



UROMI JDPCI Newsletter

A Quarterly Publication of Uromi Justice Development and Peace Caritas Initiative (Uromi JDPCI) VOL. 39 NO. 47 MARCH 2026 EDITION

INTRODUCTION

The first quarter of 2026 marked another period of impactful interventions and strengthened community engagement for Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI). Guided by its mission to promote human dignity, justice, protection, and sustainable development, the organization continued to implement programmes that addressed the needs of vulnerable individuals and communities across Edo Central Senatorial District and beyond.

Under the Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme, Uromi JDPCI strengthened community-based justice systems through adolescent human rights clubs, quarterly reviews with paralegals and human rights advocates, a workshop on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), and the Annual Stakeholders' Conference on Inclusive Human Rights Defense Mechanisms. These interventions enhanced awareness of rights, improved access to justice, strengthened survivor-centred responses, and supported the resolution of numerous cases of human rights violations across project communities.

Uromi JDPCI used the AACTING Project to intensify efforts at preventing child trafficking. The project conducted stakeholder coordination meetings, caregiver forums, psychosocial support for young female returnees, consultation meetings between community and institutional actors of justice, economic empowerment of returnees, child champion club activities, and the strengthening of child protection structures at community and local government levels. These interventions contributed to improved awareness, prevention, rescue, reintegration, and protection of vulnerable children and young people.

Within the Health and OVC Programme, Uromi JDPCI continued to provide comprehensive support to Children Living with HIV (CLHIV) and their households through treatment adherence support, referral services, nutritional assistance, psychosocial care, and household strengthening interventions. The quarter also recorded inspiring outcomes in viral load suppression and overall child wellbeing.

In the area of Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability, Uromi JDPCI promoted responsible waste management practices among students and community members, fostering environmental awareness and encouraging individual and collective responsibility for environmental protection.

The Correctional Centre Apostolate remained a vital component of Uromi JDPCI's intervention of compassion, providing inmates with psychosocial support, spiritual guidance, legal counselling, and humanitarian assistance while promoting rehabilitation, reconciliation, and the restoration of human dignity.

Uromi JDPCI used the Parish JDPC to expand grassroots structures for justice and peace by establishing a new Parish JDPC group and strengthening the capacity of existing members to effectively promote social justice and community development. Meanwhile, the Micro Credit Scheme continued to improve livelihoods by expanding access to loans, financial literacy, savings opportunities, and business support services for small-scale entrepreneurs and farmers.

This newsletter presents highlights of these interventions, and the collective impact made possible through the support of partners, volunteers, stakeholders, and the communities we serve. Together, these achievements reflect Uromi JDPCI's continued commitment to building safer, healthier, more just, and resilient communities.

HUMAN RIGHT EDUCATION AND PARALEGAL SCHEME ADOLESCENT HUMAN RIGHTS CLUBS

Empowering Adolescents to Recognize and Report Abuse Across Edo Central Senatorial District

Between January and March 2026, Uromi JDPCI, with support from MISEREOR, continued to strengthen child protection and human rights awareness through Adolescent Human Rights Club sessions in 28 secondary schools across Edo Central Senatorial District. A total of 469 students (120 males and 349 females) participated in interactive learning sessions focused on children's rights and protection from abuse. Building on previous lessons, students demonstrated impressive knowledge retention and extended discussions on child rights, gender-based violence, and protection issues to an additional 46 peers and family members.

The quarter's learning sessions focused on "My Right Against Abuse," helping students understand the

different forms of abuse; physical, emotional, sexual abuse, and neglect, and the importance of speaking up when abuse occurs. Through practical exercises such as the Abuse Continuum and scenario-sorting activities, participants developed stronger skills in identifying harmful behaviours, understanding how abuse can escalate, and recognizing available support mechanisms.

The impact of the programme extended well beyond the classroom. Students reported using their knowledge to challenge harmful practices, promote



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. 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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Staff Strength	22
Registered Volunteers	72
Project Executed	30



gender equality, and educate family members and peers about children's rights. One student facilitated a discussion involving 26 classmates on gender

bias within the home, while another successfully advocated for a female child in his community who had been routinely excluded from family discussions. A student who travelled during the holidays shared child rights messages with 12 cousins in Northern Nigeria, helping to spread awareness beyond Edo State.

The programme also contributed to stronger child protection systems. At Irrua Girls' Secondary School, a student reported a case of abuse affecting a child in her community, prompting immediate follow-up by Uromi



JDPCI and referral to the Usenu Community Human Rights Group for intervention. Such actions demonstrate growing confidence among adolescents to

report concerns and access protection services.

