



UROMI JDPCI Newsletter

A Quarterly Publication of Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (JDPCI) VOL. 37 NO. 45 SEPTEMBER, 2025 EDITION

INTRODUCTION

The third quarter of 2025 marked another period of strong community engagement, capacity strengthening, and collaborative action for Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI). Uromi JDPCI continued to advance human rights education, prevent human trafficking, expand access to health and OVC services, promote environmental sustainability, support inmate rehabilitation, strengthen parish JDPC structures, and empower households economically through micro-credit across communities in Edo Central Senatorial District.

Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme:

This quarter saw a significant scale-up in community sensitisation and school-based human rights learning. Quarterly review meetings were held with 429 paralegals and human rights advocates to assess progress, address emerging violations, and strengthen community-level accountability. Learning sessions were facilitated with Adolescent Human Rights Clubs in 28 secondary schools, reaching 463 adolescents with messages on communication, emotional intelligence, and conflict transformation. Radio programmes, community town hall meetings in Efandion, Ubiaja, and Ewatto further expanded awareness on dignity, justice, cultural reform, and the role of communities in preventing abuse.

Migration and Countering Trafficking in Persons:

Uromi JDPCI deepened collaboration with critical actors in the anti-trafficking ecosystem with a high-level workshop, which had 77 influential stakeholders, convened to strengthen synergy between traditional rulers, security agencies, and service providers. The biannual forum brought 55 parents and caregivers together to discuss family-based prevention measures. Coordination meetings with 33 LGA caseworkers and mentors, and a broader consultation involving 70 community and institutional actors, enhanced referral pathways, understanding of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), and survivor-centred justice responses. The project also gathered 85 community and religious leaders to commemorate the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, reaffirming their commitment to grassroots vigilance and advocacy.

Health and OVC (THRIVE Project): Uromi JDPCI delivered comprehensive support to 281 Children Living with HIV (CLHIV), including TB screening, adherence counselling, nutrition education, and psychosocial services. 175 children received assisted referrals for ART refills, while 27 children who had interrupted treatment were successfully traced and returned to care. The Operation Triple Zero Club provided psychosocial and adherence support to 68 CALHIV, and 21 new beneficiaries were enrolled into OVC care during the period.

Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability:

Uromi JDPCI conducted sensitisation campaigns across communities and churches, reaching 851 participants. The sessions were aimed at inspiring behavioural change, strengthening environmental consciousness, and encouraging community-led initiatives to curb indiscriminate dumping.

Correctional Center Apostolate:

The monthly visit to the Ubiaja Correctional Center supported 59 inmates through psychosocial counselling, spiritual guidance, and welfare support. Individual counselling was provided to 23 inmates, helping to strengthen emotional resilience, encourage self-reflection, and promote pathways to reintegration.

Parish JDPC Strengthening:

Efforts to revitalise parish JDPC structures continued through parish visits, follow-up engagement, and environmental awareness. Across these interventions, 248 parishioners were reached, enabling deeper participation in social justice, environmental care, and community-building activities.

Micro-Credit Programme:

Through its Micro-Credit Scheme, Uromi JDPCI empowered **101 beneficiaries** across six communities with small loans, savings opportunities, insurance schemes, and financial literacy. The programme enhanced livelihoods, promoted financial discipline, and strengthened economic resilience, especially among women, who constituted the majority of the beneficiaries.

UROMI JDPCI

CORPORATE FACT SHEET

Name	Uromi Justice Development Peace & Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI).	
Owner	Catholic Diocese of Uromi, Nigeria.	
Legal Holder	His Lordship, Most Rev. Dr. Donatus A Ogun (OSA)	
Authorized Representative & Director	Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Oriabure Arhedo	
Corporate Registration No:	CAC/IT/No: 50042 & ED/MWASD/NGOR/200/04	
Status	Faith-Based Non-Governmental, Non-For-Profit, Humanitarian and Development Organization.	
Motto	Hope for the Oppressed and Empowerment for All	
Areas of operation	Integral Development, Human Rights, Democracy, and Good Governance, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Correctional Center Apostolate and Legal Aid services, Peace Building, Micro-Credit, and Caritas, TB and HIV/AIDS care and support, HIV Counseling and testing, Livelihood and Food Security, Migration and Countering Trafficking in Person, and OVC programming	
Project steered	Conflict Management, Training of Electorate, Election Observation, Budget Monitoring, Community TB Care, HIV/AIDS Awareness Creation and counselling, Micro-Credit Facilities, Rural Community Development Enlightenment Campaign, Prisoners' Welfare Services, Gender And Child Rights, Widowhood Association, Human Rights, Training Programmes for Police Officers and Youths, Women Development & Promotion through Micro Credit, Emergency Response, Legal Aid, VC Programming, Capacity Strengthening for Good Governance, Campaigns and Sensitizations Against Human Trafficking as well as Creating Alternatives to Human Trafficking through Vocational Skills Acquisition and Empowerment, Human Right Education and Paralegal Scheme, Don't Pay With Your Life, Strengthening Community Participation to Prevent Human Trafficking and Integrated Child Health and Social Service Award, Galvanize Action for Effective Trafficking in Persons Response, Act Against Child Trafficking in Nigeria	
Focus Group	The rural populace, the economically deprived, families, children, students, youths, women and widows living among the poorest of the poor in the society. Inmates in Prison and Ex-inmates, persons stigmatized with deadly diseases.	
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Auditors	1. Grant Thornton chartered Accountants Emgn, Lagos 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 PLC Mission Road, Uromi	
Staff Strength	22	
Registered Volunteers	72	
Project Executed	30	

HUMAN RIGHT EDUCATION AND PARALEGAL SCHEME

Uromi JDPCI Strengthens Grassroots Human Rights Networks Across Edo Central Senatorial District

Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) convened its Quarterly Meeting with Paralegals and Human Rights Advocates across the five local government areas of Edo Central Senatorial District (Igueben, Esan North East, Esan South East, Esan Central, and Esan West).



