

ANNUAL REPORT

OF

UROMI JUSTICE DEVELOPMENT PEACE AND CARITAS INITIATIVES,

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF UROMI,

CHANCERY COMPLEX, EGBELE UROMI

FROM JANUARY – DECEMBER, 2024

JANUARY, 2025

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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 A Ogun (OSA)
Authorized Representative & Director	Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Oriabure Arhedo
Corporate Registration No:	CAC/IT/No: 50042 & ED/MWASD/NGOR/200/04
Status	Catholic Non-Governmental, Non-Profit making, Humanitarian and Development Organization.
Motto	Hope for the Oppressed and Empowerment for All
Areas of operation	Integral Development, Human Rights, Democracy, and Good Governance, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Correctional Center Apostolate and Legal Aid services, Peace Building, Micro-Credit, and Caritas, Health including TB and HIV/AIDS care and support, HIV Counselling and testing, Livelihood improvement, Migration and Countering Trafficking in Person, and OVC programming
Project steered	Conflict Management, Training of Electorate, Election Observation, Budget Monitoring, Community TB Care, HIV/AIDS Awareness Creation and counselling, Micro-Credit Facilities, Rural Community Development Enlightenment Campaign, Prisoners' Welfare Services, Gender And Child Rights, Widowhood Association, Human Rights, Training Programmes for Police Officers and Youths, Women Development & Promotion through Micro Credit, Emergency Response, Legal Aid, OVC Programming, Capacity Strengthening for Good Governance, Campaigns and Sensitizations Against Human Trafficking as well as Creating Alternatives to Human Trafficking through Vocational Skills Acquisition and Empowerment, Human Right Education and Paralegal Scheme, Don't Pay With Your Life, Strengthening Community Participation to Prevent Human Trafficking, Galvanize action against Trafficking in Person Response at the Local levels and Integrated Child Health and Social Service Award, Act Against Child Trafficking in Nigeria, Strengthening Awareness of ACJL in Edo State

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	Chancery Complex, Egbele, Uromi, Edo State, Nigeria.
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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 • Zenith Bank PLC Mission Road, Uromi
Staff Strength	24
Number of Community Volunteers	72
Project Executed	28

OUR VISION

A just and developed society where people coexist in peace

OUR MISSION

To promote integral human development through motivation and participatory actions with relevant stakeholders toward policy reforms, empowerment of the people, and enhancement of human dignity for meaningful living

OUR CORE VALUE

Integrity: Committed to doing the right thing at the right time

Accountability: We hold ourselves responsible to all stakeholders

Transparency: We demonstrate openness, and honesty and welcome constructive criticism

Excellence: We do ordinary things in extraordinary ways

Team Spirit: We uphold a friendly disposition and oneness toward achieving our goal

FOCUS GROUP

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

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To promote human rights 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 society.
4. To promote human rights as enshrined in the UN Charter and Banjul declaration of Human Rights.
5. To build the capacity of communities to participate in their own development for peaceful co-existence.
6. To co-operate with international agencies, government, and NGOs for integral development.
7. To promote and monitor activities geared towards community growth and development
8. To Promote the well-being and protection of Orphans and Vulnerable Children
9. To promote the protection and empowerment of women
10. Support the Countering of Trafficking in Persons

ORGANISATIONAL IDEOLOGY

Uromi JDPCI's organizational ideology is premised on the mandate of God to humankind which is to take care of His creation, to be on the side of the poor, to live in peace with all people, and to preserve human dignity and the common good of all.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

As we reflect on the year 2024, we are profoundly grateful to Almighty God for His abundant wisdom, guidance, inspiration, and grace, which have illuminated the path of the Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI).

Through His divine blessings, we were empowered to implement an array of interventions aimed at enhancing the well-being and quality of life of the people in the society. In our continued efforts to champion the principles of social justice, equity, and sustainable development, we are grateful to him for the progress we have made and the success we have experienced in our initiatives.

The year 2024 was indeed a year of blessings; one marked by innovation, a greater endowment of wisdom, and a deepened understanding of the needs of those we serve. By God's grace, we successfully achieved nearly 80% of the targets we set at the beginning of the year. This achievement stands as a testament to the divine guidance that has directed our work and the unwavering commitment of our team. We take this moment to celebrate the accomplishments of the past year, while also acknowledging the significant work that still lies ahead. As we look towards 2025, we are determined to remain steadfast in our mission and strategic objectives, ensuring that we continue to build on our successes and address the challenges that persist within our community and society at large.

Uromi JDPCI placed great emphasis on promoting good governance, an issue that stirred political debates and concerns throughout the year. Our active involvement in election observation and citizen sensitization initiatives played a critical role in fostering a peaceful and transparent electoral process. Through our outreach efforts, we worked to ensure that citizens were not only informed about the electoral process but also encouraged to actively engage in the democratic process peacefully and responsibly. By God's grace, we are pleased to report that the election day proceeded without any recorded casualties, and despite rumors of election result manipulation, the process itself was largely peaceful. We commend the people for their strong commitment to democracy and their active participation in the electoral process.

As we continue to advocate for human rights, Uromi JDPCI remains deeply committed to addressing gender-based violence and ensuring the protection of women and children. Over the past year, we have made significant strides in challenging harmful cultural practices that undermine human dignity and hinder the realization of basic human rights, particularly for vulnerable groups. Our focus on raising awareness of gender-based violence has led to greater community engagement and accountability for those responsible for such violations. We are proud of our role in empowering communities to recognize and address these violations, and we remain resolute in our mission to promote human rights and human dignity for all.

In line with our commitment to addressing critical social issues, Uromi JDPCI has continued its unyielding efforts to combat human trafficking, with a special focus on the trafficking of children. Through extensive community sensitization programs and the establishment of Adolescent Clubs in various communities, we have worked diligently to raise awareness about the dangers of human trafficking and the steps that families can take to protect their children. These clubs have provided vital platforms for parents and children alike to learn about the dangers of trafficking, equipping

them with the knowledge and resources necessary to prevent exploitation. We remain committed to addressing this heinous crime and creating safe environments for all children.

Uromi JDPCI's microcredit program has been another cornerstone of our efforts to empower rural farmers and entrepreneurs, providing them with essential financial support, training, and resources to grow their businesses. By offering soft loans, financial literacy training, and access to modern farming techniques, we have helped many rural farmers improve their agricultural practices and increase productivity. This, in turn, has strengthened the local agro-economy, provided employment opportunities, and contributed to the economic well-being of families in our communities. As we look forward to the future, we are hopeful that our continued focus on empowering the agricultural sector will yield even greater benefits for our people, and we are open to collaborating with well meaning partners to further scale these efforts.

One of the key areas of focus for Uromi JDPCI has been supporting orphaned and vulnerable children, particularly those living with HIV. In 2024, we ensured that these children received the medical care, emotional support, and consistent access to their medications. Through our programs, we have worked to raise awareness about HIV prevention and provided critical health services to key population. We remain deeply committed to addressing the needs of vulnerable children, ensuring that they receive the care, love, and protection they deserve, while also providing critical resources to mitigate the spread of HIV.

In the area of Prison Apostolate, Uromi JDPCI successfully provided a range of social welfare services within the correctional center. These services included spiritual counselling, legal assistance, medical care, and support aimed at facilitating the reintegration of inmates into society. By working to build the capacity of inmates, we have helped ensure that upon their release, they are equipped with the skills and support needed to become productive and contributing members of society. This ministry has brought hope and healing to many incarcerated individuals, and we are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to their rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

Uromi JDPCI has taken proactive steps in addressing the challenges of climate change within our community. Through awareness campaigns and environmental education, we have empowered local farmers and residents with sustainable practices to mitigate environmental degradation. Our efforts include promoting tree planting initiatives and advocating for eco-friendly agricultural methods to protect the environment. By integrating climate action into our programs, we aim to foster a resilient community capable of adapting to changing environmental conditions.

At the parish level, we are pleased to report that our initiatives continued to thrive, with strong support and active participation from the faithful. The commitment of our parishioners has been instrumental in furthering the promotion of social justice, community development, and the well-being of all individuals within our diocesan communities.

Through careful financial management and strategic planning, we are well-positioned for sustained growth and greater impact in the year ahead. We have utilized our resources wisely to expand our reach and effectiveness, and we remain committed to maintaining fiscal responsibility and transparency in all our efforts.

As we look back on the progress we have made in 2024, we are filled with gratitude for the many successes we have achieved. However, we also recognize that much work remains to be done. As we move forward into 2025, we are optimistic that the coming year will bring even greater success, as we continue to implement our strategic plan and work towards achieving our vision. We remain dedicated to the people we serve, and we will continue to prioritize their needs with even greater passion and commitment.

We would also like to express our deepest gratitude to our Legal Holder, Most Rev. Dr. Donatus A. Ogun (OSA), the Bishop of Uromi Diocese, for his steadfast support, approval of our programs, and continuous guidance. His fatherly presence, legal oversight, and encouragement have been a constant source of strength for us. We are equally thankful to the Board of Trustees, staff members of Uromi JDPCI, community volunteers, priests, and religious of the Diocese of Uromi for their ongoing commitment and contributions to our work.

In conclusion, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to our partners and funders, including Misereor Aachen Germany, Open Hand Foundation (SwissHand), Catholic Caritas Foundation of Nigeria, ECPAT France, ECPAT Luxembourg, Expertise France, British Council ACT Project, USAID/Palladium SCALE Nigeria Project, the US Embassy Nigeria, RoLAC, International IDEA, European Union (EU), ANNEJ, Great Esan Returnees Association (GERA), Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development and Gender Issues Edo State Migration Agency, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development and Gender Issue, Ministry of Justice, The Edo State Government, and our volunteers. Your invaluable support has been fundamental to our success, and we look forward to continuing our collaboration in the year ahead. As we look forward and work together for the greater good of all, may God continue to bless us with wisdom, strength, and the grace to serve with humility and commitment. Amen

Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo
The Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) is a faith based non-governmental organization established by the Catholic Diocese of Uromi. Uromi JDPCI is dedicated to promoting human rights, social justice, and integral human development. In 2024, the organization implemented a range of interventions aimed at addressing key social challenges in Edo Central Senatorial District, Nigeria. Through strategic partnerships and community-driven initiatives, Uromi JDPCI successfully advanced its mission across multiple thematic areas, including human rights education, governance, migration, child protection, health, economic empowerment, environmental sustainability, and access to justice.

Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme: Uromi JDPCI expanded its Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme to five additional communities making a total of 35 communities with functional human rights clubs. 70 Paralegals and 140 Human Rights Advocates were trained across the 35 communities to address cases of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), child rights violations, and other human rights concerns. Advocacy engagements were held with key stakeholders, including traditional rulers and law enforcement agencies, to promote awareness and reinforce justice mechanisms. The impact of the programme was evident in successful interventions against harmful traditional practices, increased community awareness of legal rights, and strengthened collaboration with security agencies.

Good Governance and Civic Participation: In its commitment to strengthening democracy, Uromi JDPCI conducted extensive voter education campaigns, reaching over 6,400 individuals to enhance electoral participation and transparency. The organization facilitated election observation during the Edo State governorship election, deploying trained observers to polling units across 20 wards. Town hall meetings and advocacy visits, engaged political leaders on governance and accountability, contributing to greater citizen involvement in the democratic process.

Countering Human Trafficking and Migration Governance: Uromi JDPCI played a pivotal role in countering human trafficking through the Act Against Child Trafficking in Nigeria (AACTING) project and the Galvanizing Action for the Localization of Trafficking in Persons Response (GATIP) initiative. Awareness campaigns, community dialogues, and school-based sensitization sessions equipped children, caregivers, and community leaders with knowledge on trafficking risks and prevention strategies. Advocacy efforts led to the institutionalization of local response units and strengthened referral pathways for trafficking victims. Over 1,600 individuals were directly reached through these interventions.

Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) and Health Initiatives: Under the Integrated Child Health and Social Services Award (ICHSSA 2) project, Uromi JDPCI provided critical support to over 3,500 vulnerable children and caregivers. Services included HIV/AIDS awareness and stigma reduction campaigns, health insurance enrollment, and tuberculosis (TB) screening. Community-based adherence counseling sessions improved treatment outcomes for individuals living with HIV. The programme also facilitated birth registrations, vocational training, and conditional cash transfers, promoting resilience among vulnerable households.

Economic Empowerment and Livelihoods: The organization’s micro-credit scheme continued to support rural farmers and petty traders, with over 1,600 individuals benefiting from soft loans and financial literacy training. Vocational skills training in soap making, tailoring, and agribusiness provided economic opportunities for unemployed youths and caregivers. These interventions fostered self-sufficiency and contributed to local economic development.

Correctional Center Apostolate: Uromi JDPCI remained committed to improving the welfare of inmates at the Ubiaja Correctional Center through spiritual and legal counselling. Uromi JDPCI facilitated sessions on anger management, self-transformation, and reintegration support. Additionally, the annual Christmas celebration and provision of essential items reinforced the dignity and well-being of incarcerated individuals.

Environmental and Climate Change Initiatives: Recognizing the urgency of climate action, Uromi JDPCI engaged communities in environmental awareness campaigns on deforestation, waste management, and the adoption of renewable energy. Over 370 tree seedlings were distributed and planted, and more than 750 individuals were educated on sustainable environmental practices. These efforts contributed to ecological conservation and climate resilience in local communities.

Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening: Uromi JDPCI conducted multiple training sessions for staff, paralegals, and community actors to enhance programme implementation. Topics included legal frameworks, alternative dispute resolution, psychosocial support, and case management for survivors of GBV and human trafficking. These capacity-strengthening initiatives equipped stakeholders with the skills to respond effectively to human rights violations and social injustices.

Looking Ahead: As Uromi JDPCI prepares for 2025, the organization remains committed to deepening its impact through policy advocacy, enhanced community engagement, and expanded service delivery. Priorities for the coming year include increased resource mobilization, strengthening legal aid services, scaling up economic empowerment programmes, and further institutionalizing anti-trafficking response mechanisms. With continued support from partners and stakeholders, Uromi JDPCI aims to create a more just, inclusive, and equitable society.

Acknowledgments: Uromi JDPCI expresses profound gratitude to its donors, including Misereor Germany, ECPAT France, USAID, Expertise France, Palladium SCALE Nigeria Project, and the Catholic Caritas Foundation of Nigeria, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) among others. Uromi JDPCI appreciates the unwavering support of the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Uromi, Most Rev. Dr. Donatus Ogun (OSA), the Board of Trustees, community volunteers, and dedicated staff whose efforts have been instrumental in achieving the successes recorded in 2024.