These achievements highlight the growing role of young people as advocates for dignity, equality, and protection within their schools, families, and communities. Through sustained human rights education, Uromi JDPCI continues to nurture a generation of informed, confident, and rights-conscious adolescents committed to building safer environments for all children.

QUARTERLY MEETING WITH PARALEGALS AND HUMAN RIGHTS CLUBS

Community Human Rights Structures Resolve Over 100 Cases Across Edo Central Senatorial District

During the first quarter of 2026, Uromi JDPCI convened quarterly review meetings with community paralegals, Human Rights Advocates, social welfare officers, police representatives, and traditional institutions across the five Local Government Areas of Edo Central Senatorial



District. The meetings provided an opportunity to assess progress under the Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme Project, implemented with support from MISEREOR, and to strengthen strategies for protecting human rights within local communities.

The review revealed the growing effectiveness of community-based human rights structures. Across the quarter, paralegals and Human Rights Clubs responded to 103 reported human rights violation cases and carried out 28 non-case-based interventions through counselling, awareness creation, mediation, and referrals. Reported cases included domestic violence, rape, child labour, denial of the right to education, neglect and abandonment, assault, widow inheritance disputes, and violations affecting women and children. Most cases were successfully resolved through Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms, while more serious cases were referred to the police, social welfare departments, and other relevant authorities.



the review came from Egbele Community, where a long-standing cultural practice denying daughters the right to inherit their fathers' property was successfully challenged. Following sustained advocacy and sensitization efforts by community paralegals and Human Rights Club members, three daughters were permitted to inherit their late father's property, while their widowed mother was allowed to freely decide her future without coercion. This landmark decision represents an important step toward advancing gender equality and protecting the rights of women and girls within the community.



The quarter also witnessed strengthened collaboration between community structures and formal institutions. In Esan West, paralegals conducted advocacy visits to local government authorities and security agencies, securing commitments for improved cooperation in responding to human rights violations. Community groups also expanded awareness campaigns on issues such as substance abuse, violence against women and children,



One of the most significant achievements reported during

and child protection, reaching both project and non-project communities.

Several life-changing interventions further demonstrated the project's impact. Community groups facilitated the return of children to school after parental neglect, reunited abandoned families, protected widows from harmful traditional practices, secured justice for survivors of rape and assault, and prevented vulnerable children from exploitation and abuse. In one instance, a timely intervention prevented the attempted sale of a child by a financially distressed parent, while in another, a widow successfully reclaimed land that had been unlawfully taken from her following her husband's death.

The achievements recorded during the quarter underscore the vital role of trained community paralegals and Human Rights Clubs in expanding access to justice, promoting

human dignity, and strengthening protection mechanisms at the grassroots level. Through sustained advocacy, mediation, and community engagement, Uromi JDPCI continues to foster safer, more inclusive, and rights-respecting communities across Edo Central Senatorial District.



WORKSHOP ON HEALTH RESPONSE TO SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Strengthening Frontline Response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Edo Central Senatorial District

As part of its commitment to improving access to justice and protection for survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), Uromi JDPCI convened a multi-stakeholder workshop on 11 February 2026 to strengthen health and justice sector responses to SGBV across Edo Central Senatorial District. The workshop brought together 120 participants, including representatives of the Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), health facilities, social welfare departments, legal practitioners, civil society organizations, Sexual Assault Referral Centres, and community-based human rights paralegals.



The training reinforced the understanding of SGBV as a serious human rights violation requiring coordinated, survivor-centred interventions. Participants explored the various forms of violence affecting women, girls, and vulnerable persons within communities, including domestic violence, rape, child sexual abuse, forced and early marriage, harmful traditional practices, and other forms of gender-based discrimination. Through practical discussions and case-based learning, stakeholders strengthened their capacity to identify violations early and respond in ways that prioritize the dignity, safety, and wellbeing of survivors.



A major focus of the workshop was improving the quality of support provided to survivors. Participants enhanced their skills in survivor-centred case

management, confidential interviewing, psychosocial support, forensic evidence preservation, documentation, and referral procedures. The sessions also clarified the complementary roles of security agencies, healthcare providers, social welfare officers, and civil society organizations, promoting stronger collaboration and more effective referral pathways for survivors seeking protection and justice.

The workshop further provided a platform for stakeholders to discuss challenges affecting access to services, including stigma, delays in legal processes, and gaps in survivor support systems. Participants collectively identified practical solutions and renewed their commitment to strengthening coordinated responses within their respective institutions and communities.

By strengthening collaboration among key actors and enhancing the skills of frontline responders, the workshop contributed to building a more effective and



survivor-centred protection system in Edo Central. The initiative reflects Uromi JDPCI's ongoing efforts to promote human dignity, improve

access to justice, and ensure that survivors of violence receive timely, professional, and compassionate support.