The meeting brought together 429 participants, comprising 232 men and 193 women from 36 Community Human Rights Clubs across the five LGAs in Edo Central Senatorial District. Among the attendees were the Queen of Igueben Kingdom, personnel from the Nigeria Police Force, Heads of Social Departments from the five LGAs, Palace Secretaries, Paralegal Supervisors, and trained Community Paralegals. Their participation underscored the growing synergy between traditional institutions, civic actors, and law enforcement agencies in advancing grassroots human rights protection.

Strengthening Collaboration and Accountability

In his opening remarks, the Director of Programmes, Dr. Michael Iyoriobhe, welcomed participants and commended communities that conducted sensitization activities during the quarter. He emphasized the importance of coordination, consistent reporting, and shared accountability in ensuring that human rights interventions are both effective and sustainable.



The Executive Director, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo, reaffirmed the vision of the community human rights clubs, which is to foster peaceful and inclusive communities where dignity and justice prevail. Drawing on local examples, he highlighted positive cultural shifts, including the gradual phasing out of degrading widowhood practices, and called for sustained collaboration among traditional leaders, particularly female leaders such as community Queens, and law enforcement agencies.



Fr. Arhedo further stressed the need to understand the intersection between

law, culture, and religion in driving social transformation. Addressing sensitive issues like rape, child neglect, and stigmatization of vulnerable children, he urged participants to be proactive as moral and legal advocates within their communities.

Insights and Emerging Trends

The meeting featured detailed case reviews and experience sharing from the five LGAs. A total of 68 case-based interventions were reported during the quarter, covering: 7 cases of rape, 22 cases of domestic violence, 13 cases of child neglect and abandonment, 5 cases of forced child labour, 3 cases of denial of education rights, 3 cases of denial of widows' inheritance rights, 1 case of child trafficking, 2 cases of arbitrary arrest and detention, 3 cases of assault and threat to life, 2 cases of violence against persons, 1 case of ill-treatment of a widow, 1 case of violation of freedom of expression and association, 3 cases of violation of the right to fair trial, and 2 cases of intimidation.

In response to these challenges, nine (9) community sensitizations and awareness campaigns were conducted across the LGAs, promoting knowledge of human rights laws, including the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Law (VAPP Law), and encouraging victims to seek redress through appropriate channels.



Participants reported increasing public confidence in reporting mechanisms and stronger collaboration between paralegals, traditional authorities,

and law enforcement officers, a sign of deepening grassroots responsiveness to human rights education.

Legal and Cultural Dialogue

A major highlight of the meeting was the interactive legal literacy session at Igueben LGA, which explored the customary practice of Idiogbe, a traditional inheritance norm favouring the eldest male child. Facilitators clarified that while Idiogbe holds cultural significance, it cannot override constitutional guarantees of gender equality and inheritance rights.



This sparked robust dialogue and led to a resolution for expanded legal education on inheritance rights and will-making.

Similarly, a participant from Esan Central LGA raised a question on whether a 13-year-old child could be arrested. The discussion clarified that while minors can be held accountable under the Family Court System, their cases are treated with a focus on rehabilitation and parental responsibility, emphasizing the critical role of moral upbringing in preventing juvenile offenses.

Towards a Just and Inclusive Future

The meeting concluded with a collective commitment to intensify community sensitization, enhance coordination across LGAs, and sustain partnerships that can bridge traditional wisdom with modern human rights standards. Through these collaborative efforts, Uromi JDPCI continues to build a strong, informed network of human rights advocates, empowering communities to speak out against injustice, protect the vulnerable, and promote a culture of peace and dignity across Edo Central Senatorial District.



Human Rights Adolescent Club Sessions: Building Bridges Through Communication

Uromi Justice Development, Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) facilitated Adolescent Human Rights Learning Sessions across 28 secondary schools in the five Local Government Areas of Edo Central Senatorial District (Esan South East, Esan North East, Igueben, Esan West, and Esan Central). The initiative aims to deepen young people's understanding of human rights, personal responsibility, and social harmony, while equipping them with practical life skills that support their growth into confident, respectful, and self-aware adults.



This quarter's theme, *"Communicating with My Parents/Caregivers,"* focused on strengthening family relationships through respectful and effective dialogue. The sessions emphasized that communication is not merely about speaking but also about listening, empathy, and understanding. The central message, *"When I communicate effectively, adults listen and understand my needs,"* guided the discussions.

Facilitators introduced students to key communication steps like preparing ahead, choosing the right time, staying calm, listening actively, and expressing opinions respectfully. Participants were reminded that



while disagreements are natural, effective communication can transform conflicts into opportunities for mutual understanding

and respect.

The sessions were highly participatory and interactive, enabling students to reflect on real-life experiences and practice alternative ways of resolving disagreements. Their feedback revealed a growing sense of empathy, patience, and responsibility.

In Igueben LGA, one participant proudly shared how she taught her three friends and four sisters the lessons she learned, leading her entire household to adopt better communication habits. Another student narrated how his father noticed a positive change in his behavior



since joining the Human Rights Club, responding with admiration and pride. Similarly, at Ewatto Grammar School, Annunciation Catholic

College (ACC) Irrua, Agba Grammar School, and Emaudo Secondary School, students testified to resolving conflicts peacefully using the POCC model introduced during the sessions.