Dr. Michael Iyoriobhe
Director of Programme

STRATEGIC GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Good Governance Desk

In 2024, Uromi JDPCI made substantial progress in fostering civic participation, accountability, and good governance. Key activities included strategic engagements with political stakeholders, training sessions for animated groups, voter education campaigns, and election observation initiatives. Notably, voter education efforts reached an impressive 6,412 individuals, surpassing initial targets. Additionally, 50 INEC-accredited observers were deployed to 20 wards and 52 polling units, ensuring electoral integrity. Advocacy efforts expanded to nine key stakeholders, focusing on electoral transparency and human rights protection.

Health and Orphans & Vulnerable Children (OVC) Desk

The Health and OVC Desk aimed to enhance healthcare access, promote HIV/AIDS awareness, and support vulnerable children. In 2024, the programme conducted 27 HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns, reaching 2,890 individuals. HIV screening covered 3,039 persons, with two cases successfully linked to treatment. Adherence counselling sessions improved health outcomes for 298 virally unsuppressed individuals. Financial literacy and vocational training empowered 646 caregivers, with 15 vulnerable youth receiving business startup support. Despite challenges in birth registration and health insurance enrollment, TB sensitization campaigns exceeded targets, reaching 2,402 individuals.

Livelihood Desk

Uromi JDPCI prioritized economic empowerment through agricultural training, entrepreneurship support, and financial literacy programs. Training on modern farming practices benefited 680 farmers, while 50 self-help groups were formed across five LGAs. Vocational training far exceeded expectations, equipping 680 youth and women with essential skills. Although support for indigent households was limited, two vulnerable families received grants for income-generating activities, demonstrating the program's potential for long-term economic stability.

Human Rights Desk

The Human Rights Desk continued to advance justice, equality, and human dignity through education, advocacy, and alternative dispute resolution (ADR). In 2024, 109 cases related to human rights and gender-based violence (GBV) received counseling services. A total of 45 cases were successfully resolved through ADR, and 10 cases were referred for litigation. Community sensitization engaged 552 individuals, while school-based human rights education reached 1,671 students. Advocacy efforts with 11 security agencies strengthened human rights case management across target communities.

Migration and Counter-Trafficking Desk

Uromi JDPCI played a pivotal role in combatting human trafficking through awareness campaigns, community dialogues, and stakeholder advocacy. A total of 1,660 individuals benefited from 25 sensitization programs across 15 communities and 10 schools. Child protection groups were formed, providing structured prevention strategies. The organization also engaged in advocacy sessions aimed at activating the Victims of Trafficking Trust Fund, further institutionalizing anti-trafficking response mechanisms.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and Child Early & Forced Marriage (CEFM) Desk

Uromi JDPCI intensified efforts to combat SGBV and child marriage, exceeding several targets. Eleven sensitization meetings reached 552 stakeholders, while advocacy engagements with government agencies fostered stronger policy commitments. Capacity-building sessions equipped 100 professionals with skills for effective SGBV/CEFM case management. School-based education reached 1,671 students, promoting awareness and prevention strategies. While some advocacy and media campaigns were not fully realized, the program successfully facilitated survivor case referrals, medical interventions, and psychosocial support services.

Legal and Correctional Center Apostolate Desk

To enhance access to justice, the organization conducted 11 legal counseling sessions for 125 inmates, surpassing initial targets. Additionally, spiritual counseling sessions included catechism training, leading to the baptism of four inmates. Welfare support was provided during Easter and Christmas celebrations, reinforcing dignity and well-being among incarcerated individuals. Although direct legal representation for inmates was not secured, the program's holistic approach fostered rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.

Microcredit and Financial Inclusion Desk

Uromi JDPCI continued to promote financial literacy and economic stability through microcredit programs. Entrepreneurship training reached 680 individuals across 48 communities, while loan management sessions benefited 505 participants. Ten new cooperative subgroups were established, though financial constraints limited the provision of credit facilities to 54 groups instead of the planned 100. Despite these setbacks, the desk played a crucial role in enhancing financial inclusion and self-reliance among rural communities.

Environment and Climate Change Desk

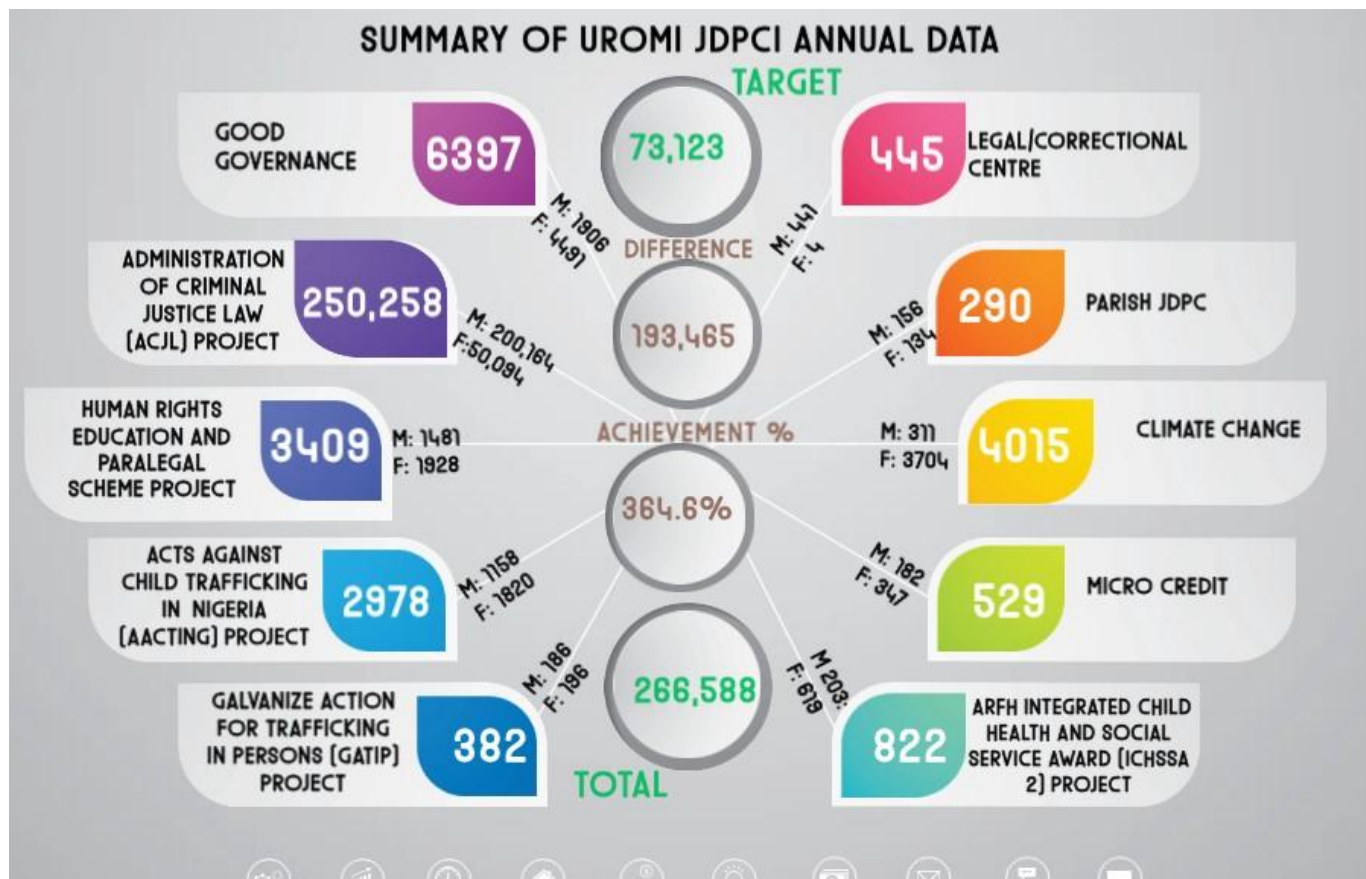
The organization's environmental initiatives focused on awareness creation, tree planting, and sustainable energy adoption. Awareness campaigns on deforestation and fossil fuel use reached 573 individuals across nine communities. Efforts to promote renewable energy exceeded expectations, engaging 755 individuals and linking 30 adopters to clean energy sources. Tree-planting activities resulted in the distribution of 371 seedlings across 13 communities. However, waste management initiatives fell short, with only 200 individuals reached through a single market-based campaign.

Conclusion

In 2024, Uromi JDPCI made significant progress in governance, health, livelihoods, human rights, migration, environmental sustainability, and access to justice. Despite financial and logistical challenges, many programmatic targets were surpassed, demonstrating the organization's resilience and commitment to social transformation. Moving forward, Uromi JDPCI aims to strengthen partnerships, enhance resource mobilization, and expand its impact to create a more just and equitable society.

Harriet Erhabor

Program Manager/Admin Secretary



Prepared by
Bridget E. Enearu
M&E Officer

PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES

HUMAN RIGHT EDUCATION AND PARALEGAL SCHEME

Entry Advocacy Visits to 5 New Communities: Uromi JDPCI conducted advocacy visits to community leaders in five new communities as part of an initiative to extend the Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme to additional areas within Edo Central Senatorial District. The target communities were Okalo (Igueben LGA), Uhiele (Esan West LGA), Usugbenu (Esan Central LGA), Ohordua (Esan South East LGA), and Ukoni (Esan North East LGA). These visits were used to raise awareness and secure partnerships for the implementation of the Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme project in the new communities.



The advocacy sessions focused on the role communities play in preventing human rights violations, and helped the people to understand how knowledge of their rights fosters responsibility for collective action to reduce human rights violations in the community. The sessions also addressed the intersection of state laws and cultural practices, emphasizing the need for reforms where traditional customs conflict with human rights.

The advocacy highlighted critical issues like Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), harmful cultural practices, and the need to build community capacity to address these challenges. Communities were informed of relevant legal frameworks, such as the Edo State Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law, and were encouraged to align traditional practices with modern human rights standards.

Success stories from previous project phases were shared, including the notable abolition of widow inheritance by the Onojie of Irrua, demonstrating the power of cultural reform in protecting marginalized groups. Uromi JDPCI also advocated for greater gender inclusion in leadership roles and traditional councils. The advocacy emphasized that certain criminal matters, like rape, should be handled by law enforcement, not local institutions, and underscored the need for collaboration with the police. Through the advocacy visits, Uromi JDPCI built relationships with local leaders, enhanced trust, and increased awareness of human rights issues, laying the groundwork for active collaboration. The advocacy visits also secured strong commitments from all five communities and established a solid foundation for implementing the Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme in the selected communities. A total of 87 persons (72M, 15F) were reached in the 5 communities



Identification and Selection of Paralegals in Five New Communities:

Following the successful advocacy visits to five new communities, Uromi JDPCI facilitated the identification and selection of Paralegals and Advocates to serve as members of the Human Rights Clubs in Okalo, Uhiele, Usugbenu, Ohordua, and Ukoni. This selection process marked a crucial step in establishing these clubs, with community leaders identifying individuals committed to human rights and the well-being of their communities. The selection process prioritized individuals respected within their communities, who demonstrated strong interpersonal skills, a sound understanding of traditional laws and customs, and a willingness to advocate for vulnerable groups, particularly women and children. Each Human Rights Club's membership included community elders, men, women, and youths, ensuring diverse representation and the inclusion of key voices within each community.



Uromi JDPCI promised to build the capacity of the human rights club members and equip them with the necessary skills to act as first responders in cases of abuse or exploitation thereby enabling them to serve their communities effectively. Paralegals were encouraged to establish a visible presence within their communities, actively promoting human rights and engaging community members in discussions on safety, dignity, and equality. In addition, the importance of collaboration with local leaders, law enforcement, and social service organizations was emphasized, enabling the Paralegals to build networks that enhance their advocacy for justice and provide essential support to victims of human rights violations. A total of 35 persons (23M,12F) signified interest at the first instance



Advocacy Engagement Meeting with Key Decision Makers and Influencers: In preparation for the third phase of the Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme in Edo Central Senatorial District, Uromi JDPCI conducted series of advocacy visits to key decision makers and influencers. These engagements targeted key decision-makers and influencers in government agencies and institutions at the state level. The goal was to strengthen relationships and referral mechanisms, particularly in addressing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), and to lay the foundation for continued collaboration.



The visits included discussions with the Edo State Commissioner of Police, the Director of Citizens' Rights in the Ministry of Justice, the Chairperson of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), the Honourable Commissioner for Social Development and Gender Issues, and the Permanent Secretary of the same Ministry. These engagements focused on reinforcing partnerships to improve justice for victims and advancing the protection of human rights in the communities served.

In each meeting, the achievements of the second phase of the project were highlighted, and the proposed strategies for the third phase were shared. The visits generated positive feedback, with stakeholders expressing strong commitments to collaborate on the project. A total of 40 persons (13 males, 27 females) participated in the engagements.



Advocacy Visits to 30 Community and Institutional Stakeholders in Edo Central Senatorial District: Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI), conducted advocacy visits to Traditional Rulers, Police Divisions, and Area Commands across the five Local Government Areas in Edo Central Senatorial District. These visits were instrumental in fostering collaboration with traditional institutions and security agencies to advance human rights in Edo Central Senatorial District.

The focus of our advocacy to the Traditional Rulers was to encourage them to reform or abolish practices and customs deemed harmful, discriminatory or at variance with the regular laws within their communities while strengthening those that benefit the community's growth and the well-being of its members. Uromi JDPCI also advocated for the codification of Esan traditional practices, particularly in areas such as marriage, burial, and inheritance, to ensure clarity and consistency in their interpretation in a manner that is fair to all members of society, regardless of religious beliefs. Emphasis was placed on aligning cultural practices with modern human rights standards to prevent conflict with state human rights laws.



Our advocacy to the Police Divisional Headquarters and Area Commands emphasized the critical importance of enhancing support and collaboration in the promotion of human rights and the protection of human dignity. Uromi JDPCI acknowledged the pivotal role that the Nigeria Police play in safeguarding human rights, particularly at the grassroots level, where their presence and actions are fundamental to maintaining justice and peace in communities. A total of 18 Traditional Monarchs across the following Kingdoms were engaged through the advocacy efforts: Irrua, Opoji, Uromi, Uzea, Ewohimi, Ewatto, Ubiaja, Orhordua, Emu, Okhuesan, Igueben, Ebelle, Ewossa, Ekpon, Ekpoma, Ukhun, and Ogwa, including the community head of Egoro Amede. Additionally, the three (3) Police Area Commanders (Ekpoma, Uromi, and Irrua) and seven (7) Divisional Police Officers from the following Police Divisions: Ewu, Uromi, Irrua, Ekpon, Igueben, Ewohimi, Ubiaja, Ekpoma, and Ebelle, were also engaged. 5 Divisional Offices of Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corp (NSCDC) in Uromi, Ubiaja, Igueben, Irrua and Ekpoma were also visited.