STAKEHOLDERS UNITE TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY-BASED HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION



On 26 March 2026, Uromi JDPCI convened its Annual Stakeholders' Conference on

Inclusive Human Rights Defense Mechanisms under the theme, “Defending Human Dignity at the Grassroots: The Power of Community-Based Legal Action.” The conference brought together 200 stakeholders from across Edo Central Senatorial District, including traditional rulers, religious leaders, security agencies, legal practitioners, social welfare actors, community leaders, and community-based paralegals. The event provided a valuable platform for reflection, learning, and collaboration aimed at strengthening access to justice and human rights protection at the grassroots level.

A major highlight of the conference was the presentation of annual project results covering April 2025 to March 2026. During the period, community paralegals and human rights structures supported more than 300 human rights interventions, addressing issues such as domestic violence, rape, child labour, widow inheritance disputes, denial of education, neglect and abandonment, arbitrary arrest, and other forms of abuse. The



presentation demonstrated the growing effectiveness of community-based legal action and the important role of referral systems,

mediation, psychosocial support, and survivor-centred case management in securing justice for vulnerable persons.

The conference also provided an opportunity for stakeholders to openly discuss persistent barriers to justice, particularly in cases involving sexual violence and child protection. Participants examined challenges



such as stigma, financial constraints, delays in medical and legal processes, and pressures on families to withdraw cases. These

discussions helped identify practical strategies for improving collaboration, strengthening referral pathways, and ensuring that survivors receive timely legal, medical, and psychosocial support.

Traditional rulers, community chiefs, religious leaders, legal practitioners, and representatives of key service institutions reaffirmed their commitment to advancing human rights and protecting vulnerable populations. Many community leaders acknowledged that the Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme has contributed to positive changes in local attitudes and practices, including reforms to cultural norms that previously undermined the rights of women, children, and other vulnerable groups.

By bringing together diverse stakeholders around a shared commitment to justice and human dignity, the



conference reinforced the importance of collective action in addressing human rights violations. It also highlighted the growing impact of community-based protection mechanisms and strengthened partnerships that will continue to drive positive social change across Edo Central Senatorial District.

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

Strengthening Community Coordination to Combat Child Trafficking

As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen child protection systems across Edo Central Senatorial District, Uromi JDPCI convened its fourth quarterly coordination meeting with Local Government Area (LGA) Case Workers and Child Champion Club Mentors/Field Officers on 20 January 2026. The meeting brought together 35 stakeholders from the five Local Government Areas to review progress, share lessons learned, and strengthen collaboration in the fight against child trafficking and exploitation. The forum provided an opportunity to reflect on achievements recorded in 2025

and outline priorities for 2026. Participants reviewed ongoing community-based interventions aimed at preventing child trafficking, protecting vulnerable children, and strengthening reporting and response mechanisms. Stakeholders reaffirmed their commitment to promoting child rights and safeguarding children through increased community engagement, early detection of risks, and timely referral of protection concerns.



In his remarks, the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhede, commended participants for their contributions to child protection efforts and encouraged them to remain proactive in identifying and reporting cases of abuse, exploitation, and trafficking. He emphasized the importance of understanding relevant legal frameworks and strengthening community awareness to improve prevention and response efforts.

A major focus of the meeting was the growing threat of child trafficking through deceptive recruitment practices and online platforms. Participants discussed emerging trends involving the movement of children from rural communities to urban centres under false promises of employment, only for them to face exploitation and abuse. The discussions highlighted the need for increased digital awareness, stronger parental guidance, and greater community vigilance to protect children from traffickers.

The meeting also provided a platform for collaborative problem-solving around active protection cases. Participants reviewed a reported case involving a 17-year-old girl trafficked to Ghana for sexual exploitation and discussed appropriate response strategies to support her safe return while pursuing justice against those responsible. The case reinforced the importance of coordinated action among communities, law enforcement agencies, and child protection actors in addressing trafficking-related crimes.

As the meeting concluded, participants renewed their commitment to strengthening community sensitization efforts and advancing collective action against child trafficking. Plans were also initiated to commemorate the International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking, further reinforcing public awareness and community engagement in the protection of vulnerable children. Through regular coordination and collaboration, Uromi JDPCI continues to strengthen grassroots child protection mechanisms and build a united front against child trafficking and exploitation across Edo Central Senatorial District.

Caregivers Strengthen Their Role in Preventing Child Trafficking

On 6 February 2026, Uromi JDPCI convened its Bi-Annual Caregivers Forum at the Chancery Hall, Egbele, bringing together 55 caregivers from 15 project communities to strengthen their capacity to protect children from trafficking and exploitation. The forum served as an important platform for equipping parents and caregivers with practical knowledge and skills to safeguard children



within their homes and communities.