These experiences demonstrated not only retention of the lessons but also their practical application in daily life. Students expressed eagerness to continue using these skills, especially in handling financial or relational challenges at home, showing maturity and emotional intelligence in their approach to problem-solving. In total, 463 adolescents (145 males and 318 females) participated in the quarter's activities.



Through these engagements, the Adolescent Human Rights Clubs continue to nurture a new generation of rights-conscious, emotionally intelligent, and socially responsible youth; young people who are learning not only to stand up for their rights but also to communicate with empathy and live peacefully within their families, schools, and communities.

UROMI JDPCI AMPLIFIES HUMAN RIGHTS AWARENESS ON RADIO

Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI), continued its powerful radio sensitisation on Human Rights Education on A's 99.9FM, Uromi. The weekly "Human Rights Half Hour" programme, anchored by the Executive Director, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo, and the Director of Programmes, Dr. Michael Iyoriobhe, brought human rights advocacy closer to the people through practical, community-centered discussions.

Accessing Support Mechanisms and Paralegal Services

The July 8th edition focused on "*Accessing Support Mechanisms, Including Paralegal Services.*" The discussion explored the various channels through which individuals can seek help when faced with human rights violations or social injustices. The hosts highlighted how paralegals serve as bridges between the people and formal justice systems, and how they offer guidance, mediation, and referral services at the grassroots level. They also discussed the importance of psychosocial support, especially in cases involving trauma, substance abuse, and family disputes, where victims often suffer in silence due to stigma or ignorance of available support.

Listeners actively engaged in the live conversation. A caller from Ewatto shared a distressing account of a young man who attempted self-harm after being reprimanded by his peers over drug use. His story underscored the urgent need for integrated mental health and legal support services at the community level. He appealed for the expansion of the radio programme to one full hour to allow more in-depth discussions and participation. Another caller from Fugar commended the programme's growing impact in promoting awareness of human rights and fostering respect for human dignity. The conversation reaffirmed Uromi JDPCI's message: justice must be accessible, practical, and rooted in everyday realities, and every voice matters in shaping a just and compassionate society.

Exploring Support Systems for Victims of Violence

On July 15th, the discussion turned to "*Exploring Support Systems for Victims of Violence.*" The session shed light on various forms of abuse, such as physical,

emotional, sexual, psychological, and economic, and highlighted how silence, fear, and stigma keep many victims, especially women and children, from seeking help. Uromi JDPCI emphasized collaboration with partners such as NAPTIP, FIDA, the Legal Aid Council of Nigeria, the Nigerian Bar Association pro bono units, and faith-based organizations to provide counselling, legal aid, medical care, and safe spaces for survivors.

A critical gap identified was the lack of shelters in Edo Central Senatorial District, prompting calls for urgent investment from local authorities to create safe spaces for victims. A listener from Esan South East appreciated the programme for promoting peace and awareness within their community.

Community Leadership in Action

The July 22nd broadcast titled "*The Role of Community Members and Leaders in Supporting Victims of Violence*" underscored the community's indispensable role in responding to violence. While institutions offer professional assistance, the first line of empathy and intervention often comes from within the community itself. A touching story shared by a listener revealed how a local Chief, inspired by Uromi JDPCI's advocacy, sponsored the education of an out-of-school child, demonstrating that every act of compassion counts. Uromi JDPCI commended the Chief and encouraged others to emulate such acts of kindness that bring hope and healing to the people and community in general.

Empowering Communities Through Paralegal Support

The month's final session, held on July 29th, merged these discussions under the theme "*Exploring Paralegal Support Services and the Role of Community Members and Leaders in Supporting Victims of Violence.*" The conversation emphasized the need for survivors to speak up early and seek help through established paralegal structures. It also highlighted the shared responsibility of community leaders and members in identifying, referring, and protecting victims, while partnering with relevant agencies to ensure justice is served.

Building a Culture of Justice and Compassion

Across all July editions, one message echoed consistently: change begins with you.

Every listener, community leader, and citizen has a role to play in making justice accessible, protecting the vulnerable, and nurturing a society rooted in dignity and peace.



UROMI JDPCI STRENGTHENS GRASSROOTS HUMAN RIGHTS AWARENESS ACROSS ESAN COMMUNITIES

As part of its Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme project supported by MISEREOR, Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) continued its robust grassroots sensitization campaign across Edo Central Senatorial District in July and August 2025. Uromi JDPCI used the community town hall meetings and sensitization sessions held in Efandion, Ubiaja, and Ewatto to engage traditional leaders, elders, women, and youths on the need to align cultural practices with national human rights standards and the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law.

Promoting Human Dignity and Legal Awareness in Efandion

On July 14, 2025, Uromi JDPCI hosted a community town hall meeting at Efandion Town Hall. The session brought together elders, chiefs, women, and youth leaders to discuss the intersection between culture, law, and human rights, particularly in the codification of Esan customary laws.

Participants were sensitized on key provisions of the VAPP Law, covering offences such as rape, false statements, unlawful eviction, deprivation of liberty, assault, spousal battery, harmful widowhood rites, female genital mutilation (FGM), and child neglect. The team emphasized that these acts are punishable under Nigerian law and encouraged community members to report cases to the appropriate authorities.

During the interactive session, one woman questioned why the cultural practice of parading women naked as punishment for adultery should be abolished, knowing that it is intended to serve as a deterrent to others. In response, Fr. Arhedo affirmed that “no tradition that violates human dignity should be upheld, because human rights are universal and every person deserves respect.” Another participant asked how to access the VAPP Law, and was informed that it is freely available online and that Uromi JDPCI will make some copies available to the community after the sensitization.

