



UROMI JDPCI Newsletter

A Quarterly Publication of Uromi Justice, Development and Peace Caritas Initiative (JDPCI) Vol. 35 No. 43 MARCH, 2025 EDITION

INTRODUCTION

At Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI), the first quarter of 2025 marked significant progress in advancing our mission to uphold justice, protect the vulnerable, and empower communities across Edo Central Senatorial District. This edition of our quarterly newsletter highlights our diverse interventions across key thematic areas.

Human Rights

Our Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme expanded its reach across schools and communities, promoting awareness, access to justice, and peaceful coexistence. Through adolescent Human Rights Clubs, town hall meetings, quarterly meetings with paralegals, and stakeholder coordination events, we empowered over 1,000 made up of students, women, and community leaders, to challenge harmful practices, report abuses, and uphold the rights and dignity of every person. We also continued the codification of Esan customary laws, bridging tradition with contemporary human rights standards.

Migration and Countering Trafficking in Persons

In the AACTING Project, Uromi JDPCI deepened its commitment to eradicating child trafficking and unsafe migration. We built strong alliances with institutional actors such as the Edo State Migration Agency and conducted awareness sessions with transporters, school children, community members, and caregivers. Through the establishment and training of Child Protection Groups and Child Champion Clubs, we created sustainable, grassroots defenses against trafficking while advancing psychosocial, legal, and community support systems for vulnerable children.

Health and Orphans & Vulnerable Children (OVC)

In our ongoing work under the USAID-THRIVE South project, we provided holistic care and support to Children Living with HIV (CLHIV) and their caregivers. Through household visits, counselling, health referrals, and financial literacy sessions, we improved treatment adherence, addressed stigma, and strengthened family resilience. Our health and OVC interventions remain central to our vision of care that respects both human dignity and wellbeing.

Micro Credit and Economic Empowerment

The Uromi JDPCI Micro Credit Scheme continued to serve as a lifeline for women, smallholder farmers, and rural entrepreneurs. This quarter, we extended our reach across 18 communities, supporting individuals through access to low-interest loans and financial literacy training. The stories of personal growth and renewed dignity, especially among women, underscore the transformative power of economic inclusion and financial education.

Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability

Addressing environmental degradation and climate risks remained a key priority. Through advocacy engagements with government stakeholders and sensitization campaigns on bush burning, we promoted environmentally friendly farming practices and responsible waste management in communities. These efforts contribute to our broader goal of building climate-resilient and ecologically conscious communities.

Correctional Center Apostolate

At the Ublaja Correctional Center, our restorative justice outreach continued to touch lives. Through scripture-based spiritual and legal counselling sessions, inmates were guided toward forgiveness, inner peace, and personal transformation. Each visit offered more than just reflection, it offered inmates a renewed sense of worth and the courage to rebuild their lives beyond incarceration.

Parish JDPC Development

We made considerable strides in strengthening Parish JDPC structures through virtual engagement, follow-up support, training, and the inauguration of a new parish unit. These grassroots commissions are essential to our faith-based justice framework, enabling parishes to take ownership of peacebuilding, civic engagement, and human development within their communities.

This quarter's work reflects our unwavering belief in people-centered development. Across all sectors, Uromi JDPCI remains committed to restoring dignity, empowering voices, and transforming communities through justice, compassion, and collaboration.

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, Ehlagwina & 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	24	
Registered Volunteers	72	
Project Executed	30	

HUMAN RIGHT EDUCATION AND PARALEGAL SCHEME

Empowering Adolescents' Human Rights Clubs Through Human Rights Education Learning Sessions Across Schools

Education is a powerful tool for social transformation, and when young people are equipped with the right knowledge, they become agents of change in their communities. Between January 23rd and



February 4th, 2025, Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI), through its Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme II, conducted adolescent learning sessions across 28 secondary schools in Edo Central Senatorial District. These sessions focused on effective communication skills, leadership development, and human rights education, ensuring that students not only understand their rights but also learn how to advocate for them. A total of 506 students (140 males and 366 females) participated in the

sessions, reflecting a growing interest in human rights education. The sessions also saw the expansion of the Adolescent Human Rights Clubs into three new schools: Opoji Commercial College,



Gift Day Secondary School, and Obiyon Secondary School. This was to further strengthen the movement for human rights awareness among young people. To ensure sustainability, elections were held in various schools to appoint new Presidents and Secretaries as outgoing students prepared for their WAEC examinations. This leadership transition ensures that the clubs remain active, empowering students to take charge of advocacy efforts in their schools.