The session focused on the often-overlooked role of family communication in influencing children's decisions and vulnerability to trafficking. Participants explored how everyday conversations within the home can either protect children or unintentionally expose them to risks. Discussions highlighted how repeated expressions of hardship, comparison, and emotional pressure may lead children to feel responsible for solving family challenges, making them more susceptible to deceptive job offers, unsafe migration, and other forms of exploitation.



Caregivers were encouraged to adopt positive communication practices that reassure and support children without placing the burden of family survival on them. They were also advised to create safe spaces where children can freely ask questions, express concerns, and seek guidance without fear of judgment or intimidation. The importance of verifying travel and employment opportunities through trusted sources and child protection actors was equally emphasized as a critical safeguard against trafficking.

A particularly moving moment during the forum came when a participant shared the tragic story of a relative who migrated to Ghana in search of better opportunities without informing her family. The experience ended in exploitation and loss of life, serving as a powerful reminder of the dangers associated with unverified migration and the importance of family communication, vigilance, and informed decision-making.

The forum concluded with caregivers reaffirming their commitment to protecting children from trafficking and becoming advocates for child safety within their communities. By strengthening the role of parents and caregivers as the first line of protection, Uromi JDPCI continues to advance community-based efforts to prevent child trafficking and promote safer environments where children can grow, learn, and thrive.



Young Female Returnees Reflect on Progress and Renew Hope for the Future

On 6 February 2026, Uromi JDPCI facilitated its fifth psychosocial support and group counselling session for young female returnees under the AACTING Project at the Chancery Hall, Egbele-Uromi. The session brought together 14 participants and provided a safe space for reflection, peer support, and personal growth.

Under the theme, "The Journey So Far," participants reflected on their experiences before joining the project, the progress they have made, and their

aspirations for the future. Many recalled facing significant challenges, including low self-esteem, emotional distress, limited family support, unemployment, and financial hardship. These difficulties often left them feeling uncertain about their future and lacking the confidence to pursue their goals.

As the discussion shifted to their current realities, participants shared inspiring stories of transformation. Many reported increased confidence, improved income through their businesses, and a stronger sense of purpose. They highlighted how the support, mentoring, and empowerment opportunities provided through the project had helped them become more focused, resilient, and committed to building better lives for themselves and their families. One participant shared how her newfound confidence enabled her to speak at a school career event, where she not only shared her experiences but also educated students on the dangers of child trafficking. Others expressed gratitude for the empowerment support they received, noting that it had exceeded their expectations and contributed significantly to their personal and economic stability.

The session also provided an opportunity to discuss ongoing challenges, particularly difficulties in attracting customers and growing businesses in competitive environments. Participants received practical guidance on marketing strategies, business development, and the importance of networking and mutual support.

The forum concluded with participants making personal commitments toward achieving their goals and sustaining the progress they have made. The session fostered gratitude, strengthened peer support, and renewed participants' determination to continue building safe, productive, and independent futures. Through such engagements, Uromi JDPCI continues to promote healing, resilience, and sustainable reintegration among young female returnees.

Strengthening Collaboration to Combat Child Trafficking

On 10 February 2026, Uromi JDPCI convened its fourth Consultation Meeting between Community and



institutions in preventing trafficking and ensuring timely intervention for vulnerable children.

A key highlight of the meeting was the

presentation of successful case interventions. Stakeholders received updates on the rescue and safe return of a 17-year-old girl who had been trafficked to Ghana for sexual exploitation. Through coordinated efforts involving social welfare authorities and the support of her relatives, the girl was successfully reunited with her family without complying with the traffickers' demand for payment. Participants also celebrated the successful reunification of a child trafficked for domestic servitude with her parents through the intervention of a community child protection committee.

Discussions focused on the persistent challenges surrounding child exploitation, particularly cases where caregivers demand repayment of transportation or recruitment costs before releasing children who have suffered abuse or neglect. Participants strongly condemned such practices, noting that they constitute further exploitation and should be treated as violations under anti-trafficking laws.

The consultation also highlighted the need for increased public awareness, especially in rural communities where many people remain unaware that the



exploitation of children as domestic workers constitutes child trafficking. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of continuous

sensitization, timely reporting of cases, and stronger collaboration among community and institutional actors. The meeting concluded with renewed commitments from participants to intensify awareness campaigns, strengthen referral and response mechanisms, and work collectively to protect children from trafficking and exploitation across Edo Central Senatorial District.