At the close of the session, the Community Elder pledged to abolish degrading cultural practices and support continuous human rights education across Efandion.

Ubiaja Town Hall: Uniting Culture and Justice

On July 28, 2025, the human rights train moved to Ubiaja, where Uromi JDPCI held a sensitization session and town hall meeting at the Royal Palace of Ubiaja. The gathering drew 67 participants, including traditional chiefs and community representatives from all quarters of the kingdom.

Discussions focused on rape, spousal battery, child neglect, widow inheritance, and other cultural practices infringing on human rights. It was reiterated that while culture defines identity, “no culture should dehumanize its people.” The team outlined both the legal and

social penalties associated with human rights violations and encouraged traditional leaders to champion reforms that protect the vulnerable, particularly women and children.

The community expressed deep appreciation for the session, pledging to spread the message across all quarters and maintain collaboration with Uromi JDPCI in promoting justice and dignity.

Together, participants reaffirmed their shared vision of building informed, empowered, and rights-conscious communities.

Ewatto Sensitization: Preserving Culture, Protecting Dignity

The final engagement in this round of outreach was held on August 13, 2025, at the Ewatto Palace. The session emphasized the need to uphold cultural values while reforming harmful traditions that violate human rights. Copies of the VAPP Law were presented to community elders, with encouragement to study and align their local customs with its provisions.

Key themes discussed included rape, child marriage, spousal battery, ill-treatment of widows, FGM, intimidation, and neglect. Participants actively shared their experiences, including one widow's account of a degrading mourning ritual that required her to sit in one spot for seven days and eat with an unwashed left hand.

A question was raised on whether communities were consulted before the passage of the VAPP Law. The team clarified that while community consultation is important, laws passed by elected representatives are binding, and citizens should hold leaders accountable to ensure their voices are heard in future legislative processes.

Very Rev Fr. Dr Fidelis Arhedo urged the people to reform outdated customs, integrate human rights values into cultural norms, and ensure that every individual is treated with respect. In closing, the Palace Secretary, speaking on behalf of the community, expressed gratitude to Uromi JDPCI and assured that the traditional council would deliberate on the discussed reforms.

A Shared Vision for a Just and Humane Society

Across all three engagements, Uromi JDPCI reaffirmed its commitment to bridging the gap between law and culture, ensuring that human dignity remains the foundation of Esan traditions.

With communities pledging reform and continued collaboration, the movement for a safer, fairer, and more compassionate Edo Central grows stronger each day. Together, we can preserve culture while protecting human dignity.



MIGRATION AND COUNTERING TRAFFICKING IN PERSON

ACT AGAINST CHILD TRAFFICKING IN NIGERIA (AACTING PROJECT) HIGH-LEVEL WORKSHOP STRENGTHENS SYNERGY FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND ANTI-TRAFFICKING EFFORTS

Uromi JDPCI convened a strategic workshop aimed at enhancing coordination among influential actors, community leaders, security agencies, government institutions, and civil society, to improve prevention, response, and protection mechanisms for children at risk of trafficking.

The workshop, which had the theme *Building Stronger Synergy for Child Protection Against Trafficking*, brought together 77 key stakeholders (43 males, 34 females), including representatives of NAPTIP, Edo State Migration Agency, Caritas Nigeria, representatives of the Commissioner of Police, Divisional Police Officers, traditional leaders, and the Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association. Discussions focused on trauma-informed approaches, survivor-centred response, timely referrals, and the urgent need for more cohesive collaboration across sectors.

Goodwill messages from stakeholders underscored the seriousness of the challenges of human trafficking and reaffirmed their commitment to collective action. A major highlight came from the National Vice President of the Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association, who announced that, due to ongoing engagements under the AACTING Project, he had stopped administering oath-taking rituals to trafficked persons. He further pledged to use his national platform to promote anti-trafficking advocacy among traditional medicine practitioners across Nigeria.

Similarly, the Iyase of Igubeben Kingdom restated the kingdom's dedication to supporting survivors and at-risk children. He also shared that plans were already underway to establish a community skill-acquisition centre to strengthen prevention and reintegration efforts.

The workshop featured a technical presentation on Case Management for Child Victims by Caritas Nigeria, followed by a robust panel discussion on the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). Stakeholders collectively examined existing gaps and proposed actionable strategies to reinforce coordination between community structures and formal institutions.

The event concluded with a renewed sense of shared responsibility and a unified commitment to safeguarding children across Edo Central Senatorial District and beyond.

BIANNUAL FORUM EMPOWERS PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS TO PREVENT CHILD TRAFFICKING

Uromi JDPCI hosted its third Biannual Forum for Parents and Caregivers, with a focus on strengthening family and

community resilience against child trafficking. The forum provided a safe space for parents and caregivers to learn, reflect, and share experiences on how best to protect children from exploitation.

The session focused on deepening participants' understanding of the signs, drivers, and dynamics of child trafficking, as well as practical preventive strategies they can apply at home and within their communities. Discussions highlighted the crucial role families play in building a vigilant support network where parents, caregivers, and adolescents work collectively to prevent trafficking, identify red flags, and report suspicious activities promptly.

Facilitators led an engaging, interactive dialogue on the root causes and risk factors of trafficking. Among the identified factors were neglect and lack of parental involvement, peer pressure, harmful comparisons among children, and inappropriate dressing. Participants also learned how traffickers operate, including their use of deceptive tactics such as false job offers, unsolicited gifts, fake promises, and impersonation of trusted figures, including religious leaders.