The visits facilitated constructive dialogues between Uromi JDPCI, traditional rulers, and police departments, setting the stage for continued collaboration in addressing human rights issues and aligning traditional laws with modern legal standards. The discussions highlighted a shared commitment to improving justice and human rights within the communities. The stakeholders expressed their commitment to work with Uromi JDPCI in the promotion of human rights their various communities and domains



Inception Meeting for the Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme Project (Phase 3): On July 16, 2024, Uromi JDPCI held an inception meeting for Phase 3 of its Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme Project at the Chancery Complex, Egbelle, Uromi. Attended by 150 stakeholders, including law enforcement, social welfare officers, medical personnel, advocates, and paralegals, the meeting set the stage for the project's continued focus on addressing human rights violations in Esan land, Edo State.



The Executive Director, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo, emphasized the need for cooperation between Uromi JDPCI, security agencies, and local communities to uphold human rights and combat gender-based violence (SGBV) and other societal issues. He condemned domestic

violence and urged stakeholders to be proactive in reporting cases of SGBV, ensuring that victims receive necessary support through paralegals and Uromi JDPCI's legal team.

Stakeholders, including representatives from the police, Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC), and hospitals, stressed the importance of prompt reporting, professional case handling, and the preservation of evidence, particularly in cases of rape and domestic violence. They emphasized the importance of collaboration to improve the efficiency of justice delivery and ensure that victims receive timely support.

Paralegals shared the challenges they faced, including community confrontations and resistance, highlighting the need for continuous training and closer engagement with local authorities. A specific cultural issue in Esan land, where women are discouraged from taking their husbands to the police, was identified as a significant barrier to justice. Advocacy and sensitization were proposed to address such entrenched practices. Uromi JDPCI's advocacy, particularly on World Human Rights Day (December 10, 2024), and its commitment to engaging stakeholders through quarterly meetings with traditional leaders, were recognized as critical components in fostering an inclusive and responsive human rights defense mechanism.



Learning Session with Adolescent Human Rights Club: Uromi JDPCI sustained the facilitation of quarterly learning sessions with Adolescent Human Rights Clubs across 26 secondary schools in Edo Central Senatorial District. The sessions were used to empower young people with knowledge about their rights, raise awareness about Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), and equip them with the necessary skills to protect themselves and support others experiencing violence or abuse, it also fostered a culture of respect for human rights among adolescents.



The sessions which were held in 26 Secondary Schools across the five Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Edo Central Senatorial District had a total of 1,772 students made up of 537 males and 1,235 females in attendance in each quarter. Some of the issues discussed were an introduction to basic human rights, understanding Sexual and Gender-Based Violence among others. The participants were equipped with the skills and knowledge to identify, prevent, and address instances of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and the various reporting channels.

Through interactive activities and role-playing, participants gained practical skills to recognize, prevent, and address SGBV effectively. The session promoted unity and collaboration in tackling SGBV issues, inspiring participants to become advocates for positive change within their communities.



Some students shared insights on how the Human Rights Club has impacted their lives. They mentioned that the club helped them understand their rights, avoid deception, and differentiate between sex and gender. They also noted an increased understanding of SGBV and basic human rights, enabling them to make informed decisions.

Quarterly Meeting of Paralegals and Human Rights Advocates: Uromi JDPCI conducted four quarterly meetings with Paralegals and Human Rights Advocates in the Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme. These meetings brought together paralegals and human rights advocates from 35 Community Human Rights Clubs across the five Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Edo Central Senatorial District, with an average of 400 participants attending meeting every quarter. The meetings served as critical platforms for assessing the impact of ongoing interventions, providing technical support, and fostering experience sharing among participants. The focus was on discussing human rights issues specific to each community, exchanging knowledge on best practices, and learning from their challenges and successes. The sessions also provided coaching on effective case management and legacy-building for future generations. The paralegals and Human Rights Advocates reported numerous impactful human rights interventions recorded across the 35 communities, demonstrating the real-life impact of the paralegals' work in Edo Central Senatorial District.



i. **Child Rights and Protection:**

- Efandion Community successfully facilitated the return of out-of-school children to school.
- Ivue Community rescued a child suffering from malnutrition due to neglect, with appropriate interventions made and support provided for the child.
- Multiple communities intervened in cases of forced child labour and child neglect, which resulted in the provision of proper care and protection for the affected children.

ii. **Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence:**

- 10 cases of domestic violence were reported and mediated across the communities by paralegals and human rights advocates, with support provided to victims.

- 6 rape cases were referred to the police, and the victims are being provided with ongoing psychosocial support.
- Akho Community abolished forced widow inheritance through successful advocacy with elders and the Monarch, marking a key victory in gender rights.
- 5 cases of widow maltreatment were addressed, including a case where a woman was forced to marry a relative of her deceased husband.



iii. **Property Rights and Gender Discrimination:**

- The Ukpenu Community successfully intervened in a physical abuse case that left a woman with impaired hearing, ensuring justice and assistance for the victim.
- Ukhun and Eguare Ekpoma Communities reconciled fathers and children in neglect and abandonment cases, highlighting the importance of family unity.

iv. **Advocacy and Community Development:**

- Uzea Community led a successful advocacy campaign to protect their water source, preventing further pollution and ensuring clean water access.



- Idumebo Human Rights Club supported a woman who was physically abused and evicted from her shop, ensuring her return and facilitating legal action with the help of Uromi JDPCI.
- 35 sensitization campaigns were conducted across all communities, raising awareness on key human rights issues such as child rights, gender equality, and the prevention of violence against person.

v. **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and Legal Support:**

- 14 ADR cases were resolved, promoting peaceful conflict resolution across multiple communities.
- 2 human trafficking and child labour cases were reported and addressed, showcasing the vigilance of the human rights clubs.
- 2 cases of arbitrary arrest and detention were resolved, ensuring justice for the affected individuals.



The interventions reported in the quarterly meetings highlighted a significant shift in conservative community attitudes towards human rights promotion and protection. Across the 35 communities, paralegals and advocates have been instrumental in promoting gender equality, child protection, and peaceful dispute resolution. Their consistent efforts have led to: Increased awareness of human rights and community-based solutions, Tangible behavioural changes, particularly in the areas of gender discrimination, domestic violence, and child rights and enhanced collaboration with traditional leaders, leading to the reform of cultural practices that previously violated human rights. The efforts paralegals and human rights advocates have continued to foster positive change and community empowerment, with the support of traditional authorities amplifying the impact of their work in the target communities. As the human rights clubs grow stronger, they are increasingly positioned to leave a lasting legacy of justice, equity, and human dignity for future generations.



Training on Introduction to Paralegal Scheme, Mental Health, and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS):

The Uromi Justice Development, Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) equipped community human rights paralegals, advocates, and social protection actors with the knowledge and skills to promote human rights and provide mental health support as well as Psychological First Aid (PFA) to victims of human rights violations. The training had 118 participants (82 males, 36 females, including 2 persons with disabilities) from various groups such as community paralegals, police officers, social welfare officers, and local NGOs. The training focused on introduction to paralegal, outlining who can become a paralegal, their duties, and the ethical guidelines they must follow. Participants were also educated on human rights declarations, conventions, and national legal instruments, with emphasis on civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. Discussions also covered the challenges in enforcing human rights laws in Nigeria and the importance of citizen awareness for advocacy. It also covered mental health and psychosocial support, with a detailed explanation of PFA. Participants learned the practical steps for providing immediate relief to individuals in crisis and the importance of addressing mental health through psychosocial support. The training emphasized that PFA can be administered in various community settings and highlighted the need for cultural and environmental sensitivity.



The training saw a significant increase in participants' knowledge, with over 82% demonstrating improved understanding in pre-and post-test assessments. The sessions were facilitated by Dr. Michael Iyoriobhe and Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo, and participants expressed satisfaction with the programme, which concluded with a call for applying the knowledge gained in their respective communities.

Training on Understanding Human Rights in the Context of Traditional and Religious Practices and Case Management:

Uromi JDPCI conducted training on Understanding Human Rights in the Context of Traditional and Religious Practices. The training was designed to address human rights concerns tied to cultural and religious traditions within Esan land. It aimed to equip paralegals, human rights advocates, and community leaders with the knowledge and skills to promote human rights while honoring cultural values. The training emphasized the importance of aligning traditional practices with human rights principles, fostering dignity, equality, and justice for all.



The training explored key human rights concepts, classifications, and the legal frameworks safeguarding these rights, such as the United Nation Declaration on Human Rights, African Charter, and Nigeria's Constitution. Participants examined prevalent violations in their communities, including widow inheritance, denial of women's inheritance rights, female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage, and witchcraft accusations. Additionally, the sessions highlighted the crucial role of traditional and religious leaders in advocating for positive cultural reforms.

Some interactive activities like group discussions, role-plays, and case studies were used to help participants connect theoretical knowledge to practical applications. For example, a mediation exercise on a widow's inheritance dispute demonstrated how human rights principles and respectful dialogue could resolve conflicts effectively. These hands-on activities empowered participants to take actionable steps in their communities.

The training yielded significant outcomes, with participants reporting improved understanding of human rights and their relevance to local cultural practices. Skills in community education, mediation, and legal referral were notably enhanced, enabling participants to advocate effectively for victims and collaborate with traditional leaders. A sense of solidarity emerged as participants committed to working together to address violations. Traditional and community leaders expressed their readiness to champion reforms, particularly in eliminating harmful widowhood practices and advancing girls' education.

The training has laid a robust foundation for promoting human rights in Edo Central Senatorial District. It has catalyzed meaningful progress toward harmonizing cultural practices with human rights principles by enhancing awareness, advocacy skills, and collaboration among stakeholders. Sustained efforts, supported by stakeholders and adequate resources, will be critical to achieving lasting change and ensuring justice for all.



Annual Stakeholders Conference on Inclusive Human Rights Defense

Uromi JDPCI convened an annual stakeholders conference on inclusive human rights defense in Edo Central Senatorial District. The event, themed “Criminal Procedures in Gender Justice in Nigeria: Roles and Duties of State and Non-State Actors,” brought together a diverse group of participants, including clergy, traditional rulers, imams, security personnel, medical professionals, community paralegals, human rights advocates, and media representatives from A's 99.9 FM. The event served as a vital platform to showcase the achievements of the past three years of the Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme in Edo Central Senatorial District and strengthened collaboration in the field of gender justice.



In his keynote address, the Executive Director, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo, presented a comprehensive review of the Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme's key activities and significant achievements and identified some of the notable achievements to include; increased reporting of violations, enhanced collaboration with law enforcement agencies, heightened awareness of the need to promote human dignity among community members, and improved support for victims and vulnerable groups, including widows. The event also featured a paper presentation by the Guest Speaker, Barr. Mrs. Violet Olumense, Chairperson of FIDA Nigeria, Edo State chapter. She emphasized the importance of adhering to legal procedures and frameworks to protect victims' rights and hold perpetrators accountable in the justice system.



Participants identified some issues such as the prolonged duration of court cases, dismissal of some cases on technical grounds, and corrupt practices among some law enforcement personnel as major challenges preventing trust in the criminal justice system. The various stakeholders expressed their appreciation for Uromi JDPCI's work and pledged their commitment to ongoing collaboration.



Consultation Meeting with Healthcare Providers in Edo Central Senatorial District

Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) convened a consultation meeting with 51 stakeholders made up of healthcare providers and key human rights actors in Edo Central Senatorial District as part of its Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme Project. The meeting was used to foster partnerships for addressing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and strengthening referral pathways for survivors so as to ensure seamless coordination between healthcare, legal, and security services towards enhancing access to justice for the vulnerable group.



In the course of the meeting, Uromi JDPCI outlined the project's progress and highlighted gaps such as the high cost of medical reports, the unwillingness of medical Doctors to testify in court, inadequate local capacity for managing SGBV cases, inequities in the justice system, and systemic barriers as factors militating against access to justice for victims of sexual and gender-based violence. The importance of legal empowerment for marginalized groups was also emphasized. The Executive Director, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo, stressed collaboration between healthcare providers, security agencies, and Uromi JDPCI to expedite SGBV case management processes, improve access to medical facilities, and enhance investigative processes for the benefit of victims and in the interest of justice.



Participants discussed challenges, including technical difficulties in handling rape cases, high costs of medical reports, and reluctance to testify in court as major hindrance to justice for victims. Suggestions included making treatment for SGBV survivors affordable if it cannot be totally free and simplifying documentation processes were made. A healthcare provider pledged support for survivors, while a police representative praised the meeting's productivity and expressed readiness for collaboration to improve public trust.

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment from stakeholders to address systemic barriers, foster collaboration, and create sustainable solutions for SGBV response in Edo Central Senatorial District. Uromi JDPCI reaffirmed its dedication to advancing human rights and justice through coordinated efforts with healthcare providers and security agencies.

Commemoration of International Day Against Child Abuse:

Uromi JDPCI commemorated the International Day against Child Labour and Abuse. This event reaffirmed Uromi JDPCI's resolute dedication to safeguarding the rights and well-being of every child. The event raised awareness of the need to promote the well-being and safety of children and served as a reminder of the importance of ensuring that children have access to the necessities of life and a nurturing environment to grow and thrive. The theme for the event was "Children are our future, the more we invest in them the better the future will be". Participants engaged in insightful discussions on policies, cultural practices, and investment strategies to enhance children's welfare and protect them from abuse and exploitation. They also expressed commitment to sensitize their various communities on the decisions reached at the event. The key Participants at the event included Traditional Leaders, Religious Leaders, Representatives of Local Government Chairmen in Edo Central Senatorial District, Educationists, Community Women and Youth Leaders, Principals of Schools, Community Paralegals from across 36 communities, and Students from 27 secondary schools within Edo Central Senatorial District and members of the press (Curve news and A'S 99.9 FM)



Highlights of the event included a keynote address by the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI in which he harped on the place of investment in the life of children. Dr Peter Aikore; an esteemed educationist and retired principal made a compelling presentation on the theme of the event.

Thereafter an engaging essay competition among school children was conducted. The winners of the competition (first, second, and third place) were awarded attractive prizes as well as consolation prizes for up to the 8th position among the students who participated in the exercise in recognition of their hard work and contributions to their future. A total of 201 persons (107 males and 94 females) took part in the activity.



This commemoration reinforced community-wide commitment to combating child abuse and promoting child welfare. The active participation of traditional leaders, educators, and policymakers highlighted the growing recognition of children's rights as a societal priority.

Commemoration of World Human Rights Day

Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) marked the 2024 World Human Rights Day with the theme “*Our Rights, Our Future, Right Now,*” the commemoration gathered 150 diverse participants, including traditional chiefs, representatives of law enforcement, local government social welfare leaders, civil society organizations, human rights advocates, and paralegals.