The primary focus of the sessions was on "The Power of Effective Communication." Students learned about different types of communicators: confident, unconfident, and forceful, and were encouraged to embrace confidence in expressing their ideas, handling



conflicts, and advocating for themselves and others. In schools such as Uhieie Grammar School and Obeidu Secondary School, students shared personal experiences where a lack of confidence had affected their ability to communicate. Through role-playing exercises and interactive discussions, they developed essential skills for clear expression, active listening, and respectful dialogue.

Beyond communication, the learning sessions served as a platform for students to report and discuss human rights violations in their schools and communities. The learning sessions were not just theoretical but also highly interactive. In schools like St. Johnbosco Secondary School, students actively demonstrated their understanding of confident communication and set a date to address their peers during the school assembly. Similarly, at Ujoelen Grammar School, club members were assigned to deliver talks under the supervision of their teacher coordinator. The students were

encouraged to take the knowledge gained beyond the clubs by engaging in peer education in their schools and communities. At Idunwele Girls Secondary School, students scheduled an assembly session to educate their fellow students on human rights and effective communication, so as to ensure that these lessons reach a broader audience.



The learning sessions have proven to be a transformational experience for students, many of whom are now taking an active role in promoting human rights and advocating for social justice. Uromi JDPCI remains committed to building a generation of confident, informed, and empowered young leaders who will shape a better future for their communities.

Quarterly Meeting with Paralegals and Human Rights Clubs

Between March 5th and 7th, 2025, Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) held its quarterly meeting with paralegals and members of human rights clubs from 35 communities across the five Local Government Areas in Edo Central Senatorial District. This forum provided an



opportunity for experience-sharing, capacity building, and strategizing on effective responses to human rights violations within local communities. Participants discussed pressing human rights concerns, reviewed interventions, and refined their advocacy approaches through peer learning and technical guidance from Uromi JDPCI.

A total of 400 participants, including Community Paralegals, Human Rights Advocates, Project Supervisors, representatives from the Nigerian Police Family Unit, and Local Government Social Welfare Departments, took part in the sessions. The meeting emphasized the importance of collective action in addressing human rights violations and strengthening partnerships with institutional stakeholders.



Across the five LGAs, 51 cases of human rights violations were reported, including: 3 cases of rape and 1 attempted rape, 11 cases of domestic violence, 1 case of widow maltreatment, 5 cases of assault, 3 cases of human trafficking, 1 case of child labor and trafficking, 9 cases of denial of the right to education,



1 case of violation of the right to privacy, 1 case of racial or religious discrimination, 2 cases of violations of freedom of expression and assembly, 13 cases of neglect and abandonment, 8 cases were resolved through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), reinforcing

peaceful conflict resolution within communities, 5 individuals received psychosocial and counseling support.



In the same vein, Paralegals and Human Rights Advocates conducted 3 advocacy visits to community leaders and institutional security actors to strengthen collaboration for

improved human rights protection. Twelve (12) communities across the five LGAs also reported that sensitization campaigns which focused on gender equality, children's rights, domestic violence, and access to justice, were conducted in their communities.

Other notable community interventions reported during the meeting were:

A rape case in Ewu community involving a five years old child which was reported to the police for investigation and prosecution. Efandion Human Rights Club also reported a rape case involving a young girl assaulted by her uncle. They reported the case to the police for the arrest of the perpetrator. In Eguare Ekpoma, the club intervened in a domestic violence case where a husband physically abused his wife and seized her belongings. They also assisted in rescuing and returning two teenage girls who were trafficked for sexual exploitation. In Ewohimi, the club prevented an ethnic conflict where community youths attempted to expel Hausa residents over theft



allegations. In Ekpon, a rape case involving a 72-year-old man and an 11-year-old girl was escalated to the State Police Headquarters for prosecution.

In Ahia, a woman who suffered severe genital injuries due to

her husband's coercive sexual conduct was provided with support, and a community sensitization on prevention of violence in marriage was conducted. Ogwa community members were sensitized on ending discrimination against women whose bride prices had not been paid.

Several communities, including Amedokhian and Emaudo, conducted step-down training sessions on case management and



conflict resolution, which have equipped club members with essential advocacy skills. In Egbelle, the club successfully reintegrated a banished community member back to the community through mediation

and alternative dispute resolution, an action that fostered reconciliation and inclusion in the community. In Uhe, harmful widowhood practices were averted following sustained advocacy efforts by the human rights club.

The quarterly meetings reinforced the pivotal role of paralegals and human rights clubs in advocating for justice and social change at the grassroots level. Their interventions in mediation, advocacy, and sensitization have significantly contributed to addressing human rights violations and fostering peaceful coexistence in the

communities.

