five hundred and ninety one thousand, one hundred and seventy naira (₦4,591,170) was realized as repayment for the reporting year and a total sum of one hundred and fifty seven thousand, one hundred naira (₦157,100) was refunded as savings to some group/members who longer want to continue with the



Members of Alaghodaro Group, Igueben during collection of repayment.

scheme. Also, the sum of eighty one thousand, five hundred and thirty seven naira (₦81,537) was paid as contribution to Regional PROMIC for the year, 2020. In the Agric PROMIC scheme, the sum of eleven million, six hundred and fifty four thousand, eight hundred naira (₦11,654,800) was collected as repayment for the year and a total sum of one hundred and seven thousand, five hundred naira (₦107,500) was refunded as savings to some group/members who longer want to continue with the scheme. Also, the sum of two hundred and seventy thousand, one hundred and twelve naira (₦270,112) was paid as contribution to Regional PROMIC. Under the Individual

The leader of Divine Favour Group during collection at Ewu

Impact

The PROMIC 1, PROMIC 2 and Group Micro Credit schemes have been of great impact to the beneficiaries as most of them, during collection of repayment, appreciated the organization for coming to their aid via the soft loan. According to them, the loan has enabled them expand their businesses and thus; led to increase in profit and improved livelihood. Also, in the Agric PROMIC and Agric Micro Credit schemes, some beneficiaries, when visited in this reporting year, appreciated the organization for the scheme as they are now able to do what they could not

do before encountering the scheme as it relate to providing for their immediate family, sending



A group of people, including men and women, are sitting in a circle on a porch, engaged in a discussion. One person is standing and gesturing while speaking to the group. The setting is outdoors with a view of a lush green landscape.



Cross section of micro credit officer and beneficiaries during collection



Cross section of micro credit officers and beneficiaries during formation

their children/wards to school, etc. Particularly, one of

the beneficiaries, after appreciating the organization said, the scheme has helped her tremendously as her Ogbonor business has expanded and her profit has increased. According to her, it is from the profit she enrolled her daughter for JAMB and her daughter eventually passed and gained admission into Ambrose Alli University (AAU) to study and all necessary fees were paid by her without meeting anyone for assistance. Also, one of the beneficiaries of the scheme appreciated the organization for the Agric Loan. According to him, the loan has helped him expand his farming activity and via the profit from the sales of his harvested crops, he has roofed his new building as well as done POP ceiling.

Business/Farm Inspection:

As part of activity to ascertain if the objective of the scheme is being met, businesses as well as farms of beneficiaries were inspected. This inspection was aimed at monitoring beneficiaries' business/farm progress, proffer guidance and referrals where necessary.

PRISON APOSTOLATE

New Year Celebration

It was a moment of excitement as the family of Engr and Lady John Amedu KSJI in collaboration with Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives visited the inmates in Ubiaja Correctional Center to celebrate the New Year with them. The event which took place on the 23rd of January 2020, had the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI Very Rev Fr Dr. Fidelis Arhedo and the staff of Uromi JDPCI in attendance while the inmates who were full of excitement sang melodious songs to praise God.



Very Rev Fr Dr Fidelis Arhedo during homily

In his homily, the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI Very Rev Fr Dr. Fidelis Arhedo who celebrated the mass admonished the inmates and all who accompanied the celebrant to imbibe the virtue of patience as God will always honour his chosen ones. He reminded them that nothing good comes easy but with dependence on God who is the source of creation; good things will fall in place for us. He then enjoined the inmates to be focus in their genuine engagement as they strive to abandon their old ways.

At the end of the mass Engr Amedu appreciated the inmates and officials for allowing the mass take place with decorum as well as attending the mass. He advised the inmates to be patient and work hard when the freedom they desire comes; he advised them to depend on God alone to facilitate freedom.

In appreciation the Prison welfare officer thanked the family for coming to celebrate with the inmates. Uromi JDPCI thereafter use the occasion to collect request from some of the inmates for possible assistant.