The forum was rich in personal testimonies that demonstrated how previous sessions have already begun shaping behaviour change. One caregiver, a pastor, shared how the programme expanded his understanding of trafficking. He now integrates anti-trafficking messages into his sermons and community outreach. He narrated how he recently intervened to prevent a young girl from being trafficked in his community after sensitizing her parents.

Another caregiver recounted how knowledge from earlier sessions helped her stop her teenage daughter and her friends from falling victim to a suspicious job offer. Her attentiveness and persistent questioning encouraged her daughter to disclose the plan, ultimately preventing a potential trafficking incident.

The forum concluded with a strong call to action urging parents and caregivers to educate others, remain vigilant, and promptly report concerns to Community Child Protection Groups and Local Government Child Protection Committees.

A total of 55 participants (49 females and 6 males), made up of parents, caregivers, field officers, and project staff, took part in the activity, reaffirming their commitment to creating safer communities for children.

STRENGTHENING COORDINATION FOR CHILD PROTECTION: LGA CASEWORKERS AND CHILD CHAMPION MENTORS MEET FOR THIRD QUARTERLY REVIEW

On July 8th, 2025, Uromi JDPCI convened the third quarterly coordination meeting between Local Government Area





(LGA) Caseworkers and Child Champion Club Mentors. The meeting served as a collaborative platform to review progress, address emerging challenges, and reinforce a unified approach to preventing child

trafficking and exploitation across the five LGAs of Edo Central Senatorial District. A total of 33 participants (20 males and 13 females) attended the meeting, including newly engaged Education Officers and Heads of Information Departments who were recommended by stakeholders due to their influence in child protection and their personal interest in contributing to the project's objectives.

The session opened with welcome remarks from the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI, followed by a detailed presentation of the AACTING project's quarterly achievements by the

Director of Programmes. LGA caseworkers and mentors shared field reports that highlighted community-driven interventions, referral efforts, and grassroots strategies aimed at



preventing trafficking for sexual exploitation and forced labour. A refresher session on the *elements and indicators of human trafficking*, led by Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo, further strengthened participants' capacity to identify and respond to trafficking risks. The interactive discussion that followed generated practical, actionable recommendations to enhance coordination and service delivery.

During the meeting, Uromi JDPCI presented updates on three trafficking-related cases handled during the quarter:

- **Case 1:** A 17-year-old girl was trafficked from Edo State to Ghana for sexual exploitation, after being deceived with a job offer in Lagos by a neighbour who facilitated her travel.
- **Case 2:** A 28-year-old survivor returned from Mali and reported the trafficker who had lured her with a hairdressing job but subjected her to exploitation.
- **Case 3:** An 18-year-old narrowly escaped being trafficked to Europe after a suspected trafficker demanded she take an oath using her pubic hair. Instead of reporting, her family assaulted the suspect, filmed the incident, and were later detained, alongside the suspect, after he reported the assault to the police.

Two of the cases were formally referred to the Edo State Migration Agency, resulting in the arrest of the traffickers and ongoing actions to secure justice for the survivors.



The discussions underscored the need for increased public awareness on lawful, non-violent responses to suspected trafficking situations. Key recommendations emerging from the meeting included:

- Training teachers to effectively deliver human trafficking topics in the national curriculum, while expanding their knowledge in areas not adequately covered.
- Educating children on how to differentiate between

genuine relatives and non-family acquaintances, as many traffickers exploit misplaced trust created by cultural perceptions of "family."

The meeting strengthened synergy among frontline actors and reinforced the shared commitment to safeguarding children across Edo Central Senatorial District.

STRENGTHENING JUSTICE PATHWAYS: COMMUNITY AND INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS UNITE AGAINST CHILD TRAFFICKING

In a continued effort to strengthen the justice response to child trafficking, Uromi JDPCI convened its second consultation meeting with community and institutional actors. The gathering brought together key frontline actors committed to ensuring that children across Edo Central are protected, supported, and given access to timely justice when at risk of exploitation. The meeting focused on improving coordination between community structures and formal service providers, reviewing earlier commitments, and addressing persistent gaps in reporting and referral processes. Emphasis was placed on promoting survivor-centred, child-friendly responses for victims of trafficking.

A major highlight of the session was an in-depth presentation on the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for the protection and assistance of trafficked persons. The presentation strengthened participants' understanding of their responsibilities within the NRM framework, so as to ensure more coherent case reporting, accurate documentation, and seamless referrals in line with national standards.



A total of 70 participants (33 males and 37 females) attended, representing a wide range of institutions, including the Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), National Orientation Agency (NOA), Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Medical Women's Association of Nigeria (MWAN), Heads of Social Development, Legal and Information Departments from the five LGAs, Education Officers, hospital representatives, civil society groups, and community child protection actors.

In his keynote address, the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo, called for intensified community awareness and stronger reporting systems. He emphasized that winning the fight against child trafficking requires sustained collaboration across all levels of society.

Stakeholders shared progress updates, noting increased grassroots sensitization efforts in many communities. MWAN reported its successful outreach to school children during the International Day Against Child Labour and Abuse, sensitizing them on the physical and psychological effects of trafficking and the importance of early interventions.

The NSCDC Area Commandant also highlighted the agency's swift rescue of a 12-year-old domestic servitude victim, reaffirming the Corps' commitment to responding to all forms of child exploitation. He urged stakeholders to remain vigilant, particularly regarding children in domestic service roles.



Community actors raised concerns about truancy and children loitering during school hours. Participants recommended stronger collaboration with traditional leaders and law enforcement agencies to enforce existing policies that prohibit school-aged children from street hawking or roaming during school time.

The consultation reaffirmed the power of coordinated action. Through open dialogue, shared experiences, and renewed commitments, stakeholders strengthened their collective resolve to improve referral pathways, enhance prevention efforts, and ensure that every child at risk receives timely, dignified, and effective protection.