Town Hall Meetings and Sensitization on Human Rights

From January to March 2025, Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) conducted 12 town hall meetings and sensitization sessions across 12 communities in Edo Central Senatorial District. These engagements helped to raise awareness on human rights, address harmful traditional practices, and



promote social justice and equality in accordance with the provisions of the Edo State Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law. The initiative which was part of the Human Rights Education and Paralegal Scheme Project, provided a platform for dialogue between community stakeholders, traditional leaders, women, and youths, and arrived at a collective commitment to reform certain cultural and traditional practices in the communities. In the 12 town hall meetings and sensitization sessions held,

a total of 599 community members were directly reached. This includes 319 males and 280 females, demonstrating increased female participation compared to the previous



quarter. The active engagement of both genders indicates a positive shift toward inclusivity in community discussions on human rights and cultural reforms. In some of the communities visited, certain key achievements and community transformative commitments were recorded. Among which were:

1. Abolition of Harmful Traditional Practices:

In Amahor, Ahia, and Ogwa communities, the extensive discussions on widow inheritance and degrading widowhood practices have led to a renewed commitment by traditional leaders to eliminate practices of forced widow remarriage and inhumane mourning rites in their communities.

In Udakpa, the initial resistance to ending the practice of parading women naked for adultery is being reconsidered for abolition after clarifications on the legal implications of such practices. Community



leaders are committed to adopting humane and legal dispute resolution mechanisms in the settlement of civil matters.

In Ukhun and Ewossa, community leaders affirmed that their communities were no longer practicing levirate marriage (widow inheritance) as it was in the years past. They reassured their willingness to support women's rights in widowhood.

2. Strengthening Legal Awareness and Access to Justice:

In Ahia, a community elder attempted to report an attempted rape but was discouraged by community reluctance. Uromi JDPCI provided legal education, reinforcing the need to report such crimes to law enforcement. By the end of the



session, leaders pledged to actively support survivors in seeking justice.

Across the 12 communities, copies of the VAPP Law and Information Education and Communication Materials (IEC) were distributed to ensure continuous reference and compliance with human rights principles.

In Ogwa and Eguare-Ekpoma, emphasis was placed on the importance of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in handling civil cases, while ensuring criminal offenses such as rape and child abuse are reported to the appropriate authorities.

3. Child Protection and Education



In Ogwa and Usenu, elders raised concerns about school dropouts and incidences of child labour. Uromi JDPCI emphasized the importance of compulsory education and encouraged communities to

adopt strategies to keep children in school.

In Amahor and Imu, participants expressed concerns about fathers who abandon their children yet attempt to reclaim authority over them during important life events. Uromi JDPCI reinforced parental responsibility and encouraged community-based accountability measures while raising awareness about the section of the VAPP Law



that prohibits and recommends punishment for neglect and abandonment.

In Uzea, awareness was raised on child neglect, and the community committed to monitoring and reporting cases

of child abuse to the appropriate authorities.

4. Women's Rights and Gender Equality:

In Eguare-Ekpoma and Ewossa, the discussions on female inheritance rights resulted in some community leaders expressing support to reform local practices on inheritance with legal provisions to ensure women have rights to inherit their fathers' property.

In Ahia and Ukhun, community attitudes toward women's participation in decision-making improved, with more women actively contributing to discussions than in previous years.



In Opoji and Ogwa, concerns about discrimination against women whose bride price had not been paid were addressed, and leaders committed to ensuring women are not unfairly excluded from

community activities.

5. Addressing Youth Challenges and Substance Abuse:

In Ogwa, community elders raised alarms about the rise in youth indiscipline and drug abuse. Uromi JDPCI emphasized the importance of early intervention, community vigilance, and alternative positive engagement for young people as a solution to the challenge.

In Udakpa, concerns over youth involvement in theft and substance abuse were discussed, leading to recommendations for stronger parental oversight and structured mentorship programmes for young

people.

6. Commitment to Change and Community-Led Initiatives

Across the 12 communities, local leaders acknowledged the need for continuous sensitization and pledged to enforce necessary changes.

In Agwa and Opoji communities, appreciations were demonstrated through the gifting of farm produce to the Uromi JDPCI team as a token of gratitude for their enlightenment efforts.



The town hall sensitizations conducted by Uromi JDPCI significantly impacted community perspectives on human rights, justice, and equality. These engagements have laid a strong foundation for ongoing reform, with community leaders committing to aligning traditional practices with national legal frameworks.