In the opening remark, the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI Very Rev Fr Dr Fidelis Arhedo emphasized the role of stakeholders in the shared responsibility to uphold dignity, equality, and justice. He called on participants to remain steadfast in defending human rights within their communities.

A keynote speech by J.A. Onoimoimilin Esq. underscored the universality of human rights as divinely inspired and enshrined in both national and international legal frameworks. Highlighting key provisions of the Nigerian Constitution, he urged citizens to seek justice through legal channels when their rights are infringed. The keynote also tackled the complex relationship between cultural traditions and human rights. While acknowledging culture's role in fostering community cohesion, he criticized practices that perpetuate violations of human rights, particularly against women and girls. He commended the Edo State's legislative strides in criminalizing harmful traditions and called for expanded awareness campaigns and education to promote fairness and equity.



Onoimoimilin further addressed systemic challenges, such as inadequate enforcement of court orders and the need for improved training for law enforcement agencies to safeguard citizens' rights. He concluded with an appeal for continuous dialogue, education, and reforms to harmonize cultural practices with human rights principles.

The event closed with a collective commitment from participants to champion human rights, foster societal stability, and ensure justice and equality for all especially the vulnerable group. Uromi

JDPCI reaffirmed its mission to build a rights-based society, inspiring hope for a future where human rights are universally respected and upheld.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

Introduction

In 2024, Uromi JDPCI reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening democratic governance, fostering civic participation, and promoting transparency in Edo State. Through initiatives such as voters' registration sensitization, voters' education campaigns, and election observation, the organization empowered citizens with electoral information and enhanced trust in democratic institutions and processes. Uromi JDPCI collaborated with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in the mobilization of local communities on voters' education and sensitization. In the same vein, Uromi JDPCI also partnered with ANEEJ to conduct a rally for peaceful election in Edo State. Uromi JDPCI reached about 6,300 individuals across the five Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Edo Central Senatorial District, reinforcing civic responsibility and electoral engagement.



Empowering Citizens through Voters' Registration Campaign: Uromi JDPCI's conducted voter registration sensitization campaign which reached 2,930 individuals in Esan North East, Esan South East, and Igueben LGAs. The campaign targeted new voters aged 18 and above, leveraging markets, religious centers, and public spaces to disseminate information about the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise. Highlights included sensitizing 1,500 individuals at Uromi Market, 700 at Igueben Market, and 500 at Ubiaja Market. Additional engagements at Uromi Motor Park, Uromi Central Mosque, and a gathering of paralegals further amplified the campaign's outreach. Despite challenges such as network downtime at registration centers, the campaign successfully addressed misconceptions and motivated citizens to register for their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) thereby increasing trust in the electoral system.



Enhancing Civic Engagement through Voter Education: From August 21 to 27, 2024, Uromi JDPCI's voter education initiative reached 3,373 individuals in Esan North East LGA, promoting participation in the Edo State Governorship Election. The campaign reached 2,270 women and 1,103 men across markets, churches, mosques, and community centers. Notably, outreach efforts at Uromi Main Market and St. Theresa Catholic Church Ukoni demonstrated the campaign's inclusivity. The initiative also collaborated with traditional leaders, community influencers, and religious groups to emphasize the importance of PVC collection and electoral participation. Increased turnout at PVC collection centers validated the campaign's impact on civic readiness. Uromi JDPCI appreciates the partnership with INEC who sponsored this exercise.



Promoting Peaceful Elections: Uromi JDPCI conducted civic education and peace rally in Esan North East LGA. The rally which was done with support from Africa Network for Environmental and Economic Justice (ANEEJ) emphasized the importance of peaceful electoral participation while sensitizing the public the need for a violence-free and credible election. Diversed stakeholders, including community leaders, security operatives, and media personnel participated in the rally. The rally highlighted key messages such as “Don’t Sell Your Vote” and “Vote, Don’t Fight.” Flyers and public address systems amplified these messages, fostering a collective commitment to a free and fair election.



Ensuring Transparency through Election Observation: Ahead of the September 21, 2024, Edo State Governorship Election, Uromi JDPCI trained and deployed 48 accredited election observers across 52 polling units in Edo Central Senatorial District. Equipped with skills in electoral observation and ethical reporting, observers documented key findings, including the prompt arrival of INEC officials and the efficient functioning of BVAS machines. While the election was largely peaceful, instances of vote buying were noted, raising concerns about electoral integrity. Observers commended the transparency of vote counting and result transmission via INEC’s Result Viewing Portal, which enhanced public trust in the process except for complain about the lack of transparency in some collation centers. Moving forward, addressing systemic challenges such as vote buying and maintaining transparent collation centers remain critical to sustaining democratic integrity and enhancing public trust in Nigeria’s electoral processes.



STRENGTHENING AWARENESS ON ADMINISTRATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE LAW (ACJL) IN EDO STATE

The Administration of Criminal Justice Law (ACJL) of Edo State, adopted in 2018, represents a pivotal step toward reforming the state's criminal justice system. The ACJL was designed to uphold human rights, promote efficiency, and foster fairness. Despite these transformative potentials, the effective implementation of the ACJL has been hindered by gaps in awareness and the underutilization of certain provisions of the law. To address these challenges, Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI), with support from the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) Programme launched a series of targeted interventions aimed at raising awareness about key provisions of the ACJL in Edo State. Among such interventions were advocacy visits to justice actors, roundtable discussions with journalists, engagement meetings with justice actors on the implementation of ACJL in Edo State, and public awareness campaigns using radio jingles.

Inception/Planning Meeting for ACJL Awareness Project

On November 5, 2024, the Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI), with support from the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) Programme, convened a planning and inception meeting for the Administration of Criminal Justice Law (ACJL) Awareness Project. The meeting, held at the Catholic Chancery Complex, Benin City, marked a significant milestone in the campaign to enhance fairness, efficiency, and human rights within Edo State's justice system.



The ACJL Awareness Project seeks to raise awareness on the implementation of key legal provisions in the ACJL such as plea bargaining, suspended sentencing, parole, and non-custodial sentencing. These measures aim to protect suspects' rights, reduce correctional facility overcrowding, and promote alternatives to custodial sentences. The Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI; Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo, in his opening remark, called for synergy among justice actors to ensure the effective implementation of the law.

Participants at the planning meeting included representatives from the judiciary, Ministry of Justice, law enforcement, correctional services, civil society organizations (CSOs), traditional and religious leaders, and professional associations such as the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA). These stakeholders deliberated on strategies, timelines, and deliverables to ensure project success.



Advocacy Visits to Justice Actors: Recognizing the critical role of justice actors in advancing the ACJL, Uromi JDPCI conducted comprehensive advocacy visits across the three senatorial districts in Edo State. These engagements targeted 24 key stakeholders, including the Chief Judge, Commissioner of Police, Controller of the Nigerian Correctional Service, Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) representatives, the State Commandant of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corp, the Director of Citizens Rights in the Ministry of Justice among others. The visits were aimed at emphasizing underutilized provisions of the ACJL such as plea bargaining, parole, suspended sentencing, and non-custodial sentencing, which are essential for addressing systemic inefficiencies and promoting restorative justice.



During these visits, Uromi JDPCI highlighted some statistics that underscored the urgent need for reform. For example, 75% of inmates in Edo State correctional centers were awaiting trial, with many detained for minor offenses. Additionally, 92% of the public in Edo Central Senatorial District were unfamiliar with the ACJL, and in 2022, over 1,500 cases of unlawful detention and 800 cases of torture were reported, with fewer than 20% investigated. These figures illustrated the critical gaps in awareness and implementation that the advocacy efforts sought to address.



The advocacy visits yielded strong commitments from stakeholders. The Director of Citizens Rights Department pledged to mobilize pro bono lawyers and conduct weekly correctional center visits to decongest facilities. Similarly, the Chief Judge of Edo State expressed support for Uromi JDPCI's inclusion in the Administration of Criminal Justice Monitoring Committee (ACJMC), a body dedicated to justice reforms. These engagements also fostered a shared understanding of the ACJL's transformative potential and encouraged collaborative efforts to address systemic challenges.



Roundtable Discussion with Journalists: On November 8, 2024, Uromi JDPCI conveyed a roundtable discussion with 30 journalists at the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) Centre in Benin City. The session, supported by RoLAC, aimed to enhance journalists' capacity to report effectively on the ACJL, thereby bridging the awareness gap among the public and stakeholders.



During the session, the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo, stressed the importance of accurate and responsible reporting in demystifying the ACJL. He highlighted the media's critical role in holding justice actors accountable and educating the public about legal reforms. Dr. Michael Iyoriobhe, Director of Programs at Uromi JDPCI, delivered an insightful presentation on ACJL provisions, focusing on plea bargaining, suspended sentencing, and non-custodial measures. He addressed misconceptions, such as concerns about plea bargaining encouraging corruption, clarifying that these measures aim to expedite justice and reduce trial backlogs. The roundtable equipped journalists with practical strategies for reporting on justice sector reforms. Participants resolved to intensify public awareness campaigns, collaborate with legal experts and advocate for greater transparency in the justice system. The session also fostered stronger partnerships between Uromi JDPCI and the media, laying the foundation for sustained advocacy.



Engagement Meetings and Learning Sessions Justice Actors in Edo State: Uromi JDPCI hosted three engagement sessions in Benin City, Uromi, and Auchi to promote the effective implementation of the ACJL in Edo State. These sessions brought together a diverse range of stakeholders, including law enforcement agencies, judicial officers, civil society organizations, traditional and religious leaders, and the media. The events were used to address implementation challenges, educate participants about ACJL provisions, and foster collaboration among justice actors.



Benin City Session: Held on November 14, 2024, at the Catholic Chancery, with a keynote address presented by Hon Justice Gloria Etinosa Adekanmbi. This session emphasized the role of the ACJL in safeguarding citizens' rights. Stakeholders shared goodwill messages. They also highlighted the potential of the ACJL to decongest correctional centers and promote fairness in the justice system. Panel discussions addressed key challenges, such as funding gaps and procedural inefficiencies, and proposed actionable solutions.

Uromi Session: On November 15, 2024, the Uromi session focused on grassroots engagement, attracting participants from the Nigerian Bar Association, National Orientation Agency, and local communities. Magistrate S.A. Ugah delivered a keynote address on the ACJL's innovations, including streamlined arrest procedures and restorative justice measures. Interactive discussions explored issues like access to justice and the integrity of confessional statements.

Auchi Session: The final session, held on November 26, 2024, featured a keynote address by Hon. Justice B.E. Oniha, who highlighted the ACJL's role in replacing outdated laws with modern, rights-focused provisions. Panelists identified challenges such as low public awareness and insufficient resources as factors militating against the effective implementation of the ACJL in Edo State. They emphasized the need for collaborative action to enhance implementation.



The stakeholders' engagement sessions enhanced stakeholders' understanding of the ACJL, fostered dialogue on justice reforms, and generated actionable recommendations. Participants pledged to support ongoing awareness campaigns and capacity-building initiatives, strengthening the collective effort to improve the justice system.



Public Awareness Campaigns: To extend its outreach, Uromi JDPCI launched a series of public awareness campaigns, including the airing of jingles on A's FM radio and Independent television radio station. These broadcasts, conducted from December 4 to December 9, 2024, highlighted key ACJL provisions such as plea bargaining, parole, and non-custodial sentencing and suspended sentencing. The campaigns reached approximately 250,000 individuals across Edo State, surpassing the initial target of 50,000. The jingles increased public awareness of the ACJL, ensuring informed civic participation and encouraging the adoption of restorative justice measures. This initiative also laid the foundation for sustained public discourse on justice reforms.

GALVANIZE ACTION FOR LOCALIZATION OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSON RESPONSE (GATIP)

Uromi JDPCI through a clustered arrangement involving 6 notable Civil Society Organizations in Edo State implemented the GATIP project. The joint effort was supported by USAID under the ambit of the Strengthening Civic Advocacy and Local Engagement (SCALE) project. The GATIP project specifically aimed to achieve a legislative review of the Edo State Trafficking in Person Prohibition Law 2018 to incorporate provisions for the establishment of Local Government Trafficking in Persons Response Units, the activation of the Victims of Trafficking Trust Fund (VTTF) and the Trust fund Committee as already provided by the Law in sections 67 and 68, and increased resource and budgetary allocation to the Edo State Taskforce against human trafficking. The project ended on the 9th of May 2024 and the program closeout in Nigeria was done on the 25th of September 2024. Uromi JDPCI and her cluster members were awarded certificates of participation and contribution to the SCALE Nigeria project during the closeout meeting that held in Abuja on the 25th of September, 2024.

Cluster Coaching and Learning Session

We had our 6th Cluster coaching session. This was to examine progress and harvest successes on the Cluster's advocacy work, evaluate current commitments from stakeholders, design action plans to follow up on the commitments and other activities necessary to achieve the Cluster's set objectives as well as foster an environment of collaborative learning among members. In the same vein, a learning session focused on Harnessing LGA capacity for Local TIP response in Edo State was conducted to



increase awareness of the need to cascade TIP response to the local government level and explore existing structures and capacities that can be harnessed. 15 persons which comprised 7 females and 8 males participated in the Cluster Coaching while the Learning session had 35 persons in attendance (19 males and 16 females)

Two-days training on Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) and Knowledge Management Fundamentals

Uromi JDPCI participated in a two-day training on Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) and Knowledge Management Fundamentals organized by SCALE PALLADIUM for cluster members and Anchors in the South-South Zone. The training was aimed at improving the understanding of program managers on MEL fundamentals and KM so that they could apply the knowledge gained to facilitate increased organizational efficiency and effectiveness and undertake essential MEL and KM functions within their organizations as well as improve better working relationships between Program Managers and Monitoring and Evaluation Officers within the Organization. The meeting was attended by 33 Cluster/Anchor members (17 males and 16 females) from across Nigeria and 4 SCALE PALLADIUM Staff.



The training explored several topics including; an introduction to Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, Data Visualization, Data Quality Assessment, Understanding SCALE Data which focused on SCALE Indicators, SCALE monitoring and evaluation tools and data segregation, Knowledge management which looked at how to turn data into useful information, legacy product and data dissemination, Storytelling techniques, Impact reporting and stakeholders reporting and Data usage.