Christmas Party for Inmates

In the same vein the family of Amedu again collaborated with Uromi JDPCI to celebrate Christmas for the inmates. The event which held on the 22nd of December, 2020 had Very Rev Fr Dr Fidelis Arhedo, the family of Amedu, staff of Uromi JDPCI and other friends of Amedu in attendance. The executive Director appreciated the family for their firm commitment to supporting the course of effective reformation of the inmates. He admonished the inmates to see such act of love as God's invitation to them and a call to repentance.

Mrs. Amedu also encouraged them to draw lessons from the story of Joseph in the Bible who was vindicated after a long period of suffering while noting that the innocent would always experience such miracles. She advised those who were guilty to repent and be reformed.

The Welfare Officer for the correctional center and the New Officer in Charge appreciated the guest and prayed for God to reward their good efforts. Food and drinks were given to the inmates.

Medical Assistance for Inmate in Prison

As a follow up to the requests collected from the inmates Uromi JDPCI visited one of the inmate to ascertain the health condition of the inmate who had malaria (according to medical diagnosis). Uromi JDPCI assisted him with the procurement of the prescribed drugs. Another inmate who

was hospitalized was also assisted with the part payment of hospital bill to effect his discharge from the hospital.



Assessing hospital bill for an inmate

Easter Gift to Inmates in Ubiaja Correctional Center

Uromi JDPCI facilitated the delivery of food items from the Catholic Diocese of Uromi to the Correctional Center for the use of inmates. The food items were made up of 5 bags of garri, small bowl of onions about 50 tubers of yam and some bunches of plantain. One of the officer who received the items on behalf of the welfare officer expressed appreciation to the Bishop and the entire Catholic Diocese of Uromi for the gift sent to them despite the difficult times created by the COVID 19 pandemic, leaving the world in uncertainty.

CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING

Family Tracing and Reunification

With the objective to strengthen the knowledge of staff on family tracing, reintegration, child



Cross section of participants and facilitator after training.

protection in the community, skills to train others (social workers) in service, and skills to cope on daily work with returnees, a two days training programme was organized by Girls Power Initiative (GPI) on family tracing, reintegration and case management for staff of Uromi JDPCI in August, 2020. The training was very insightful as participants were exposed to the causes of separation, key concepts in family tracing and reintegration as well as how cases could be

managed.

Soap Making and Fragrance Production

In the year 2020 in order to curb irregular migration and discourage human trafficking Uromi JDPCI collaborated with Caritas Nigeria to organize a 5 day training on soap and fragrance production under the Sustained, Trained and Empowered Me Project (STEM) where by 25 beneficiaries spread across the 5 local government areas in Edo Central Senatorial District who were vulnerable to the



Group Photograph with beneficiaries

aforementioned problems were trained. The training took place at the chancery complex Egbele and was facilitated by INDRAP who taught on Entrepreneurship, soap making, fragrance production, germicide, bleach and insecticide production. The training ended with the trainees being given starter packs to start up their businesses.

Poultry Farming

In a bid to curb irregular migration and discourage human trafficking Uromi JDPCI collaborated with CARITAS Nigeria to organize a 5 day training on poultry production under the Sustained, Trained and Empowered Me project (STEM) where by 25 beneficiaries spread across the 5 local government areas in Edo Central Senatorial District who



A group of participants at the training



Some birds at the training farm

were vulnerable to the aforementioned problems were trained. The training took place at the chancery complex Egbele, Uromi and was facilitated by INDRAP who taught the beneficiaries how to start up and manage an agricultural enterprise as well as the theoretical and practical aspect of poultry production.

Online Soap Making Training

In order to build capacity at the community level Uromi JDPCI enrolled her staff for two online training so as to improve her knowledge on both liquid and tablet soap production. Although Uromi JDPCI now produces Izal, liquid soap, air freshener liquid and bar soap which she sells to the public she still plans sending her staff for further training in order to have a better output.