Validation Meeting for the Situational Analysis of Esan Customary Laws and Practices

Between January and March 2025, Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) facilitated three validation meetings focused on

the codification of Esan customary laws and practices. These meetings brought together key stakeholders,



including traditional rulers, legal experts, religious leaders, community heads, and representatives from government institutions. The objective was to review, refine, and validate research findings on Esan customary laws, ensuring their alignment with modern legal frameworks while preserving their cultural significance.

A total of 227 participants (164 males and 63 females) actively engaged in the validation sessions, reflecting a broad-based commitment to strengthening the legal recognition of Esan customary laws. The research, led by Prof. Matthew Izibili, covered

11 kingdoms across 5 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Esan Central, Esan South East, Esan North East, Igueben, and Esan West. Key customary laws studied included marriage, inheritance, widowhood



practices, burial rites, child rights, and traditional governance structures. The research findings were validated through extensive stakeholder engagement, ensuring that customary practices were accurately documented and aligned with human rights principles.

The Executive Director, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo, in his opening remark, emphasized the importance of systematically documenting Esan customary laws to provide clarity and consistency in their interpretation and application. A representative of the Judiciary (President of the Igueben Area Customary Court), commended the initiative, acknowledging that



the codified laws would support legal dispute resolution.

The stakeholders, while addressing Gender Disparities and Human Rights considerations, debated the exclusion of women from certain burial rites, inheritance rights, and other traditional practices. Some community leaders recommended modifying these customs to ensure gender inclusivity. They also raised concerns about widow inheritance, and it was suggested that codified laws should emphasize the voluntary nature of remarriage rather than coercion.

Traditional rulers and community leaders pledged to present the validated research findings to their councils for formal adoption and documentation as customary laws. The community leaders made commitments to integrate the codified laws with Nigeria's statutory legal frameworks to prevent human rights violations while maintaining cultural heritage. The participants raised the need for continuous sensitization and awareness programmes to ensure that communities understand and respect the codified laws.

The validation of Esan customary laws represents a significant milestone in preserving cultural identity while ensuring that traditional practices align with contemporary legal and human rights standards and the promotion of justice and equity for all.

Annual Stakeholders' Conference/Coordination Meeting on Inclusive Human Rights Defense Mechanism

On March 27, 2025, Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) convened its annual stakeholders' congress and coordination meeting, which brought together a diverse coalition of justice actors, traditional and religious leaders, Security agencies, community advocates, and institutional partners from across Edo Central Senatorial District. The theme of the event was "Strengthening Access to Justice, Enhancing Collaboration for Effective Case Management." The event served as a platform to review progress, deepen partnerships, and drive systemic reforms for human rights defense architecture in Edo Central Senatorial District. The conference attracted 200 participants (126 males and 74 females), made up of representatives from the judiciary, law enforcement agencies, medical directors, paralegals, and community and religious leaders from the five Local Government Areas (LGAs)



in Edo Central Senatorial District. The presence of high-level officials such as Chief Magistrate Sir Barr. E.E. Asibor (KSC), Divisional Police Officers (DPOs), the acting Chairman of Esan South East

LGA, local government area, legal practitioners, and religious leaders underscored a shared commitment to access to justice and human dignity.

The Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI in his opening remarks, emphasized the importance of collective responsibility in advancing human rights. He acknowledged the gains made, but urged communities to remain proactive and visible in their interventions. He called attention to under-reported cases of sexual violence against

male minors and reinforced the need for inclusive advocacy.

Goodwill messages from traditional, religious, and institutional leaders echoed a unified theme: justice must be community-driven and culturally relevant. Traditional leaders pledged to take resolutions back to their councils, while security officials, including representatives from the Nigerian Police Force, NSCDC, and DSS, pledged their recommitment to address human rights violations promptly and professionally.

A key feature of the meeting was the presentation of Uromi JDPCI's achievements under its Human Rights Education and



Paralegal Scheme. Over the past year, the organization facilitated:

- Expansion of paralegal training and youth-led human rights education.
- 174 case-based interventions and 67 non-case-based engagements across five LGAs.
- Legal support for survivors of gender-based violence.
- Advocacy for the codification of customary laws aligned with national legal standards.

Esan West LGA recorded the highest intervention footprint, with Eguare-Ekpoma alone accounting for 20 case resolutions. These figures were not just statistics, they reflected lives changed, conflicts resolved, and systems held accountable.

Delivering the keynote address, the guest speaker, Chief Magistrate Sir Barr. E.E. Asibor underscored that justice must be timely, accessible, and free from corruption. He urged stakeholders to strengthen inter-agency coordination, uphold transparency, and utilize existing legal frameworks such as the Legal Aid Act of 2011 to support marginalized groups. His address was both a call to action and a roadmap for strategic improvements.