Economic Empowerment for Three Young Female Returnees

On the 10th of February 2026, Uromi JDPCI facilitated the second batch of economic empowerment to three young female returnees, who received business start-up materials worth over one million Naira each, including one year shop rent, to support their journey toward

e c o n o m i c independence, dignity, and sustainable reintegration. The event was held at the Chancery Hall, Egbelle, Uromi and had in attendance the three beneficiaries,



Institutional Actors of Justice in Edo Central Senatorial District. The forum brought together 76 participants drawn from law enforcement agencies, social welfare departments, health

institutions, civil society organizations, community-based child protection groups, and other key stakeholders to strengthen collaboration and improve responses to child trafficking and exploitation.

The meeting served as a platform for sharing experiences, reviewing ongoing cases, and identifying practical solutions to emerging child protection challenges. Participants reaffirmed the importance of sustained collaboration between communities and



alongside their caregivers, one of the trainers, community and institutional justice actors and men of the press. It is important to note that the

consultation meeting with community and institutional actors of justice was leveraged to conduct this activity, in the absence of a specific budget line for the activity.

The Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo, stated in his address that true development must prioritize the poor and most vulnerable, noting that the empowerment builds on the earlier empowerment done in October 2025 where seven young female returnees were reached. He extended appreciation to ECPAT France and Luxembourg for the AACTING project's sustained commitment to survivors' recovery. He called on the beneficiaries to make use of the start-up wisely and prayed for their success.

The three beneficiaries were empowered in trades such as tailoring, sales of sanitary wears and toiletries, and provision store businesses.

The event was filled with joy, gratitude, and renewed hope, as beneficiaries, caregivers, and well-wishers expressed deep appreciation to Uromi JDPCI and its partners, ECPAT France and Luxembourg, for standing with survivors on their journey toward healing and self-reliance.

Child Champion Clubs Empower Young People to Prevent Human Trafficking

In February 2026, Uromi JDPCI strengthened Community-Based Child Champion Clubs across 15 communities in Edo Central Senatorial District, equipping children and adolescents with



practical skills to recognize and prevent human trafficking. The sessions reached 153 participants, comprising 113 girls and 40 boys, and formed part of ongoing efforts to empower young people as advocates for child protection within their communities.

Building on previous lessons on child trafficking and exploitation, participants learned how to identify warning signs that often appear during recruitment, travel, and at destinations. Through interactive discussions and real-life scenarios, children explored common trafficking indicators such as promises of quick wealth, unclear job offers, rushed travel arrangements, secrecy, oath-taking, and misleading information about employment or education opportunities. They also learned to recognize signs of exploitation, including



restricted communication, excessive work demands, intimidation, poor living conditions, and confiscation of personal documents.

A key focus of the sessions was helping participants understand where and how to seek help when confronted with suspicious situations. Children were encouraged to speak with trusted adults, community leaders, teachers, religious leaders, social workers, and law enforcement agencies whenever concerns arise. The sessions reinforced the message that no child should remain silent in the face of exploitation or abuse.



The impact of the programme was evident through practical actions taken by participants. In one community, Child Champions reported the case of a 12-year-old girl allegedly subjected to excessive domestic labour and denied access to education. The matter was referred to the community child protection structure for intervention. In another instance, a child and her mother successfully identified warning signs in a suspicious overseas job offer and declined the proposal, potentially preventing a trafficking situation.

Beyond the club meetings, Child Champions continued to serve as peer educators, sharing trafficking prevention messages with 47 additional children and adults within their communities. Their growing confidence and vigilance demonstrate the important role young people can play in protecting themselves and others from exploitation.



Through these engagements, Uromi JDPCI continues to strengthen community-based child protection systems and empower children with the knowledge, confidence, and support networks needed to stay safe and help build trafficking-free communities.

Strengthening Local Government Child Protection Systems Across Edo Central

Uromi JDPCI convened biannual coordination meetings with Local Government Child Protection Committees (LGPCs) across the five Local Government Areas of Edo Central Senatorial District. The meetings brought together 170 stakeholders, including representatives of social welfare departments, security agencies, religious institutions, traditional leaders, market associations, community child protection groups, and other child protection actors committed to safeguarding children from trafficking, abuse, neglect,



and exploitation.

The meetings provided an opportunity to review progress, strengthen collaboration, and enhance coordination between government institutions and community-based child protection structures. Stakeholders acknowledged the growing partnership between community groups and local government authorities, which has improved case reporting, referrals, and responses to child protection concerns.

A major highlight of the meetings was the significant impact of community sensitization efforts. Child Protection Committees and community groups conducted awareness campaigns in churches, schools, markets, motor parks, community meetings, and households, reaching more than 6,700 people with messages on child trafficking prevention, safe migration, and the rights of children to protection, education, and dignity.