Commemoration of St Bakhita (the International Day of Prayer for Victims of Human Trafficking)

Uromi JDPCI and her cluster members held a community sensitization and public awareness rally on trafficking in persons to commemorate the feast of St Josephine Bakhita which is also known as the International Day of Prayer for victims of Human Trafficking and slavery. The event raised awareness about the pressing issue of human trafficking and explored effective strategies for combating it, with a particular focus on establishing dedicated response units at the local government level in Edo State. It featured an interactive community sensitization session, where participants were educated about the realities of human trafficking and engaged in discussions on existing responses within local communities in countering human trafficking. It was also used to raise awareness about the cluster's advocacy pursuit and a call to support the ongoing advocacy. Central to these pursuits is the call for the institutionalization of local response units on human trafficking and the activation of the Victims of Trafficking Trust Fund and its Committee, aiming at ensuring effective and sustained empowerment of victims. Following this, a rally was conducted to further raise awareness among the general public.



The event which was held in Uromi, Benin City and Auchi simultaneously witnessed the active participation of diverse community stakeholders, including community leaders, youths, women, Traders, Civil Society Organizations, returned migrants, survivors of human trafficking, representatives of Local government Chairmen, representatives of the Local Government Social Welfare Departments, Representatives of the Nigeria



Immigration Service, the National Orientation Agency and members of the press who gave their support to join the fight against human trafficking through continuous awareness raising of community members and amplifying the need for the establishment of local response units. A total of 301 persons participated directly in the events, including 143 males and 158 females, out of which were 3 persons with disability. The commemoration was sponsored through the SCALE Nigeria Project with funding from USAID.

Follow-up Advocacy Engagement Meeting with the Commissioner of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs

A follow-up advocacy engagement meeting was held with the Commissioner of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs; on the 9th of February 2024 in Benin City. The engagement meeting was convened, with a particular focus on advocating for the establishment of Local Government Trafficking in Persons Response Units in Edo State and seeking the invaluable support of the then Honourable Commissioner in mobilizing the Executive Chairmen of Esan North East, Etsako West, and Orhionmwon Local Government Areas for a constructive dialogue concerning the localization of trafficking in person response within these jurisdictions which are our focus areas.



Support for the advocacy was given by the then Commissioner who committed to further deliberating the recommendations with the Local Government Chairmen and facilitating a joint meeting with all the Chairmen for detailed discussions and presentation of our recommendations. 9 persons (6 females and 3 males) were in attendance

Advocacy engagement meetings with the Consultant engaged to Restructure ETAHT

An advocacy engagement and follow-up meeting were made with Dr Morka, the consultant engaged by the immediate past Governor of Edo State to restructure the Edo State Taskforce against Human Trafficking. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss the Cluster's Partnership with the former Edo State Taskforce against Human Trafficking (ETAHT), now Edo State Migration Agency, to fully understand and key into the restructuring reforms of the ETAHT in achieving the Cluster's advocacy objectives and also present the advocacy issues to the consultant for consideration in the then law review. Our advocacy efforts contributed to the repeal of the Edo State Trafficking Law to create the Edo State Migration Agency with extended provisions in the new law to have liaison offices of the Migration Agency in the three senatorial districts with a broader plan to cascade



it to the Local Government levels, thus contributing to the realization of one of the project objectives. The engagement meeting had a total of 9 participants (4 males and 5 females) in attendance while the subsequent meeting was attended by 12 participants (6 males and 6 females)

ACT AGAINST CHILD TRAFFICKING (AACTING)

The Act Against Child Trafficking (AACTING) project, is a three-year initiative supported by ECPAT France (September 2023 – July 2026). The project aims to reduce child trafficking prevalence in Edo and Delta States, especially for the purpose of sexual exploitation with specific objectives of Strengthening protection systems with innovative mechanisms accessible to child victims, increasing awareness among boys and girls about trafficking risks and the actors involved in the fight against trafficking and mobilizing influential actors to prioritize anti-trafficking efforts in Edo States.

This year's achievements encompassed increased awareness campaigns about the detrimental effects of child trafficking in over 10 communities and 10 schools, the establishment of child protection structures and mechanisms in 10 communities and 5 Local Government Areas, increased capacity of communities and Social Protection actors to prevent and respond to child trafficking and other child protection issues, the establishment and strengthening of 20 child-centered and friendly platforms to bolster prevention against child trafficking and mobilized over a 100 influential stakeholders to prioritize anti-trafficking efforts in their communities, among others.

School Sensitization and Establishment of Child Champion Clubs in Schools

A comprehensive sensitization programme on the detrimental effects of human trafficking was conducted in 10 government Secondary Schools in Edo Central Senatorial District, two in each of the five Local Government Areas with a total of 1,001 students comprising (275 males and 726 females) inclusive of 1 Person with Disability sensitized. 19 teachers (7 males and 12 females) were also engaged with the sensitization messages. The students received in-depth education on human trafficking, its definition, and various forms, including sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced marriage, labor exploitation, street begging, and baby factories. The dangers of trafficking, marked by exploitation and the loss of human dignity, were emphasized.

Participants learned to identify traffickers by recognizing warning signs and deceptive tactics, with particular attention to online interactions, where traffickers often target vulnerable individuals. They were encouraged to reject offers from strangers, even those posing as helpers, who might exploit them.



The sensitization efforts effectively inspired students to take proactive roles as Child Champions against child trafficking for sexual exploitation. Students who signified interest in being members of the Child Champions Clubs were inaugurated as founding members of the club in the 10 schools.

The schools were Amedokhian Secondary School and Efandion Secondary School in Esan North East Local Government Area. Emaudo and Ujoelen Secondary Schools in Esan West LGA, Irrua Girls and Idunwele Girls Secondary Schools in Esan Central LGA, Igueben College and Ebelle Commercial College in Igueben LGA and then Okhuesan and Obiaza Mixed Secondary Schools in Esan South East LGA.



Community Sensitization and Strengthening of Community Child Protection Groups:



The outreach campaign extended into local communities, with sensitization campaign held across 10 communities in the five Local Government Areas of Edo Central Senatorial District. Attendees included community elders, chiefs, men, women, and youths, all of whom were sensitized to the grave risks associated with human trafficking. The focus was on dissuading any attempts to coerce children into trafficking situations. Instead, a

concerted effort was urged to prioritize and support children's education, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary for a meaningful and productive life. An overall total of 279 persons were reached consisting of 174 males and 105 females inclusive of 9 persons with disability across the 10 communities.



The need to have a community-led initiative to protect children against trafficking and other social issues resulted in the establishment of Child Protection Groups across the 10 communities to foster a proactive and supportive environment for children.



Uromi JDPCI engaged the groups through quarterly learning sessions with 3 sessions held within the year. These meetings provided a vital space to strengthen the efforts and capacities of the committees in countering human trafficking, gather feedback on their interventions and promote shared learning for the effective functioning of the groups.

The groups proactively engaged in awareness-raising sessions on the risks of child trafficking in schools, communities, marketplaces, churches, elders' council meetings and other group gatherings. They also responded to child trafficking and exploitative situations and identified and linked vulnerable children within their communities to social support. A total of 264 persons (104 males, and 160 females) participated in the quarterly sessions.

Sensitization Session/Meetings with Transporters

Uromi JDPCI had an impactful session with 60 male local transporters at the Uromi Central Motor Park, in Esan North East Local Government Area and Ekpoma Motor Park at Esan West Local Government Area. The purpose was to create awareness among transporters about the pervasive issue of human trafficking and call on a collective responsibility to counter this grave menace.

During the session, transporters were enlightened about human trafficking and its associated dangers by utilizing both informative messages and video documentaries. They were encouraged to act as a crucial link between trafficking survivors and appropriate authorities or support services. It was highlighted that responsibility comes with their



unique position, as transporters. This is because they are often the first point of contact for survivors seeking refuge, noting that their prompt and compassionate assistance can make a significant difference in the lives of those affected. To facilitate effective collaboration, official contacts were shared with the transporters, offering them a direct line to reach out to Uromi JDPCI in case they encounter suspected cases of human trafficking.



The transporters expressed a commendable willingness to actively engage and collaborate in the fight against human trafficking with one of them sharing an account of how a child was rescued from the web of traffickers

Establishment and strengthening of child champion clubs in 10 communities

Uromi JDPCI established Child Champion Clubs across 10 targeted communities. This effort engaged out-of-school adolescents and young persons aged 14-18 as ambassadors and champions in addressing the critical issue of human trafficking, through awareness raising about the dangers associated with human trafficking, building their resilience against trafficking lures and moulding them as peer educators against human trafficking.



The inaugural meetings of the Child Champion Clubs enlightened members about the Act Against Child Trafficking (AACTING) project, its objectives, and the importance of establishing such clubs in their communities. Participants were introduced to their roles as Child Champions and the knowledge they would gain from the sessions.

Since the inauguration of the clubs, members have participated in 2 quarterly learning sessions which equipped them with essential knowledge about human trafficking, including international and domestic legal frameworks covering human trafficking as well as relevant actors involved in the fight. They were linked to available support networks within and outside their communities as well as reporting channels to report suspected cases of human trafficking.



The sessions integrated fun recreational activities where the children played games, greatly stimulating their interest in the learning process. It also featured a participatory recap of lessons from the previous session and elicited feedback from the children on how they had utilized the knowledge gained in the fight against child trafficking.



A total of 105 community child champions—27 males and 78 females—were directly trained through the quarterly sessions by Uromi JDPCI across the ten communities, including Usenu, Idunwele, Efandion, Amedokhian, Okhuesan, Ubijaja, Ebelle, Igueben, Emaudo, and Eguare.



These young advocates now possess a deep awareness of the high risks of trafficking and a clear understanding of the key actors involved in combating this menace. They can now resist the deceptive lures of traffickers, educate their peers about the dangers of trafficking, and report suspected cases

Feedback gathered from the children indicated that the majority engaged in one-on-one sensitization efforts with their peers, whether in church, at their places of work, or with their siblings creating a ripple effect that strengthened our impact. Some even encouraged those they had sensitized to join the Child Champion Club, leading to an increase in overall participation.

The sessions have proven impactful, as some children reported successfully dissuading their friends from accepting suspicious travel offers that could lead to trafficking. Additionally, some of them displayed heightened awareness by rejecting similar offers, recognizing them as potential trafficking scams.

Strengthening of Child Champion Clubs in 10 Secondary Schools

In a similar effort to empower young people with knowledge of human trafficking risks and prevention, Uromi JDPCI team conducted 2 quarterly interactive learning sessions with Child Champion Clubs across ten government secondary schools in Edo Central Senatorial District. This activity covered Efandion Secondary School and Amedokhian Secondary School in Esan North

East Local Government Area (LGA), Emaudo and Ujoelen Secondary Schools in Esan West LGA, Irrua Girls and Idunwele Girls Secondary Schools in Esan Central LGA, Igueben College and Ebelle Commercial College in Igueben LGA, and Okhuesan and Obiaza Mixed Secondary Schools in Esan South East LGA.



The sessions provided participants with vital insights into human trafficking, its various forms, and the legal frameworks addressing it at both international and domestic levels. They were introduced to key stakeholders combating trafficking and connected to support networks and reporting channels to address and report suspected cases effectively

The quarterly learning sessions have had a profound impact on the Child Champion Club members. Not only have they deepened their understanding of trafficking, but they have also taken on the role of peer educators, spreading awareness to their families and friends. This initiative has fostered a community-wide impact, equipping students to identify and resist trafficking attempts. With continued support and education, these young champions can contribute meaningfully to combating trafficking in Edo State. A total of 110 students (24males and 86 females) were reached.



Mapping of Influential Actors and Workshop with Influential Actors

Uromi JDPCI undertook a mapping session to identify influential actors at the community, local government, and state levels who are pivotal in the fight against human trafficking. This activity successfully identified key stakeholders whose influence, cooperation, and leadership would significantly bolster efforts to combat trafficking and its associated challenges.

The mapping exercise culminated in a workshop designed to inspire collaboration and secure the active involvement of these stakeholders. During the workshop, participants were sensitized to the pressing issues of human trafficking, its devastating impact on individuals and communities, and the urgent need for collective action. Stakeholders pledged their unwavering commitment to tackling human trafficking within their spheres of influence.



Their participation has strengthened the fight against trafficking, as the stakeholders have since become vital allies, contributing to a more cohesive and effective approach in countering trafficking across Edo Central Senatorial District and supporting vulnerable children. A total of 42 influential actors—30 males and 12 females—were mobilized for the workshop including community,

youth and women leaders, relevant state and local government institutions, Community Based Organizations as well as Civil Society Organizations.

Capacity Building for the Project Team, Field Officers and Social Protection Actors at the Local Government Levels:

A series of four impactful training sessions were conducted to strengthen the capacity of the project team and social protection actors at the local government level. These sessions aimed at equipping participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to protect children against trafficking and related exploitation and enhance their ability to effectively respond to and manage child trafficking and related cases. Uromi JDPCI through these sessions holistically equipped 113 social protection actors at the Local Government and community levels including Staff of Uromi JDPCI (64 males and 49 females) with relevant knowledge and practical skills to combat child trafficking, advocate for systemic change, and support victims with professionalism and care.



The first training focused on understanding the multifaceted nature of human trafficking and providing Psychological First Aid (PFA) including when, where, and how to responsibly offer support, effective communication techniques, and self-care for caregivers. The session emphasized practical strategies for assisting trafficked individuals and ensuring both immediate and sustained care. A total of 30 participants (18 males and 12 females) engaged in this session.



The second training was on advocacy strategy and action planning as a tool to combat child trafficking and foster social change. Participants collaboratively developed an anti-trafficking advocacy strategy and acquired skills in crafting advocacy goals and objectives, Conducting stakeholder analyses, Identifying strategic allies and addressing potential obstacles and formulating impactful advocacy messages. This session was attended by 30 participants (17 males and 13 females).

The third training explored social protection mechanisms, case management and adolescent health. Key highlights included an overview of social protection goals, definitions, and collaborative approaches, trafficking-related health issues and practical support for child victims. It also introduced the case management process, from eligibility screening to case closure, and emphasized referral systems and continuity of care. This session provided a comprehensive understanding of how social protection initiatives intersect with trafficking prevention and victim support. 53 Participants (24 females and 29 males) were reached.





The final session focused on enhancing project communication and visibility. The two-day training targeted Uromi JDPCI AACTING Project Team and Field Officers and equipped participants with skills in developing effective communication strategies, Utilizing media and digital platforms to amplify project visibility and Creating compelling content to improve outreach and engagement. Thirteen (13) participants, made up of 5 males and 8 females, attended the training.

Formation and Strengthening of Child Protection Committee at the Local Government Level:

Uromi JDPCI facilitated the formation and inauguration of the Child Protection Coordination Committees across the five Local Government Areas (LGA) in Edo Central Senatorial District. This initiative aimed to create a sustainable mechanism to enhance child protection efforts and foster referral pathways and collaboration, in combating child trafficking within the community particularly Child trafficking for sexual exploitation and forced labour; and other related child protection issues. Membership of the Committees consists of local government social welfare and legal departments, the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corp, the Nigerian Immigration Services, the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Christian Association of Nigeria representatives including representatives of market women association, and representatives of the community child protection groups.