During the interactive session, participants candidly discussed challenges such as limited access to legal aid, police misconduct, and delays in judicial processes. In response, Sir Asibor assured that his court upholds a three-month resolution timeline for all cases, reinforcing public confidence in the judiciary.

The meeting closed with strong commitments from stakeholders. Dr. Iyoriobhe and Fr. Charles Akhue reiterated that sustainable justice requires both sacrifice and collaboration. They urged communities to go beyond reporting, to become proactive defenders of human rights. Assistant Executive Director Rev. Fr. Ferguson Ukpebor reaffirmed Uromi JDPCI's unwavering dedication to rights protection and institutional accountability.

As the conference concluded with a prayer for guidance and perseverance, one message stood out: justice is not the sole responsibility of the courts, but a shared mandate of the entire community.



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

Advocacy Visit to The Director General of Edo State Migration Agency

Following the transformation of the Edo State Task Force Against Human Trafficking into the Edo State Migration Agency through a law that took effect in October 2024, the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI and his team had an advocacy engagement meeting with the Director General (DG) of the Edo State Migration Agency, Hon. Chief Fortune Agazuma, and his team. The visit aimed to establish rapport with the agency's new leadership and strengthen collaboration in addressing migration and trafficking issues within local communities.



The visit was also used to seek the agency's recommendation of returned victims of trafficking residing in Edo Central Senatorial District for economic and psychosocial reintegration under the Act Against Child Trafficking in Nigeria project.

An agreement for enhanced collaboration was reached, with the DG committing to work with Uromi JDPCI and recommend returnees for the reintegration programme as requested. He also outlined the agency's plans to convene a meeting in February 2025 with Civil Society Organizations working in the migration sector to address key concerns, discuss the new Migration Law, and foster better collaboration, as well as engage with hotel and brothel owners to address the recruitment and exploitation of minors in sexual exploitative endeavours. He emphasized that the Agency will also tackle labour exploitation, particularly cases where families employ underage domestic workers and subject them to abuse. The DG further highlighted his ongoing collaboration with the DSS, Police, and EFCC, and even Embassies in addressing Migration and trafficking concerns. A total of 7 persons (4 males and 3 females) participated in the meeting.



Establishment of a Consultation Mechanism between Justice and Institutional Child Protection Actors in Edo Central Senatorial District.

Uromi JDPCI facilitated the establishment of a consultation mechanism for child protection between justice and institutional actors in Edo Central Senatorial District. This was to enhance institutional collaboration and coordination to address child trafficking, strengthen child protection, improve response systems, and foster collaboration between community-based and institutional actors. The meeting brought together 60 key



stakeholders (37 Male and 23 Female) made up of law enforcement agencies, healthcare professionals, local governments, civil society organizations, and community-based child protection groups.

In his opening remark, the Executive Director Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo, emphasized the need for partnerships and a multi-sectoral approach in tackling child trafficking. To acquaint participants with the challenge at hand, the Director of Program Dr. Michael Iyoriobhe, presented statistics on the rising cases of child trafficking in Edo State, highlighting economic vulnerabilities, social inequalities, and weak law enforcement as major contributing factors. He called for stronger policies and increased community involvement in combating the issue.

Further discussions focused on establishing regular consultative meetings to share updates, discuss trends, and plan joint interventions. Participants agreed on the need for awareness campaigns, clear referral pathways for victims, and stronger coordination between stakeholders. Advocacy for improved child protection policies and legal reforms was also emphasized.

Participants thereafter shared their thoughts on possible ways to strengthen child protection and enhance efforts at the prevention of child trafficking. The Chairperson of the Medical Women Association of Nigeria, Edo State Branch Dr Irene Akhideno, advised caution when dealing with inquisitive and traumatized children. She emphasized the need for parental care rather than sending children to strangers. The



Welfare Officer of Esan North East Local Government Area stressed the importance of following legal procedures before entrusting children to caregivers, as failure to do so was a criminal offense. This, he said

would help to limit the number of children who suffer exploitation in the hands of caregivers. Another medical doctor at the event highlighted the need for mandatory reporting policies and suggested designating focal persons in schools, utilizing the internet for awareness, and establishing a helpline for anonymous reporting. Fr. Arhedo assured participants that Uromi JDPCI had already implemented reporting mechanisms such as child champions clubs in schools and communities, to address these concerns.

The meeting marked a crucial step toward enhancing coordination and collaboration in combating child trafficking in Edo Central Senatorial District, ensuring a more effective and unified response.