These efforts translated into tangible protection outcomes. Across the five LGAs, stakeholders reported 14 successful child protection interventions, including the prevention of irregular migration, rescue of children from trafficking and exploitation, interception of children in transit for trafficking purposes, responses to cases of child maltreatment and denial of education, and the reintegration of vulnerable children into school.

Several success stories highlighted the growing effectiveness of community-based protection systems. In Esan West, a child trafficked with Côte d'Ivoire as the intended destination was rescued through collaboration with law enforcement agencies and subsequently enrolled in vocational training. Another child subjected to sexual exploitation was rescued and returned to safety. In Esan South East, a potential trafficking case involving a schoolgirl lured with promises of a better life abroad was successfully prevented through timely intervention and counselling. Communities also reported positive shifts in parental attitudes, with increasing resistance to trafficking recruiters and greater commitment to children's education and wellbeing.



While challenges such as poverty, parental complicity, and school dropout remain, stakeholders reaffirmed their commitment to expanding awareness campaigns, strengthening referral systems, and sustaining community engagement. The meetings demonstrated the power of coordinated action in protecting vulnerable children and reinforced the importance of strong partnerships in building safer communities across Edo Central Senatorial District.



Community Child Protection Groups Strengthen Local Action Against Child Trafficking

In March 2026, Uromi JDPCI facilitated bi-monthly meetings of Community Child Protection Groups across 15 project communities in Edo Central Senatorial District. The meetings brought together 158 participants, comprising 75 men and 83 women, as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen grassroots capacity to prevent child trafficking, abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

The sessions focused on the important role parents and caregivers play in protecting children through positive communication and supportive family relationships. Participants explored how repeated expressions of hardship, excessive expectations, and comparisons with other children can unintentionally place emotional pressure on young people, increasing their vulnerability to unsafe migration, school dropout, exploitative labour, and trafficking. Discussions emphasized the need for families to create safe and supportive environments where children can openly express concerns and seek guidance without fear of criticism or intimidation.



The meetings also provided a platform for communities to discuss emerging child protection concerns and identify practical solutions. In Efandion community, members reflected on the reasons children may suddenly withdraw from school or apprenticeship programmes. Participants highlighted that such behaviour may be linked to deeper protection issues, including bullying, intimidation, exploitation, or poor welfare conditions, underscoring the importance of early intervention and open communication within families.



In Ebelle community, concerns were raised about individuals whose actions appeared inconsistent with the values of child protection, prompting discussions on accountability and ethical leadership within community structures. Members also shared the story of a young girl who travelled to Libya despite repeated warnings, only to later report experiencing severe hardship and expressing a desire to return home. The case reinforced the importance of continuous awareness-raising on the dangers of irregular migration and trafficking.



Another important discussion took place in Opoji community, where participants addressed the denial of education to children living as domestic helpers.

Members reaffirmed that every child has the right to education and committed to mobilizing community support to ensure vulnerable children have access to school and learning materials.



HEALTH AND OVC

Strengthening Care and Support for Children Living with HIV

During the first quarter of 2026, Uromi JDPCI's Uromi Cluster continued to strengthen HIV care, treatment, and child protection services across its four implementing Local Government Areas, reaching 283 Children Living with HIV (CLHIV) and their households with comprehensive health and social support services.

Efforts throughout the quarter focused on improving treatment adherence, increasing access to healthcare services, strengthening household resilience, and enhancing the overall well-being of vulnerable children. A total of 99 children received referral and transport support for antiretroviral therapy (ART) refills, while 29 children were supported to access viral load testing services. Routine tuberculosis screening was conducted for all enrolled children, ensuring early identification and treatment of confirmed cases. Emergency assistance was also provided to vulnerable households facing critical health challenges.

Adherence support remained a key priority, with caregivers and children participating in regular counselling sessions designed to promote treatment continuity and positive health outcomes. Intensive follow-up and community-based adherence counselling contributed to improved treatment outcomes across the cluster, including the successful return of 25 children who had previously interrupted treatment. To further strengthen holistic support, 19 newly identified households were enrolled into the THRIVE OVC programme, expanding their access to health, nutrition, education, and psychosocial services. In addition, 44 vulnerable households received nutritional support to help improve treatment adherence and household well-being.

The quarter also featured active engagement of adolescents through Operation Triple Zero (OTZ) club activities, which reached 49 young people living with HIV and provided transport support to facilitate participation. Capacity-building initiatives for staff further enhanced service quality through specialized training on Early Infant Diagnosis, case management systems, and programme review processes.