As part of efforts to support the operational capacities of the Committees, one biannual session was conducted across the five LGAs. This session reviewed the Committees' anti-trafficking efforts, dialogued on ways to improve interventions within communities, and shared best practices in tackling child trafficking and other child protection concerns. Several interventions and achievements were reported which showcased the Committees' evolving capacity in addressing these critical issues.

Through Uromi JDPCI's intervention, 125 institutional and community actors have been empowered with the knowledge and skills needed to respond effectively when a child is identified as a victim or at risk of exploitation, abuse, neglect, violence, or unprotected mobility. By fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders and establishing a reliable referral and response system, Edo Central Senatorial District is now better



equipped to create a safer environment for children and significantly reduce the prevalence of trafficking.

Biannual Forum with Parents/Caregivers:

Uromi JDPCI organized two biannual forums with parents and caregivers, providing a vital platform to educate them on the prevalence and dangers of child trafficking. The forums focused on equipping parents and caregivers with the knowledge about child trafficking risks, recognize the signs and indicators of trafficking in their children and others, as well as preventive strategies they could implement within their homes and communities. The objective was to foster a community-wide network of vigilance and support, encouraging parents, caregivers, to collaborate in preventing and reporting any suspicious activities related to child trafficking. A total of 103 caregivers (24 males and 79 females) participated in these forums and they, gained valuable insights and tools to actively contribute to the prevention of trafficking and ensure the safety of children in their communities.



Annual Meeting with Religious and Community Leaders to Commemorate 2024 World Day against Human Trafficking:

The meeting brought together 100 stakeholders (59 males and 41 females) comprising traditional and community leaders from key kingdoms in Edo Central Senatorial District, religious figures from the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), Imams from the Muslim community, and key actors from the Local Government social protection unit. The meeting heightened awareness of recent trends in child trafficking and mobilized collective action against it by leveraging the unique influence and reach of religious and community leaders. Stakeholders shared many valuable and practical suggestions for combating child trafficking and committed to implementing them in their communities.



During the meeting, the urgent case of a vulnerable 21-year-old young girl from Amedokhian community who was considering a risky journey was addressed. Despite her skills in decoration, baking, and makeup, she lacked the support to start a business. Thanks to the efforts of community volunteers, her situation was brought to light. Stakeholders and online participants contributed to help fund her business startup. Uromi JDPCI assessed her case, provided sensitization on the dangers of human trafficking, and plans are in place to support her with the necessary materials to launch her business.

Coordination Meeting between the LGA Caseworkers and Child Champion Club Mentors/Field Officers.

Uromi JDPCI convened two coordination meetings with LGA Caseworkers and child champion mentors/field officers. The coordination meetings aimed at enhancing the delivery of vital prevention and protection services, improving referral processes, and promoting collaborative learning for more effective service delivery in the fight against human trafficking. The meeting saw the participation of 50 persons, with 18 males and 32 females in attendance including the Heads of the Social Welfare Departments from the five local government councils,



the heads of the family unit of the Nigerian Police Force, representatives from community child protection groups, field officers and the project team. Key activities featured a presentation of the milestones and achievements of the AACTING project, updates from Protection Actors on their activities and services in protecting children against trafficking for sexual exploitation and forced labour in their respective Local Government Areas, and discussions on the proper referral processes for child protection. The session offered valuable insights into the proper referral processes for accessing support in child protection. It also identified challenges in securing assistance and proposed solutions by leveraging available resources.

Stakeholders Engagement for the Development of a Protection Manual for Community Child Champions and School Clubs

Uromi JDPCI facilitated a stakeholder engagement meeting in collaboration with the consultants engaged in developing the self-protection manual for community child champions and school clubs. The session was used to gather valuable insights and perspectives from key stakeholders, to inform the development of a comprehensive and effective manual to raise children's awareness on the trafficking of children for sexual exploitation in Edo and Delta states of Nigeria under the auspices of the Act Against Child Trafficking in Nigeria Project.



The activity took place on the 15th of March 2024 at the Chancery Hall, Uromi and saw the participation of 30 stakeholders (16 males and 14 females) from various sectors ranging from NGOs/CBOs working on child trafficking, Security Agencies, Legal practitioners, Medical Women Association of Nigeria, Local Government Social Protection Actors, community chiefs and youth leaders and the Nigeria

Immigration Service.

Varied suggestions were gathered from the stakeholders. Their insights ranged from personal experiences working with Uromi JDPCI on similar interventions in the past, to practical suggestions for addressing human trafficking within their communities. Some shared stories highlighting the importance of early intervention and community awareness, while others proposed specific measures for enhancing the effectiveness of the manual. Overall, the diverse perspectives contributed to a rich dialogue which will undoubtedly enhance the content of the manual.



INTEGRATED CHILD HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES AWARD (ICHSSA) 2

Uromi JDPCI implemented the 4-year ICHSSA2 project across four Local Government Areas in Edo Central Senatorial District. This project collaborated with 7 health facilities within the project LGAs: Esan North East, Esan Central, Esan West, and Esan South East. This project was coordinated by the Association of Reproductive and Family Health (ARFH) with funding from USAID. Its overall goal was to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on vulnerable children and their households through multi-programmatic approaches which were summarized in School, Stable, Healthy, and Safe domains. The project facilitated several interventions to contribute towards the ultimate goal of mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS on orphans and vulnerable children in Edo Central Senatorial District.

HIV Testing and Screening

Uromi JDPCI carried out Community HIV testing and screening services in 27 communities across 4 LGA. A total of 3039 persons were screened and tested for HIV, and 2 new cases were identified and linked to treatment. This intervention also created awareness on HIV protection and prevention in the target communities.

Enhanced Adherence Counselling

Uromi JDPCI supported unsuppressed Children Living with HIV (CLHIV) to access enhanced adherence counselling sessions. This process has helped the children overcome some of the challenges they faced in adhering to their treatment. Uromi JDPCI also supported a total 25 (16M 9F) CLHIV with logistics to access treatment services thereby resulting in uninterrupted treatment and viral suppression.

Viral Load Monitoring

In our relentless pursuit of ensuring the well-being of Children Living with HIV (CLHIV), Uromi JDPCI facilitated viral load sampling sessions for 298 CLHIV. This strategic intervention helped to monitor and manage the viral load of the beneficiaries, thereby improving their overall health outcomes.

Drug Pick Up

Uromi JDPCI remains committed to supporting CLHIV and ensuring that they receive the care and treatment they need to thrive. The organization facilitated and supported 298 CLHIV to access their drug pickup. A process that has resulted in greater treatment adherence among beneficiaries.

Nutrition Support

In our efforts to support orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) affected by HIV/AIDS, Uromi JDPCI prioritized nutritional support as a key component of our comprehensive health care



support. This has helped to improve the general well-being of the beneficiaries. Uromi JDPCI supported 160 OVC with foodstuff which has assisted them



in meeting their nutritional needs and promoted greater adherence to treatment.

Caregivers Forum

In a way of improving and supporting the economic stability and nutritional well-being of caregivers, Uromi JDPCI conducted 34 caregivers' fora across four LGAs. The caregivers were trained on Income-Generating Activities leading to the achievement of other streams of income and improving their means of livelihood of their general household.



The caregivers' fora also helped to support the critical aspects of early childhood nutrition, as it shared insights on best practices for ensuring the healthy development of young children while taking them through practical sessions for preparing adequate diet, leaving the participants with deeper understanding of how to meet the nutritional needs of their children. A total of 426 caregivers were reached.



Operation Triple Zero Club Meeting (OTZ) Club Meeting

In view to support adolescents between the ages of 10 to 17 years achieve viral load suppression Uromi JDPCI facilitated OTZ club meetings which aims to achieve three critical goals in HIV programming, which were zero missed appointments, zero missed drugs, and zero viral load. The program stressed the importance of treatment adherence and regular appointments. empowering CLHIV with the knowledge and support necessary to manage their health effectively. a total of 21 sessions were conducted at ISTH and Central Hospital reaching 80 CLHIV in each session,

resulting in more CLHIV being self-reliant thus translating into greater ART adherence and viral suppression.

Community-Based Health Insurance Scheme in a bid to easy access to quality health care and improve the standard of living of beneficiaries, 298 CLHIV households were enrolled in the Edo health insurance scheme (EDOHIS). This has enhanced access to health care services for the beneficiaries and their household.

Household Monitoring

Uromi JDPCI carried out household monitoring visit to beneficiaries at the project communities. This was used to provide psychosocial support to beneficiaries across 4 project LGA, and a total of 1056 households were reached and provided with psychosocial support and stability.



Financial Literacy Training

In the quest to foster economic stability and independence among beneficiaries, the Uromi JDPCI conducted comprehensive financial literacy training for 646 (631F 15M) caregivers. This strategic initiative was used to equip beneficiaries with essential business skills, to manage their businesses and finances and entrepreneurial ventures thereby leading to better economic stability of the households.



Village Saving and Loan Association

As part of the commitment to enhancing financial empowerment and community development Uromi JDPCI sustained the Village Saving and Loan Association (VSLA) initiative in four communities. This has helped to encourage savings culture among the group members. It has also enhanced their access to credit facilities for business expansion thereby improving their standard of living and contributing to the economic growth of their households. The groups consist of a total of 60 persons were reached

Review Meeting

In a bid to provide technical support as well as encourage shared learning the project conducted 10 review meetings with her 14 community case managers and 4 facility case managers. The sessions were used to report progress, discuss challenges and share best practices in implementation.



Gender Norm and No Means No Session

Uromi JDPCI facilitated 10 gender norm sessions in 10 secondary schools across the five LGAs in Edo Central Senatorial District. The sessions were used to raise awareness of gender norms and gender equality in the selected schools. A total of 700 in-school children (445 females and 255 males).



Similarly, Uromi JDPCI empowered a total of 390 female students between the ages 9-13 with essential knowledge and skills related to consent, boundaries, and sexual violence prevention through the No Means No platform; which has resulted in better understanding of how to address issues related to consent as well as prevent sexual violence children.



MICRO-CREDIT SCHEME

The micro-credit programme operates within the coverage area of the Catholic Diocese of Uromi (Edo Central Senatorial District), with the aim of empowering the less privileged and improving the livelihood of community dwellers in Edo Central Senatorial District. It comprises four (4) Schemes namely; PROMIC 1 and PROMIC 2 for petty business owners while Agric PROMIC and Microcredit scheme are for Farmers. The goal of the scheme is to empower individuals and families through micro enterprise development, thereby contributing to poverty reduction in families, communities, and society in general.

To achieve this goal, Uromi JDPCI sustained her economic support to rural farmers and petty traders across the 5 Local Government Areas in Edo Central Senatorial District. Financial literacy training sessions were held to empower beneficiaries with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively manage resources and support sustainable growth.



In the year under review, a total of 505 persons in 68 different groups were supported. 53 of the out of the 68 groups were farmers groups while 15 were petty traders' groups. These persons, who were already engaged in small scale businesses and farming, utilized the loans to expand their farming operations and improve their stock.

During the year, 19 new groups were formed, consisting of 133 members. These included 13 farmers' groups and 6 petty traders' groups. The farmers' groups were provided with soft loans to

enhance their farming operations, while the petty traders' groups received support to grow and expand their businesses."

The entire scheme currently has a total of 107 active groups with 915 persons accessing loans to enhance their livelihood opportunities.

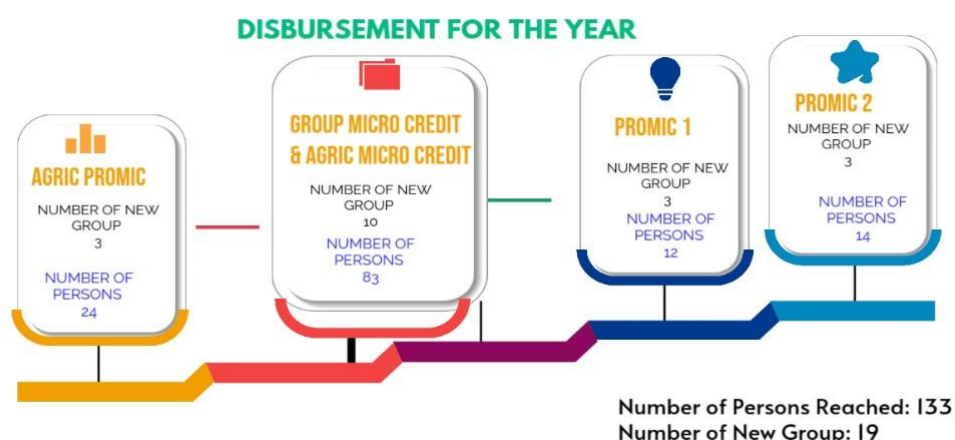
The repayment within the period was quite encouraging and Uromi JDPCI is grateful to the various groups for their solidarity and urged them to cooperate with the organization and show more commitment to repayment that could possibly qualify them for another round of loans.



During monitoring activity, the team visited some beneficiaries and it was observed that one of the groups with 12 members who are engaged in yam and cassava farming have significantly boosted their agricultural productivity through dedication and effective utilization of the loan they collected. One member shared a personal testimony, highlighting how he has started erecting a house for himself with the income from his farm's produce. Another member reported making over ₦200,000 in profit after expenses, which he used to care for his family and meet personal needs. Yet another member mentioned regularly earning up to ₦150,000 from the sale of his crops after other expenses. The group expressed their appreciation for the favorable loan interest rates, which have been helpful in their financial progress. Their leader thanked Uromi JDPCI for the support they received, acknowledging that the loans have enabled many members to acquire larger farm lands. He also conveyed the greetings of the Onojie of Idoia, recognizing the positive impact of Uromi JDPCI micro-credit assistance has had on their community.

Additionally, a beneficiary who was already in business was supported with a loan to expand her clothing business. She sells second-hand clothes called (Okirika). Doing business was tough for her, until she got a loan from Uromi JDPCI micro credit scheme. With this money, she grew her shop from Okirika to new clothes for ladies and children. Her customer base grew from 10 to over 30, and her income increased from ₦20,000 to over ₦50,000 monthly, she is very grateful to Uromi JDPCI and promised never to default in her loan repayment as the loan was very helpful.

The beneficiaries of the Uromi JDPCI Micro Credit programme express their deep gratitude for the vital support they have received. The loans have greatly improved their businesses and farming operations, allowing them to achieve financial independence and enhance their livelihoods. The favorable loan terms and financial literacy training have empowered them to better manage their resources and foster sustainable growth. The members are very thankful to Uromi JDPCI for this opportunity and are committed to repaying their loans, eager to continue benefiting from the programme's support as they work towards further improving their lives and communities. In general, the micro credit scheme has enhanced economic growth among farmers and petty traders.