Session/Meeting With Transporters in Commemoration of the Feast of St Josephine Bakhita

On the 7th of February 2025, Uromi Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) conducted an awareness session with transporters at the Benin-Auchi Motor Park in Uromi. The session was aimed at addressing the pressing issue of human trafficking, with a



particular focus on the critical role that transporters play in combating this heinous crime. The event which was also used to commemorate the feast of St Josephine Bakhita brought together key stakeholders in the transport sector with a total of 66 participants (44 Males, 22

Females) reached.

The Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo emphasized the pivotal role transporters play in the fight against human trafficking, being the first point of contact with victims, especially children being trafficked. He encouraged the transporters to be vigilant when conveying people, particularly minors, so as to help prevent the movement of trafficked persons.

He advised transporters to inquire about travel details, report suspicious cases to NAPTIP or the police, refuse to transport potential victims, raise awareness among colleagues and passengers, and collaborate with authorities to help identify and stop traffickers. He also took a reflective look at the life of St. Josephine Bakhita, as the event commemorated the 23rd edition of the Feast of St. Josephine Bakhita, which is also known as the International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking.



During this session, video documentaries on the peril of Human trafficking were screened, which helped to further buttress the message. The session also provided an opportunity for open discussion, where transporters shared their experiences and concerns, and several questions were raised about how to handle situations involving suspected trafficking.

The Secretary of the Park expressed his gratitude to Uromi JDPCI for the opportunity to be enlightened about human trafficking. He acknowledged that the session has improved his understanding of the gravity of child trafficking. The Chairman of the Park also noted that in Edo State, and particularly in Uromi, many parents often encourage their children to travel. He emphasized the need for sensitizing parents about the dangers of human trafficking and requested that the toll-free hotline be made available to them for reporting suspicious cases. They were availed the NAPTIP hotline as well as Uromi JDPCI contact details. Another transporter inquired about the location of the Uromi JDPCI office, expressing his intent to visit personally to report any suspected cases of human trafficking. The event ended with a renewed sense of collective responsibility, with transporters leaving the session more informed and motivated to take action against child trafficking.



Strengthening Child Champion Clubs in Communities and Schools

Uromi JDPCI facilitated 20 Quarterly learning sessions with Child Champion clubs in 10 Secondary Schools and 10 Communities across the five LGAs in Edo Central Senatorial District. The session featured a variety of engaging activities and discussions designed to enhance participants' understanding, including recreational games to energise the groups and recap sessions to reinforce previous learnings.



This highly interactive session engaged the Child Champions in brainstorming discussions to explore the risk factors and causes of child trafficking. They not only identified these issues but also discussed practical steps they could take to support children who might be vulnerable due to these risks.

One key example they highlighted was poverty being a cause of child trafficking. They noted that a child from a poor family could be at greater risk of trafficking due to financial



hardship. To address this, they suggested engaging such children in conversations about the dangers of trafficking and, where possible, connecting them with available community support systems.

To reinforce the session's objectives, participants were given a take-home assignment to share their new knowledge with peers. They were tasked with documenting the individuals they reached and the responses they received using feedback forms provided during the sessions. The Child Champions were encouraged to lead by example, emphasizing that earning the trust and respect of their peers and older community members was essential for effective sensitization efforts.

The sessions reached a total of 109 persons in schools (27 males and 82 females) as well as 109 children in the community (21 males and 88 females). The sessions have created a strong foundation for continued awareness, education, and action on the issue of child trafficking.

Sensitization in 5 Communities and 5 Schools



As part of the project's expansion drive to extend anti-trafficking awareness to more communities, sensitization campaigns were conducted in five new communities and six secondary schools within the communities.

Among which were: Ogwa Community and Ogwa Grammar School in Esan West Local Government Area, Opoji Community and Opoji Commercial Secondary School in Esan Central Local Government Area, Agadaga-Ewohimi Community and Agadaga Secondary School in Esan South East Local Government Area, Ewossa Community and Ewossa



Grammar School in Igueben Local Government Area, Ivue/Obeidu community and Obeidu Secondary School in Esan North East LGA. In the same vein, Obiyon Secondary School in Esan North East Local

Government Area was sensitized to replace Amendokhian Secondary.

These sessions were used to increase awareness about trafficking risks, promote behavioural change, and foster a collective community response to child trafficking. School children and community members were exposed to the harsh realities of child trafficking, the exploitative situations many children are subjected to, deceptive tactics used by traffickers, such as offers that seem too good to be true, and pressure to act without consultation. Participants were encouraged to take an active role in identifying potential victims, disseminating preventive messages, and providing support and referrals in trafficking cases.