One of the quarter's most inspiring outcomes was the remarkable improvement in health of a young client who had previously struggled with treatment adherence and emotional challenges. Through consistent counselling, psychosocial support, and close follow-up by the Uromi Cluster team, his viral load reduced dramatically from over 2.4 million copies/ml in August 2025 to just 162 copies/ml in March 2026. His journey demonstrates the transformative impact of comprehensive care, family support, and sustained adherence interventions in helping children living with HIV achieve healthier and more hopeful futures.

Overall, the quarter recorded significant progress in improving access to treatment, strengthening adherence, supporting vulnerable households, and empowering children living with HIV to lead healthier and more resilient lives.

Beyond the meetings, community groups reported ongoing sensitization activities and continued monitoring of at-risk children. Participants renewed their commitment to raising awareness, promoting child rights, and working collectively to create safer environments where children can grow, learn, and thrive free from exploitation and trafficking.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Promoting Environmental Responsibility Through Waste Management Awareness

As part of its commitment to environmental sustainability and healthier communities, Uromi JDPCI intensified waste management awareness activities during the first quarter of 2026, reaching schools and communities across Edo Central Senatorial District. The initiative sought to address the growing challenges associated with poor waste disposal practices while encouraging individuals to take greater responsibility for protecting their environment.

The sensitization campaign engaged 103 students from five secondary schools; Ewu Grammar School, Ekekhen Grammar School, Obiaza Mixed Secondary School, Eguare Secondary School, and Arue Secondary School. The student used interactive discussions and practical learning activities to explore the health and environmental consequences of indiscriminate waste disposal, including disease outbreaks, flooding, and environmental degradation. Participants were encouraged to adopt responsible waste management practices such as proper waste segregation, maintaining clean surroundings, and discouraging littering within their schools and communities. The sessions inspired students to reflect on their daily habits and identify practical ways to contribute to a cleaner environment. Many participants expressed a commitment to becoming environmental ambassadors by promoting responsible waste disposal practices among their peers, families, and community members.

Beyond the school environment, Uromi JDPCI extended the awareness campaign to community stakeholders in Usenu and members of the Parish JDPC Group of Holy Family Catholic Church, Usugbenu. Twenty participants took part in the community engagements, where discussions focused on the importance of proper waste management in preventing pollution, protecting public health, and preserving community spaces.

The initiative contributed to increased awareness and a positive shift in attitudes toward environmental stewardship. Participants recognized that environmental protection is a shared responsibility that begins with individual actions and collective commitment. Through these efforts, Uromi JDPCI continues to promote sustainable practices and encourage communities to play an active role in creating cleaner, healthier, and more resilient environments.



CORRECTIONAL CENTER APOSTOLATE

Restoring Hope and Human Dignity Through Prison Apostolate Outreach

Uromi JDPCI continued its monthly apostolate visits to inmates at the Ubiaja Custodial Centre, providing psychosocial support, spiritual guidance, legal counselling, and humanitarian assistance to promote rehabilitation, healing, and the restoration of human dignity among persons in custody.

Through regular engagements, inmates participated in interactive sessions focused on emotional resilience, self-reflection, forgiveness, and personal transformation. Drawing on faith-based teachings and practical life experiences, the sessions encouraged participants to look beyond their current circumstances and embrace hope, personal growth, and positive decision-making. Many inmates openly shared challenges relating to family separation, feelings of guilt, uncertainty about the future, and concerns about reintegration into society, creating opportunities for meaningful dialogue and support.



A total of 105 inmates participated in psychosocial support sessions during the quarter, while 28 inmates received individual spiritual counselling and 16 inmates benefited from legal counselling services. These interventions provided inmates with valuable opportunities to discuss personal concerns, seek guidance on legal matters, and receive encouragement as they navigated the challenges of incarceration.

One particularly inspiring outcome involved an inmate who had previously lost contact with his family and expressed a desire for reconciliation. Through the support and intervention of the Uromi JDPCI team, communication was restored, forgiveness was achieved, and family members resumed visits and food support. This reconciliation significantly improved the inmate's emotional wellbeing and renewed his sense of hope and belonging.

In addition to counselling services, Uromi JDPCI provided humanitarian assistance to support the welfare of inmates. The organization donated hygiene materials, medical supplies, Bibles, and catechism books to encourage both physical wellbeing and spiritual growth among inmates.