COMMUNITY AND FAITH LEADERS UNITE TO MARK WORLD DAY AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Uromi JDPCI convened its annual meeting with Community and Religious Leaders in commemoration of the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, bringing together key influencers to strengthen collective action against child trafficking. The forum aimed to deepen interfaith and inter-community collaboration, enhance community-based surveillance and reporting, and reinforce partnerships with law enforcement to ensure timely responses to suspected cases.



A keynote session on *“How Community and Religious Leaders Can Collaborate with Law Enforcement Agencies to End Child Trafficking in Line with the National Referral Mechanism”* provided participants with clear guidance on their roles in prevention, early detection, and referral of trafficking cases. The meeting recorded 85 participants (69 males and 16 females), including traditional rulers, pastors, imams, youth leaders, and representatives of security agencies.

Discussions highlighted the urgent need for sustained grassroots sensitization, stronger enforcement of anti-trafficking laws, and comprehensive reintegration support for survivors. Leaders pledged to intensify awareness campaigns within their congregations, improve community-based reporting channels, and deepen collaboration with law enforcement for prompt action. They also committed to promoting vocational empowerment for at-risk groups and advocating for the timely prosecution of traffickers.



The event reaffirmed the pivotal role of faith and community leadership in safeguarding children and building trafficking-free communities.

PSYCHOSOCIAL AND REINTEGRATION SUPPORT FOR YOUNG FEMALE RETURNEES

Uromi JDPCI continued its comprehensive reintegration support for young female survivors of human trafficking through a series of psychosocial sessions, family engagement activities, home visits, and monitoring of skill-training beneficiaries.

Psychosocial Support Sessions: Across three sessions held between August and October 2025, survivors engaged in safe, supportive spaces designed to strengthen healing and resilience. The first session focused on building

inner strength through self-reflection, mindfulness, and practical tools such as self-compassion, positive thinking, and forgiveness. Participants also completed psychological assessments to guide individual counselling.

The second session explored gratitude as a therapeutic tool. Participants took part in art-based therapy, creating “Gratitude Treasure Boxes” to symbolise personal growth, while three survivors received tailored counselling. The final session, “Rebuilding Dreams,” encouraged participants to refocus on their aspirations with renewed determination. Recreational activities enhanced relaxation and bonding, alongside individual counselling for four participants. Overall, 10 young women benefited from the sessions, and they reported improved confidence, hope, and emotional stability.

Family Tracing: Family tracing was carried out for ten survivors across Uromi, Uzea, Okhuesan, and Ekpoma to strengthen family-based care and rebuild strained relationships. The exercise enabled socio-economic assessments, revealing vulnerabilities linked to poverty and lack of social protection. Support was provided to one caregiver to revive her bean-cake business, while a girl (a relative of one of the survivors) who had dropped out of school was assisted to return to the classroom.

Home Visits: Three rounds of home visits to the same ten returnees helped monitor their well-being, safety, and reintegration progress. Emergency assistance made up of household essentials, transport support, and livelihood reinforcement was provided to three survivors. The encouragement and psychosocial support offered during the visits helped boost their morale and motivation.

Monitoring Skill-Training Beneficiaries: Monitoring visits to ten trainees showed consistent progress, with seven confirmed as market-ready. One beneficiary who had conflicts with her trainer was successfully reconciled and later paused training only due to childbirth.

COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL CHILD CHAMPION CLUBS: QUARTERLY LEARNING SESSIONS

Uromi JDPCI conducted quarterly learning sessions with Child Champion Clubs across fifteen communities and fifteen secondary schools in five LGAs of Edo Central Senatorial District.



The sessions were aimed at strengthening children's understanding of online safety, digital trafficking tactics, and the importance of recognising credible migration procedures. Through group discussions and scenario analysis, participants learned to identify red flags, avoid risky online behaviour, and question job offers that do not follow regular migration protocols. At the community level, 160 children and youths (38 males, 122 females) participated, while 168 students (37 males, 131 females) were reached in schools.

In the course of the sessions, Community Child Champions reported two cases of suspected trafficking attempts. In Ebelle, a new club member described how she narrowly escaped being trafficked after recognising warning signs in a deceptive job offer. She attributed the knowledge to earlier guidance she received from her peers before joining the club. Now living with a guardian who shows limited care for her, she expressed interest in vocational training to build her independence. In Efandion, another participant avoided a suspicious overseas job invitation and took the initiative to

educate her friend on the dangers involved.

School-based clubs reported four cases, including incidents of child maltreatment and denial of education, identified as trafficking risk factors. An additional report involved an online scam disguised as a job opportunity. At Okhuesan Secondary School, two students shared how they rejected deceptive online job offers after recognising the signs of trafficking.

A positive outcome of the sessions has been the growing commitment of club members to act as peer educators. Children have been actively cascading prevention messages within their homes and communities, reaching 176 people (127 children and 49 adults) with key information on trafficking risks.

Overall, the quarterly sessions provided a safe space for learning, disclosure, and support, which has significantly improved participants' ability to identify, prevent, and respond to trafficking threats.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY CHILD PROTECTION GROUPS ACROSS 15 COMMUNITIES

Uromi JDPCI facilitated quarterly capacity-building sessions for Child Protection Groups (CPGs) in 15 communities across five LGAs, reaching 229 participants (75 males, 154 females). The sessions aimed to strengthen community-led structures for preventing child trafficking, enhance peer learning, and support the development of actionable prevention plans. A major focus of the sessions was the rising trend of online trafficking. Participants learned how traffickers use digital platforms to target children and the risky online behaviours that increase vulnerability. CPGs committed to using this knowledge to engage parents and caregivers, promote supervised internet use, and encourage open communication at home so children feel safe reporting their online encounters.