In some communities, parents expressed deep concern over an emerging trend where children leave home with traffickers without their parents'



knowledge. They emphasized the need for more targeted engagement with both in-school and out-of-school children to help them better understand the dangers of trafficking schemes,

which are often disguised as promising opportunities for a better future.

During the school sessions, the importance of knowledge and awareness as the first line of defense against child trafficking



was raised in the various schools, and students were encouraged to educate their peers and families about trafficking risks and to utilize local child protection committees for reporting suspicious activities. One student shared how her father prevented a trafficker from taking her sister, questioning the trafficker's intentions when she claimed she wanted to help the family.

Some of the children also sought clarification on how to report suspected cases of child trafficking, and they were linked to the Community and Local Government Child Protection actors, with the contact details of key personnel shared with them, along with those of Uromi JDPCI, to ensure they had access to the necessary support structures. A total of 135 persons (56 males and 79 females) across the five communities and 620 students (266 males and 354 females) were reached across the six schools.

Formation of Child Champion Clubs in Schools and Communities

Following the series of sensitization conducted in the newly engaged communities and schools, Child Champion Clubs were formed in the six schools and five communities.

This initiative served as an essential platform for the continuous engagement of children to learn more about the risks of child trafficking. It also provided an opportunity to equip them to take on peer education roles and protect themselves and their peers from child trafficking.



A total of 59 Students (14 males and 45 females) were inaugurated as members of the child champion clubs across six schools, while 51 persons (21 males and 30 females) were inaugurated in the five communities. This brought the total number of Child Champion Clubs to 15 in the community and 15 in Schools. Thus, expanding the reach and impact of the project towards reducing the prevalence of child trafficking in Edo State.



During the inaugural meetings with the clubs across the schools and communities, Uromi JDPCI raised awareness about the AACTING project and the Implementing Partners. Participants were enlightened about the project's objectives and the relevance of establishing Child Champion Clubs in schools and communities. Uromi JDPCI expressed its commitment to equipping the children with essential knowledge about child trafficking, while introducing them to their roles as Child Champions and ambassadors against child trafficking.



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Formation of Child Protection Groups in Five Communities

Uromi JDPCI also inaugurated Community Child Protection Groups (CPGs) in the five communities that were sensitized within the quarter.



The purpose was to provide a support base for the child champion clubs in their various communities and to strengthen local efforts in combating child trafficking and safeguarding children's rights. Community

members who expressed a commitment to actively participate in the protection of children were selected and inaugurated. They were introduced to the roles and responsibilities of the CPGs, with a focus on raising awareness, reporting trafficking cases, and ensuring the protection of vulnerable children. A total of 78 persons (40 males and 38 females) were inducted into the groups across the five communities

Strengthening Child Protection Groups at the Community Level

At the community level, we facilitated the fourth quarterly meeting with Child Protection Groups in eleven communities across five Local Government Areas. This platform provided an opportunity for learning, experience-sharing, and feedback to strengthen local efforts in combating child trafficking. While we continued our engagement with the pre-existing groups, we kick-started sessions with the newly formed groups. The sessions reached 108 individuals, including 68 females and 40 males, across the following communities: Efandion, Amendokhian, Obeidu, Usenu, Iduwele-Ewu, Opoji, Ebelle, Ewossa, Igubeen, Eguare- Ekpoma and Ogwa.

The discussions with the pre-existing groups explored the national and international laws designed to protect children from trafficking, as well as



the agencies responsible for addressing trafficking issues in Nigeria and Edo State. The sessions provided group members with the opportunity to engage with the topic as they gained valuable insights into the provisions of these laws and the roles of the relevant agencies, while the new groups were introduced to the meaning, types and forms of child trafficking.



The groups reported their interventions, progress made since the previous quarter, and emerging trafficking trends within their communities. They also shared challenges and made commitments for the next quarter. The Child Protection Groups (CPGs) across the communities demonstrated increasing activism in preventing child trafficking.



Several successful interventions were reported, which included awareness campaigns on the dangers of child trafficking in markets, schools, and on a one-on-one basis. They also reported their efforts at preventing trafficking attempts, such as stopping young girls from being trafficked to Senegal and curbing unsafe migration attempts by young



boys. They further identified and intervened in cases of domestic servitude and exploitation, and provided counselling and psychosocial support to survivors of human trafficking. They reported that they ensured the protection of vulnerable children by promoting the re-enrollment, retention, and progression of out-of-school children in schools.