LIVELIHOOD AND EDUCATION SUPPORT

Uromi JDPCI demonstrated a commitment to addressing the dual challenges of educational access and livelihood security, ensuring that vulnerable children and households are empowered to build a better future. Interventions in these areas included

Educational Support to Indigent Students:

Support to University students

Uromi JDPCI provided targeted financial support to two (2) university students (A 200-level Mechanical Engineering student at Ambrose Ali University, and a 100-level student at the University of Benin) whose families faced severe financial difficulties in meeting their educational needs. Each received fifty thousand naira (#50,000). Both students demonstrated strong academic potential, but their families faced significant financial difficulties to meet up with their educational expenses due to economic hardship and they risked dropping out and losing their educational opportunities. This intervention enabled them to continue their studies and pursue their academic goals, mitigating the risk of school dropout due to financial constraints.

Support to Pupils and Secondary School Students

In a similar endeavour, Uromi JDPCI supported eight (8) indigent in-school children (3 secondary school students and 5 primary school pupils) with essential school materials, including notebooks and biros. With this intervention, the children were able to stay engaged in the learning process in their various schools, preventing dropout and ensuring their progression in school. The provision

of these materials helped bridge the barrier to education and contributed to their continued academic success.

Livelihood Support to Vulnerable Households:

Uromi JDPCI also extended its support to vulnerable households, assisting in restoring livelihoods for vulnerable households. Our intervention supported a widow with a Fifty Thousand Naira (NGN50,000) grant for income-generating activity to revive her rice business after a health tragedy left her family in financial turmoil. The funds enabled her to purchase rice and resume trading, providing a critical source of livelihood for her family. This intervention empowered her to become financially self-sufficient again, ensuring her family's sustenance and her children's well-being.

Similarly, another indigent female caregiver received a business grant of Seventy-Five Thousand Naira (NGN 75,000) to start a fufu business after the economic downturn left her struggling to provide for her family. With this support, she was able to establish a new business, ensuring her family's financial stability and allowing her children to return to school. This intervention helped to restore hope and dignity to the family offering both immediate relief and long-term empowerment through sustainable income-generating activity.

CORRECTIONAL CENTER APOSTOLATE

In 2024, the Uromi JDPCI Legal and Correctional Center Apostolate reaffirmed its dedication to delivering transformative legal and spiritual counseling services to inmates at the Ubijaja Correctional Center. The Apostolate's unwavering commitment to justice, rehabilitation, and reintegration has left a profound impact on the lives of inmates, addressing both their spiritual needs and access to legal representation.

Monthly Spiritual and Legal Counseling Sessions

Throughout the year, Uromi JDPCI conducted multiple spiritual and legal counseling sessions, reaching a total of 206 inmates, including one person with a disability. Each session focused on themes designed to encourage emotional healing, self-improvement, and faith. Topics such as "Anger Management," "Change of Heart," and "Journey of Life" provided inmates with tools for personal growth and resilience. For example, the Anger Management session incorporated biblical teachings and practical techniques to help inmates navigate emotional triggers, while the "Journey of Life" session emphasized forgiveness and finding purpose amidst challenges. Inmates actively engaged in discussions, sharing personal stories and expressing a renewed sense of hope and commitment to positive change.



Spiritual Upliftment and Counseling

Uromi JDPCI's spiritual counseling sessions emphasized themes such as "The Importance of a Resolute Spirit and Trust in God" and "Conquering Shame and Guilt." These discussions

encouraged inmates to view their incarceration as an opportunity for transformation. Biblical teachings, coupled with practical advice on meditation, positive thinking, and emotional management, inspired inmates to embrace redemption and a brighter future. Inmates shared heartfelt testimonies, expressing strengthened faith and determination to rebuild their lives after release.

Legal Assistance and Advocacy

The Apostolate’s legal team played a pivotal role in identifying inmates with minor offenses who lacked access to legal representation. Over the year, 31 inmates received personalized legal advice, and several cases were prepared for court representation. This initiative aimed to ensure fair hearings and promote access to justice for the most vulnerable. Advocacy efforts also extended to collaborative meetings with correctional center officers, fostering a supportive environment for the ongoing rehabilitation of inmates.

Compassion Through Material Support

Demonstrating compassion and love, the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Uromi, Most Rev Dr Donatus Ogun OSA provided material support to inmates in Ubiaja Correctional Center. On March 9, 2024, food items such as yams, garri, rice, red oil, and onions were given to them, reflecting the Bishop’s commitment to addressing inmates’ physical needs due to hunger in the land. The items which were presented by Uromi JDPCI on behalf of the Catholic



Diocese of Uromi were received by the welfare officer who expressed immense gratitude to the Bishop, highlighting the morale boost and sense of belonging fostered by these acts of kindness. During the Christmas season, Uromi JDPCI hosted a celebration featuring a commemorative mass, baptisms for four inmates, and the distribution of essential items, including toiletries, food, and medical supplies. This initiative, supported by generous donations, brought joy and reinforced the values of hope and renewal.

Milestones and Community Impact

In addition to counseling and legal assistance, Uromi JDPCI facilitated the distribution of spiritual resources such as Bibles and prayer manuals, fostering a deeper connection to faith among inmates.

The Apostolate’s focus on comprehensive rehabilitation—encompassing emotional, spiritual, and legal dimensions—ensured that inmates experienced immediate relief and gained tools for sustainable transformation. One inmate’s testimony encapsulated the impact: “My incarceration has led me to strengthen my faith and embrace a positive outlook. I now believe in a second chance at life.”



Conclusion

The Uromi JDPCI Legal and Correctional Center Apostolate's 2024 activities have profoundly impacted the lives of inmates at Ubiaja Correctional Center. By addressing legal and spiritual needs, fostering hope, and promoting personal growth, the Apostolate has empowered inmates to envision and work toward a better future. Through acts of compassion, advocacy, and spiritual guidance, Uromi JDPCI remains a beacon of hope and transformation, exemplifying its commitment to justice, mercy, and human dignity.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Recognizing the critical link between the environment and human well-being, Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives took proactive steps to address pressing environmental challenges. The organization advocated for sustainable environmental practices, raised awareness about environmental issues, and fostered collaboration among stakeholders in the drive for environmental sustainability and community resilience.

Sensitization and Awareness Raising on Waste Management

Uromi JDPCI carried out sensitization and awareness raising on waste management, stressing effective strategies for waste disposal in minimizing health risks associated with improper waste handling and encouraging practices that can keep the environment clean, leaving behind the attitude of sweeping dirt into the gutters or waterway presuming that erosion will clean them off. A total of 27 (Male 10, Females 17) participants were reached.



Commemoration of the International Mother Earth Day

Uromi JDPCI conducted sensitization and public awareness rally to commemorate International Mother Earth Day. It was aimed to increase public understanding of environmental issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution and to advocate for a collective effort to protect and preserve the earth. A total of 200 market women, men and youths were reached.

The Sensitization and Awareness Raising On Tree Planting

Uromi JDPCI conducted sensitization and raised awareness on tree planting. The sessions highlighted the role trees play in restoring degraded lands, a healthy environment, mitigating the effects of climate change, and the need to key into the Diocesan plan to plant 100,000 trees by 2027. Participants were encouraged to plant fruit trees in their surrounding and farms while leveraging on local species. Some participants supported the intervention through donations to procure seedlings which were distributed at subsidized rates. A total of 11 parishes



and a group of farmers were visited with a total of 2430 persons reached. As part of the involvement, St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, Christ the King Opoji and Sacred Heart Atani supported the purchase of fruit seedlings through cash donations.

Tree Planting Drive

To encourage widespread involvement in the tree planting campaign, Uromi JDPCI purchased 307 fruit and tree seedlings, including 175 orange, 20 guava, 30 avocado, 20 cashew, 20 soursop, 15 black pear, 25 palm, and 2 mango trees. These seedlings were distributed at subsidized rates to Parishes, the chancery complex, and community members across Edo Central Senatorial District. Leveraging on local species, St. Theresa Catholic Church Ukoni, Christ the King Opoji, and other individuals contributed to the effort by planting 64 seedlings, including 45 pawpaw, 2 soursop, 8 guava, 4 palm, and 5 flower plants. This brought the total number of seedlings planted to 371.

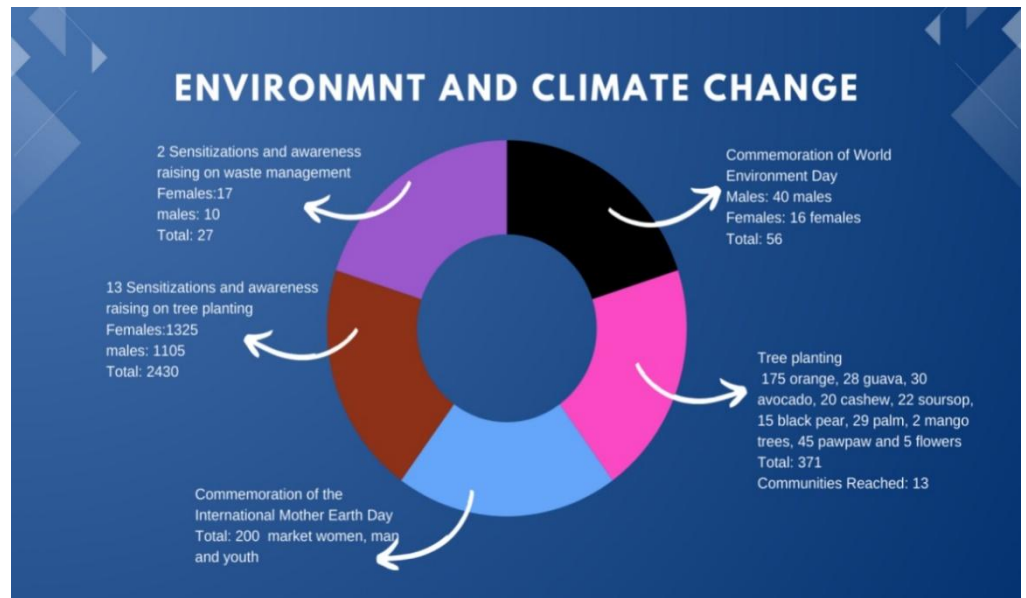


Commemoration of World Environment Day

Uromi JDPCI marked 2024 World Environment Day with a vibrant gathering of religious leaders, traditional rulers, government representatives, and Parish JDPC members. The theme was Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought Resilience, with a slogan, Our Land, our Future, we are our Generation Restoration. In the keynote address, the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI emphasized the profound impact that climate change is having on our environment. He further discouraged indiscriminate waste disposal, deforestation, bush burning, and destruction of natural inhabitants, and embraced climate-friendly activities, such as tree planting, proper waste management, and solar energy. The commitment expressed by stakeholders during the event reaffirmed our collective responsibility to protect and preserve our environment for future generations. A total of 56 (40 male, 16 females) participants were reached.

Conclusion

Uromi JDPCI remains committed to fostering environmental sustainability and addressing environmental challenges through targeted interventions and community engagement aimed at creating healthier and resilient environment. Our collaborative efforts with



stakeholders and communities were crucial in building a sustainable future for communities in Edo Central Senatorial District and beyond.

PARISH JDPC

In the past year, Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) made significant strides in fortifying Parish JDPC structures within the Uromi Diocese. Through targeted interventions, the initiative fostered greater awareness, collaboration, and capacity among parishioners, enabling them to actively contribute to community development and social justice.



Sensitization and Awareness-Raising

Uromi JDPCI conducted a series of sensitization sessions across the diocese to promote the establishment and functionality of Parish JDPC structures. These sessions encouraged active participation and collaboration among parishioners, emphasizing the relevance of JDPC in fostering justice, peace, and community service. The initiative reached a broad audience, generating widespread interest and mobilizing parishioners to take part in JDPC activities.

Formal Inauguration of Parish JDPCI Units

To strengthen the Parish JDPC framework, Uromi JDPCI formally inaugurated several units. These inaugurations marked a critical step toward fostering unity and commitment among members while reinforcing the structures needed for impactful service. Participants were equipped with the knowledge and



tools necessary to assume their roles effectively, and focal persons were appointed to ensure continuity and leadership at the parish level.

Capacity-Building Training

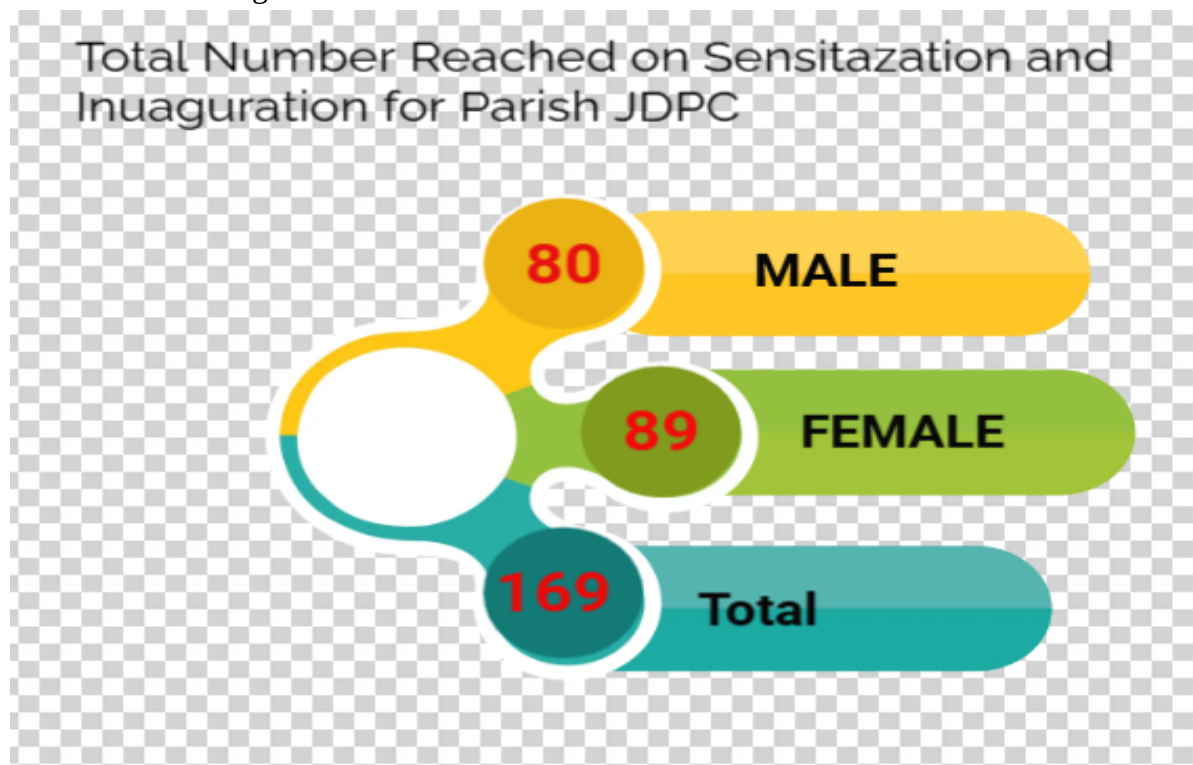
A dedicated training session was organized to enhance the competencies of Parish JDPC members. This session focused on educating members about their roles, responsibilities, and the guiding principles of JDPC. Participants were encouraged to adopt a service-oriented mindset and to apply the knowledge gained to address pressing social and developmental issues within their parishes and communities.