A major highlight of the quarter was a generous donation from the Bishop of Uromi Diocese, Most Rev. Dr. Donatus Ogun, OSA, who extended food support to inmates through Uromi JDPCI as an expression of the Church's solidarity with vulnerable members of society. The items included three bunches of plantain, three pineapples, twelve wraps of akpu, five packs of salt, twenty tins of tomatoes, five litres of palm oil, fifty-one bulbs of onions, forty-three tubers of yam, and eleven bags of garri. The donation of essential food items was warmly received by custodial authorities and brought encouragement to inmates, reinforcing the message that they remain valued members of the wider community.

The continued apostolate outreach revealed ongoing challenges faced by inmates, including delayed court processes, limited access to legal



representation, and the emotional burden of prolonged separation from loved ones. However, the programme also demonstrated the transformative impact of consistent psychosocial, spiritual, and legal support in helping inmates maintain hope and prepare for positive reintegration into society.

Through its prison apostolate, Uromi JDPCI remains committed to promoting justice, compassion, rehabilitation, and the restoration of human dignity, ensuring that individuals in custody are not forgotten but are supported on their journey toward healing and transformation.



PARISH JDPC

Strengthening Parish Structures for Justice, Peace, and Community Development

Uromi JDPCI continued to strengthen grassroots engagement through its Parish Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) Desk by expanding parish-based structures and enhancing the capacity of existing Parish JDPC members across the Diocese.

A major milestone during the quarter was the formation of a new Parish JDPC group at Holy Family Catholic Church, Usugbenu. The parishioners were sensitised and introduced to the mission of Uromi JDPCI and the vital role of Parish JDPC groups in promoting justice, peace, human dignity, and community development within local communities. Participants were encouraged to become active agents of positive change by identifying community challenges and supporting efforts to address them through collective action and service.



The initiative received strong support from the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Ernest Abhurimen, who encouraged parishioners to actively participate in the Church's social mission. As a result, eight parishioners volunteered to serve as pioneer members of the newly established Parish JDPC group. The volunteers were encouraged to work closely with the parish leadership, hold regular meetings, and maintain active collaboration with Uromi JDPCI to strengthen their effectiveness and impact.

To further enhance the capacity of existing parish structures, Uromi JDPCI organized an online refresher training for Parish JDPC members drawn from eight parishes across the Diocese. The training focused on strengthening participants' understanding of their responsibilities as grassroots promoters of justice, peace, and development, while also building their skills in report writing and documentation.

The interactive session provided an opportunity for participants to share experiences, learn from one another, and improve their ability to document community issues and interventions effectively. Participants acknowledged the importance of quality reporting in amplifying community voices, supporting advocacy efforts, and promoting evidence-based responses to local challenges.

Through the establishment of new parish structures and the continuous capacity development of existing members, Uromi JDPCI is strengthening the Church's presence at the grassroots and empowering lay faithful to play an active role in advancing justice, peace, human dignity, and sustainable development within their communities.

MICRO CREDIT DESK

Micro Credit Scheme Expands Economic Opportunities for Small Business Owners and Farmers

Uromi JDPCI's Micro Credit Scheme continued to promote economic empowerment by providing financial support, savings opportunities, and business development guidance to small-scale entrepreneurs and farmers across participating communities. The scheme remains an important tool for strengthening household livelihoods and expanding access to financial services for individuals who often face challenges obtaining credit from conventional financial institutions.



confidence and capacity to make informed financial decisions, manage their enterprises more effectively, and improve profitability.

Regular monitoring and mentoring visits further strengthened the programme by ensuring that loans were utilized for their intended purposes and by providing beneficiaries with ongoing guidance and support. The visits also created opportunities to identify challenges early, promote accountability, and strengthen relationships between beneficiaries and the scheme.



Within the reporting period, micro-loans were disbursed to 115 beneficiaries, comprising 46 men and 69 women, organized into 16 groups across 12 communities. The loans enabled beneficiaries to invest in existing businesses and farming activities, expand operations, increase productivity, and improve household income. For many participants, the scheme provided much-needed working capital that helped sustain and grow their economic activities.

The quarter also recorded encouraging levels of financial discipline among beneficiaries. Loan repayments remained strong, reflecting beneficiaries' commitment to meeting their obligations, while regular savings contributions continued to strengthen a culture of financial responsibility and long-term planning. Insurance contributions were also maintained, demonstrating growing awareness of the importance of financial protection against unforeseen challenges.

To complement financial support, all beneficiaries participated in financial literacy training sessions focused on responsible loan utilization, savings practices, basic record keeping, and simple business planning. These sessions enhanced participants'

The continued growth of the programme, including the registration of new members during the quarter, demonstrates the increasing confidence that communities place in the Micro Credit Scheme. Through access to finance, capacity building, and continuous support, Uromi JDPCI is helping individuals and families build sustainable livelihoods, strengthen economic resilience, and create pathways toward greater financial independence and improved quality of life.