Feedback indicated strong progress in community outreach. Many groups sustained sensitization in schools, churches, markets, and one group extended their efforts to the motor park, significantly expanding prevention coverage. Across the quarter, 12 cases were addressed through CPG



interventions. Two internal trafficking cases involving young girls exploited in a brothel in Ogwa were successfully identified, rescued, and reintegrated. Another case involved a young woman from Taraba State subjected to labour exploitation; with CPG support, she was safely assisted to return home.

Three attempted trafficking cases were prevented through proactive engagement with parents and guardians. Six additional cases involved children denied access to education, either due to caregivers' refusal to enroll them or economic hardship. Through CPG advocacy, all six children were eventually enrolled in school, including two who had been out of school for over three years following the death of their caregiver.

These interventions reflect the growing strength and effectiveness of community-based protection systems established through Uromi JDPCI's support, demonstrating real progress in preventing and responding to child trafficking.



JOINT ADVOCACY MEETING TO NAPTIP ZONAL COMMAND

On July 4, 2025, the AACTING Project partners, ECPAT France, Uromi JDPCI and Girls' Power Initiative (GPI), had a joint meeting with NAPTIP (National Agency For the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons), Benin Zonal Command to strengthen collaboration in the fight against child trafficking. The meeting formally introduced ECPAT France to NAPTIP and discussed the agency's involvement and contributions in the project. NAPTIP praised the project's transparency and impact, recommended scaling up sensitization and capacity-building of Legal Practitioners and pledged continued support. ECPAT France expressed gratitude and received IEC materials from NAPTIP.



HEALTH AND OVC – THRIVE PROJECT

COMPREHENSIVE CARE AND SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN LIVING WITH HIV (CLHIV)

Uromi JDPCI continued its commitment to promoting the health and well-being of Children Living with HIV (CLHIV) across Edo Central Senatorial District, providing holistic interventions through clinical, psychosocial, and community-based support. Among the activities implemented in this period were

TB Screening and Clinical Care: As part of routine health monitoring, 281 CLHIV were screened for tuberculosis (TB), resulting in the identification of 10 presumptive cases. These children were promptly referred for GeneXpert testing to confirm diagnosis and access timely treatment, highlighting Uromi JDPCI's integrated approach to reducing TB-HIV co-infection.

Adherence Counseling and ART Support: Through home visits, trained community case workers provided individualized adherence counseling to all 281 CLHIV and their caregivers, addressing barriers to Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) compliance and promoting healthy habits. Additionally, 175 children were mobilized for ART refills across multiple health facilities, while proactive tracking efforts successfully returned 27 children who had interrupted treatment back into care.

Psychosocial Support and Community Engagement: The Operation Triple Zero Club meeting engaged 68 CLHIV, offering psychosocial support, viral load monitoring, and ART

refills, fostering peer connections and emotional resilience. Family-centered support extended to nutrition counseling for all 281 children, emphasizing balanced diets, safe food practices, and hydration to promote overall health.

Emergency and Case Management: Uromi JDPCI responded to urgent needs, providing financial and medical support to children in crisis, including facilitating hospital admissions and livelihood support for caregivers.

OVC Programme Enrollment: Twenty-one new

beneficiaries were enrolled into the THRIVE Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) programme, ensuring access to comprehensive care, counselling, nutrition, and educational support.

Through these integrated interventions, Uromi JDPCI continues to strengthen the health, resilience, and long-term well-being of CLHIV, ensuring every child has the opportunity to thrive despite the challenges of living with HIV.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Promoting Responsible Waste Management in Communities

Waste management remains a critical challenge in rural communities, affecting public health, environmental sustainability, and overall quality of life. Recognizing that lasting solutions require both infrastructure and community engagement, Uromi JDPCI focused on fostering behavioral change and grassroots action against indiscriminate dumping across Edo Central Senatorial District.

During the quarter, Uromi JDPCI conducted targeted community sensitization campaigns in Ubiaja, Igueben, Opoji, and selected churches, including St. Ignatius Catholic Church, Efandion and St. Thomas Catholic Church, Idunwele Ewu. A total of 851 participants (403 males and 448 females) were reached across the religious centers and community groups visited.

The sessions highlighted the dangers of indiscriminate waste disposal, including flooding, disease outbreaks, and

environmental degradation. Participants were encouraged to adopt practical solutions such as using waste bins, organizing community clean-ups, composting organic waste, reducing single-use plastics, and collaborating with local authorities to develop sustainable waste management systems.

The interactive sessions sparked meaningful dialogue, with participants sharing both challenges and success stories. Members of St. Ignatius Parish JDPC visited the council of elders to advocate for community watchdogs to curb environmental offenses. At St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church, Rev. Fr. Dr. Francis Obaweiki urged parishioners to prioritize environmental care as a collective responsibility essential for communal well-being.

Through these campaigns, Uromi JDPCI continues to empower communities to take ownership of their environment, fostering cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable neighborhoods.

CORRECTIONAL CENTER APOSTOLATE

Uromi JDPCI Monthly Visit to Ubiaja Correctional Center for Spiritual and Legal Counselling

As part of its ongoing commitment to the rehabilitation of inmates, Uromi JDPCI conducted its monthly legal and spiritual counselling sessions at Ubiaja Correctional Center. The initiative focused on psychosocial and rehabilitation counselling, spiritual guidance, and the provision of welfare materials to inmates. The team, led by Assistant Executive Director Rev. Fr. Ferguson Ukpebor, engaged 59 inmates (42 males and 17 females) in sessions themed “Finding Purpose in Adversity.” Male and female inmates participated in separate sessions due to facility restrictions.