Impact and Reflections

The interventions carried out by Uromi JDPCI have revitalized the Parish JDPC structures, fostering a sense of purpose and dedication among members. Parishioners are now better equipped to contribute to social justice initiatives, advocate for peace, and address community challenges. The active engagement of participants in these activities has strengthened community cohesion and laid a foundation for sustained impact.

As Uromi JDPCI continues its mission, the achievements of the past year underscore the transformative power of collective effort and the commitment to building stronger, more resilient communities through Parish JDP.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Celebrating Excellence at Uromi JDPCI

On the 6th of December 2024, Uromi JDPCI hosted its annual end-of-year and award party, a festive event dedicated to recognizing the hard work, dedication, and achievements of its staff. The celebration was graced by members of the Board of Trustees, including the Board Secretary; Barr. Onomen Priscilla Oriakhi, Dr Irene Akhidenor as well as Barr. Akhidenor, friends of the organization, management, and staff of Uromi JDPCI.

The Executive Director, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo, expressed heartfelt gratitude to the team for their unwavering commitment to Uromi JDPCI's mission and their instrumental roles in achieving the year's targets and successes. He prayed for continued strength and divine guidance as the team worked tirelessly for the betterment of humanity. Members of the Board of Trustees also commended the team's impactful work in advancing justice and development in Nigeria.



The highlight of the ceremony was the presentation of awards to distinguished staff members who have gone above and beyond in their roles:

- **Dr. Michael Iyoriobhe**, *Director of Programs*, was honored as the **Overall Best Staff of the Year** for his visionary leadership, dedication, and transformative contributions. Dr. Michael's strategic foresight and ability to inspire his team have been pivotal in driving Uromi JDPCI's success, fostering an environment of innovation and inclusivity.
- **Harriet Erhabor**, *Administrative Secretary/Program Manager*, received the **Star Employee Award (Second Best Staff of the Year)**. Harriet's exceptional performance, dedication, and proactive problem-solving skills have made a significant impact on the organization, earning her the admiration and respect of her colleagues.
- **Agbonmwanre Maxwell**, *Finance Manager*, was awarded the **Most Committed Staff Award (Third Best Staff of the Year)** for his unwavering reliability and tireless commitment to Uromi JDPCI's mission. Maxwell's consistency, integrity, and positive work ethic have greatly contributed to the smooth operation and success of the organization.



In addition to staff awards, *Barr. Onomen Priscilla Oriakhi*, Secretary of the Board of Trustees, was presented with an appreciation gift and letter for her invaluable contributions to the organization's growth and success.



The event featured poem renditions, an interactive quiz competition, and the exchange of Christmas gifts among staff, Board members, and friends of the organization, fostering a spirit of unity and appreciation. The celebration not only highlighted the remarkable achievements of the team but also reinforced Uromi JDPCI's commitment to justice, development, and humanitarian service



Celebrating the Visionary Leadership of Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Oriabure Arhedo, Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI

At the heart of Uromi JDPCI's transformative journey stands its Executive Director, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Oriabure Arhedo, whose unwavering commitment to justice, development, and humanitarian service has inspired his team and earned widespread recognition from esteemed organizations across Nigeria. Throughout 2024, Fr. Arhedo's tireless efforts and profound impact were celebrated with a series of prestigious awards, each reflecting his dedication to uplifting communities, advocating for the vulnerable, and fostering social change.

In March 2024, Fr. Arhedo's leadership and compassion were first recognized by the *Edo State Returnees Association*, which honored him with the Go-Getters Special Award on *March 1st* for being an integral part of their success story. His steadfast support was instrumental in helping returnees reintegrate into society, empowering them to rebuild their lives with dignity and hope. Later that month, on *March 28th*, the *Professional Women Group (PWG)* presented him with an Award of Honour in Service of Humanity, a testament to his contributions to promoting social justice, gender equality, and community development. This accolade underscored his role as a beacon of hope for countless individuals striving for a better future.

Also on September 26, 2024, *Caritas Nigeria/JDPC* honoured him with a Special Recognition Award for his dual commitment to faith and humanity. This distinguished accolade highlighted his selfless service to the Catholic Church and his tireless efforts in advancing humanitarian causes, reflecting his deep-rooted values of compassion, justice, and service.

Fr. Arhedo's dedication to protecting the most vulnerable was further acknowledged on 10th December 2024 when the *Edo State Government's Ministry of Social Development and Gender Issues*, in collaboration with *Heartland Alliance Ltd/Gte*, awarded him the Award of Excellence as Edo GBV Champion. This honor celebrated his outstanding role as a key partner in the fight against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Edo State. His strategic interventions and unwavering advocacy have been pivotal in safeguarding survivors, raising awareness, and driving systemic change to end GBV.

These awards are not just personal achievements but a reflection of Fr. Arhedo's visionary leadership at Uromi JDPCI. His dedication has fostered a culture of excellence and compassion within the organization, inspiring his team to continue driving positive change in the lives of those they serve.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

PROGRAMMATIC AREA	TARGET FOR FY25
Good Governance	• Hold 2 strategic engagements with 20 relevant political stakeholders on issues of governance and service delivery by political leaders • Conduct 2 trainings for at least 100 members of animated groups on issues of governance • Engage 10 communities on issues of governance with 1000 community members reached. • Mobilize 25 animated Groups to engage at least 500 community stakeholders on issues of democratic dividends and community development • Organize 5 Town hall meetings at LGA level with community, religious and political leaders (Eminent stakeholders Forum) to demand accountability of stewardship from elected leaders, reaching 250 persons • Convey 1 peace accord /community surveillance session with 100 stakeholders reached • Conduct 5 roundtable discussions with political leaders on budget drafting, monitoring and tracking aimed at presenting the needs of community members to their political leaders • Undertake 5 Advocacy visits to relevant stakeholders on issues of governance
Health/OVC (Orphan and Vulnerable Children)	• Conduct 20 awareness on HIV/AIDS and stigma reduction with 2,000 persons reached. • Conduct community and index HIV testing for 2,000 persons and 200 respectively with at least 5 identified cases linked to treatment • Conduct community Adherence counselling for 300 virally unsuppressed persons and link them to facilities for Enhanced Adherence counselling (EAC) • Train 500 beneficiaries in skill acquisition geared towards improved livelihood opportunities. • Train 2000 caregivers on financial literacy. • Support 200 beneficiaries with business start-ups or cash transfers • Provide basic and secondary educational support to 500 vulnerable children • Link 400 children to secure birth certificates • Provide monitoring and counselling support to 500 households • Link 600 Caregivers and children to health insurance scheme • Conduct 20 food demonstration sessions, train 250 caregivers on home gardening and provide them with agricultural inputs for improved food security and enhanced nutrition • Conduct 15 Tuberculosis (TB) sensitization and awareness programs with 500 individuals reached • Facilitate screening for 500 persons, with at least 20 cases identified and linked to treatment • Facilitate access to treatment and care for 20 TB patients, and facilitate 20 adherence counseling sessions. • Conduct 10 awareness and sensitization programs on general health issues, including Malaria, diabetes, hypertension, Obesity, Cervical cancer, Prostrate cancer, and breast cancer, reaching 400 persons. • Organize 2 screening session for hypertension, diabetics, Cervical cancer and obesity with 100 persons reached • Conduct four awareness campaigns on hygienic practices, focusing on topics such as safe drinking water, handwashing moments, and environmental sanitation. We aim to reach a target audience of 300 persons
Livelihood	• Conduct baseline survey in 10 rural communities to assess their farming needs • Enhance knowledge and skills of 200 farmers on effective farming system • Form 15 Farmers sub groups • Provide vocational training to 50 vulnerable young people and women • Equip 60 youths and women with entrepreneurial development skills • Assess 100 indigent households to determine levels of household vulnerability and support needed.

	• Provide 20 vulnerable households and 20 Youths across 25 communities with economic strengthening activities
Human Rights	• Conduct 4 quarterly review meetings with Community Human Rights Clubs across 35 communities, reaching 2000 persons. • Conduct 4 quarterly learning sessions with Adolescent Human Rights clubs in 26 selected schools, and reach at least 2,600 children. • Hold 1 stakeholders conference within the year and reach 200 persons. • Commemorate World Human Rights Day with 150 persons reached • Carry out 10 Town Hall Meetings on human rights issues in 10 communities reaching at least 500 community stakeholders. • Conduct 2 public awareness campaigns on SGBV/CEFM and reach at least 100 persons. • Hold 2 training sessions with Paralegals, Social welfare Officers and Supervisors reaching 100 participants. • Provide 200 counselling services on Human Rights and SGBV issues. • Support 20 survivors to access justice • Provide 200 counselling services on human rights/ SGBV issues • Resolve 50 human rights/GBV conflict through Alternative Dispute Resolution • Refer 5 Human rights/ SGBV cases for litigation • Hold 3 strategic advocacy engagements with security Agents to foster effective human rights case management.
Migration and Countering Trafficking in Persons	• Conduct 10 Awareness and sensitization programs on the ills of TIP and the need for safe migration in 5 communities and 5 schools, reaching at least 500 persons. • Conduct 4 advocacies to 4 relevant stakeholders towards the establishment of trafficking response desk at the Local Government Level with at least 2 stakeholders committing to the ask. • Conduct 11 community dialogue sessions in 11 communities of Edo State on forging local solutions and way forward in curbing human trafficking in communities with 200 community and religious leaders reached • Hold 3 caregivers fora geared at prevention of human trafficking with 48 caregivers reached • Commemorate World Day against human trafficking with a target to reach 100 persons. • Establish Adolescent Anti Human Trafficking clubs in 5 schools and 5 communities and train members about human trafficking dangers and prevention. • Provide economic strengthening activities to 10 vulnerable households through their caregivers as well as 5 Youths. • Provide educational support to 5 children for school retention and see 2 out of school children re-admitted back to school. • Form 5 community child protection groups and train members for rapid response to Human Trafficking issues with at least 5 cases handled or escalated to appropriate bodies by the groups • Provide 10 Survivors with emergency support • Facilitate 10 Family tracing and reunification activities for 10 returned Migrants including 2 phased home visitations for effective reintegration • Hold 4 reintegration counselling and group discussions sessions for 10 returned Migrants to build their resilience and self-development • Link 10 Survivors to support groups and facilitate 1 mentorship session with 2 existing support groups • Provide economic reintegration and entrepreneurial development skills to 10 returnees • Support 1 returned migrant to pursue basic and secondary education based on needs • Refer at least 5 cases of Human Trafficking to NAPTIP and Edo State Migration Agency. • Commemorate the International Day of Prayer against human trafficking.
SGBV/CEFM	• Conduct 5 sensitization meetings on human rights, SGBVs, and CEFM with 35 communities and 2000 persons reached

	• Conduct 104 Sensitization sessions on SGBVs and CEFM in 27 selected schools, reaching at least 2,080 schoolchildren • Conduct 24 Community dialogues across the 5 LGAs on SGBV/ CEFM cases • Conduct 15 Awareness campaign on mainstream and social media on issues of SGBV/ CEFM and their case management • Conduct 1 public awareness rally against SGBV/ CEFM • Convey 4 strategic Advocacy visits to relevant Stakeholders to establish and strengthen Partnerships on SGBV/ CEFM case management • Populate SGBV cases to the GBV Dash Board • Establish 5 referral pathways for essential case tracking & management • Provide 1 capacity building for security agents, LGA Social Welfare Make 10 referrals of SGBV and CEFM Cases and assist Survivors to access justice at low or no cost • Hold 6 caregivers fora across 5 LGAs to improve knowledge and skill in the protection and prevention of SGBV/CEFM • Empower 15 caregivers with income-generating activities for Enhanced livelihood options and income; hence they are less vulnerable to SGBV/CEFM • Refer 10 Survivors of SGBV to government hospitals for treatment at subsidized cost • Provide first-point counseling services to 20 Survivors of SGBV and refer 10 SGBV Survivors to Professional counselors for psychosocial support
Legal/Correctional Centre Apostolate	• Conduct 11 legal counselling sessions with 20 Inmates that have minor offences. • Provide legal representation for 2 Inmates with minor offences without legal representation • Hold 10 spiritual counseling sessions with Inmates and 1 catechism towards Baptism. • Facilitate Biannual distribution of food items and welfare provision for Inmates at the Ubiaja Correctional Centre.
Micro Credit	• Conduct 20 Awareness on Entrepreneurship and financial literacy training sessions for 400 beneficiaries across 5 LGAs. • Conduct 20 trainings on entrepreneurship and financial literacy or 200 beneficiaries across 5 LGAs • Conduct 6 sensitization on the need for functional cooperatives for 300 beneficiaries across 5 LGAs • Identify and select 300 interested beneficiaries to be registered into a cooperative • Form 20 groups and register at least 5 groups into cooperatives in the 5 target LGAs • Provide 20 groups access to soft loans and Provide at least 4 cooperative groups access to government grant
Environment and Climate Change	• Conduct 10 sensitization sessions on the effect of bush burning, deforestation and the burning of fossil fuels in 10 communities with 500 individuals reached. • Conduct 1 baseline survey on the use of renewable energy and waste management • Conduct 10 awareness campaigns in 10 communities on the benefits of solar energy with 200 persons reached • Link 10 persons interested in adopting solar energy to trusted vendors. • Conduct 10 awareness campaigns on the benefit of tree cover in 10 communities/churches, reaching 500 persons. • Distribute and plant 365 tree/fruit seedlings in 20 communities. • Conduct 2 awareness campaigns on waste management in 2 markets with 500 persons reached • Conduct 1 training on waste management with 50 persons trained on use of waste management techniques. • Conduct 2 Advocacy visits to relevant agencies on waste management
Parish JDPC	• Follow up with 17 Parish JDPCs to conduct step-down training on the roles and responsibilities of Parish JDPC • Hold bi-annual meeting with Parish JDPC • Monthly monitoring of 17 functional Parish JDPCs to hold their meetings.