At the male session, Rev Fr. Fergus Ukpebor encouraged inmates to view incarceration as an opportunity for personal transformation, emphasizing daily devotion, skill acquisition, mentorship, and fellowship as avenues to enhance themselves spiritually and mentally. Using scriptural references, he highlighted how adversity can shape character and prepare individuals for future purpose. Rev Fr. Dr Francis Obaweiki, who accompanied the team, encouraged inmate on forgiveness of self and others as a pathway to hope and fulfillment beyond incarceration.

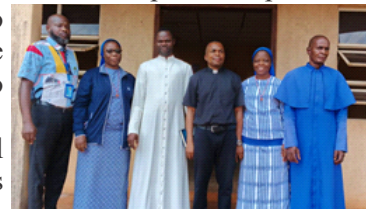
At the female session: Rev. Srs. Catherine Agada and Stella Odigie, led the discussion centered on “Forgiving Yourself and Those Who Wronged You.”

Inmates were guided to release bitterness, cultivate peace, and embrace personal growth through prayer, reflection, and discipline.

During the interactive Counseling, some inmates shared personal challenges, including struggles with self-forgiveness, reconciling with victims, and societal rejection during reintegration as their main struggles. Some of them were engaged in one-on-one spiritual and legal counselling depending on their needs. A total of 17 inmates received individual spiritual counselling, and six received legal counselling. Welfare support, made up of 10 packs of sanitary pads, were given to the female inmates, while sacramentals were given to male inmates.

In response, Correctional Center authorities expressed gratitude for Uromi JDPCI's consistent support and requested assistance in equipping the newly renovated female skills acquisition center to enhance rehabilitation opportunities.

The visit reinforced Uromi JDPCI's dedication to promoting spiritual growth, hope, and successful reintegration for inmates. The sessions fostered self-discovery, forgiveness, and resilience, while welfare interventions addressed the immediate needs of the inmate, and this demonstrates the transformative impact of sustained support and partnership



PARISH JDPC

Strengthening Parish JDPCs: Uromi JDPCI Fosters Deeper Engagement Across the Diocese

Uromi JDPCI continued its mission of revitalizing parish Justice, Development, and Peace Commissions (JDPC) across the Diocese of Uromi. The focus was on reactivating dormant parish JDPC groups, fostering greater participation among parishioners, and promoting environmental responsibility through campaigns on plastic waste pollution. These efforts aimed to help parishioners live out the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in their communities and daily lives. Among the key activities conducted within this period were:

Parish Visits: Uromi JDPCI conducted direct visits to three parishes, namely St. Ignatius Catholic Church in Efandion, St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church in Ewu, and Mary the Queen Catholic Church in Arue. These visits provided opportunities for parishioners to reconnect with the JDPC, discuss its role in promoting social justice and peace, and explore ways to strengthen community engagement. The sessions included interactive discussions on practical steps parish members could take to promote justice and peace in their local communities. A total of 23 parishioners (14 females, 9 males) participated in these visits.

Follow-up Phone Calls: To maintain contact with parish members who could not be reached physically,

follow-up phone calls were made across the Diocese. These calls offered encouragement, shared updates on ongoing JDPC activities, and provided guidance on how parish members could contribute to initiatives within their local communities. A total of 63 members (40 females, 23 males) were reached through this approach.

Environmental Sensitization Campaigns: As part of promoting responsible citizenship, Uromi JDPCI conducted awareness campaigns on the dangers of plastic waste pollution. Participants learned about proper waste disposal, reducing single-use plastics, organizing community clean-ups, and collaborating with local authorities to ensure sustainable environmental practices. These sessions engaged 162 parishioners (97 females, 65 males), who actively participated in discussions and shared ideas for improving environmental cleanliness in their neighborhoods.

Through these activities, Uromi JDPCI continues to engage parishioners in meaningful dialogue, promote responsible community action, and strengthen grassroots participation in social justice and environmental stewardship.

MICRO CREDIT DESK

Empowering Dreams and Changing Lives Through Micro Credit Scheme

Uromi JDPCI's Micro-Credit Scheme continued to strengthen economic opportunities for individuals and families across communities in Edo Central Senatorial District, with 101 beneficiaries (37 males and 64 females) in 8 groups across 6 communities supported in this quarter. The initiative provided small loans to farmers and small business owners, coupled with guidance on how to effectively grow and manage their ventures. Beneficiaries were also encouraged to save regularly and participate in insurance schemes, helping to build resilience and safeguard against unforeseen risks.

Beyond financial support, the programme placed strong emphasis on capacity-building. Beneficiaries attended practical financial literacy sessions, where they learned strategies for budgeting, savings management, and responsible loan utilization. Regular mentorship and monitoring ensured that participants could translate knowledge into action, reinforcing the sustainable growth of their businesses.

Throughout the quarter, the scheme also supported groups of women and men to collaborate and share experiences, creating a sense of community among

participants and fostering peer-to-peer learning. This approach empowered beneficiaries to overcome challenges, develop innovative approaches to their work, and enhance their livelihoods.

A standout example is a participant from Igueben who, with guidance and access to a loan, transformed a small traditional medicine business into a thriving provision store. Through careful planning and reinvestment, she expanded her stock, improved her income, and built a more sustainable source of livelihood, demonstrating the transformative potential of the Micro Credit Scheme.

Uromi JDPCI remains committed to empowering communities through practical support, mentorship, and financial inclusion, helping participants build stronger, self-reliant futures.