Their commitment and understanding of their roles as Community Child Protection Groups were applauded. They were encouraged to sustain the increased confidence with which they shared insights on emerging trafficking trends and took decisive actions to protect vulnerable children within their communities, thus reflecting the impact of continuous capacity-building provided by the project through the quarterly sessions.

HEALTH AND OVC – USAID-THRIVE PROJECT

Supporting Children Living with HIV: In line with our commitment to strengthening the health and well-being of Children Living with HIV (CLHIV), Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) continued its mission to provide compassionate, targeted, and holistic support to CLHIV and their caregivers across Edo Central. Between January and March 2025, our team reached 119 CLHIV and their caregivers through structured household monitoring, psychosocial counselling, financial literacy support, and critical healthcare referrals. These interventions were designed to enhance treatment adherence, mitigate stigma, and promote resilience among affected households.

Household Monitoring Visits: Providing a Lifeline: Our dedicated team conducted extensive household visits to assess the living conditions, health status, and psychosocial needs of CLHIV and their caregivers. These visits offered a vital opportunity to provide one-on-one counselling to help the children cope with challenges such as trauma, fear of disclosure, discrimination, and emotional distress. The visits also offered an opportunity for targeted referrals and follow-up checks to ensure that children remained on track with their Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) appointments and treatment schedules. Financial education was delivered to the caregivers to equip them with skills in budgeting, saving, and basic investment. This economic empowerment component aims to reduce financial stressors that may hinder treatment adherence and household stability.

These home visits enabled our team to identify specific needs, track progress, and provide practical solutions tailored to each family's unique context.

ART Refills, Viral Load Monitoring, and Re-engagement: During the quarter, Uromi JDPCI mobilized and supported 46 CLHIV for ART drug refills and viral load sample collection at designated healthcare facilities. Our counsellors provided pre- and post-test support, reinforcing the importance of consistent treatment to achieve viral suppression.

We also successfully tracked and re-engaged seven CLHIV who had defaulted on their treatment plans. These children were identified through community networks and peer referrals, and our outreach efforts ensured they were safely returned to care and resumed their ART regimen.

Success Story: From Stigma to Justice: In one of the communities in Esan North East LGA, we encountered a young CLHIV who had become a target of defamation and discrimination by peers and community members. The emotional toll was immense, but Uromi JDPCI stepped in to provide legal support and advocacy. Through collaborative efforts, we ensured the child's right to dignity and protection was upheld, and those responsible were held accountable. Today, the child continues to receive medical care in a safe and more supportive environment.

This case is evidence of our broader mission to provide health-related support and defend the fundamental rights of children living with HIV.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Promoting Environmental Sustainability

The Environment and Climate Change Desk of Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) remains steadfast in its mission to promote sustainable environmental practices and address climate-related challenges across rural communities. In the first quarter of 2025, the desk spearheaded two major activities: an advocacy engagement with the Head of the Environmental Department of Esan North East LGA, and a sensitization campaign on the dangers of bush burning. Both interventions were geared toward promoting environmental responsibility and resilience.

Advocacy Visit to the Head of Environmental Department, Esan North East LGA

As part of ongoing efforts to improve environmental health and sanitation within Uromi, Uromi JDPCI held an advocacy engagement with the Head of the Environmental Department in Esan North East LGA. The meeting, which brought together 14 stakeholders (9 females and 5 males), focused on advancing sustainable waste management and reducing indiscriminate refuse dumping in the area. Delivering the advocacy message, the Executive Director of Uromi

JDPCI, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo, expressed deep concern over the growing environmental degradation caused by unregulated waste disposal. He stressed the urgent need for a collaborative approach to prevent health hazards, protect the environment, and improve the town's public image.

In response, the environmental department highlighted their ongoing efforts, including the evacuation of refuse with support from sanitation officers and waste managers. However, she also acknowledged key obstacles to effective waste management, such as: Waste from homes ending up on major roads and market routes, a high number of unregistered residents, poor household waste management culture, lack of political will and undue interference and inadequate funding and delay in the release of resources to the Department

To address these issues, several recommendations emerged:

- Advocacy visits to local authorities, landlord associations, religious leaders, market unions, and security agencies
- Establishment of a joint task force against indiscriminate dumping
- Increased public awareness campaigns on proper waste management

- Creation of an alternative dumping space behind the market
- Installation of surveillance cameras at strategic points to ensure compliance

This engagement marked a critical milestone in building a collaborative framework between Uromi JDPCI and the Environmental Department to drive policy reform and sustainable urban cleanliness.

Sensitization Campaign on Bush Burning in Ekekhen, Igueben

In a continued effort to mitigate climate risks and promote eco-friendly agricultural practices, Uromi JDPCI conducted a sensitization session on the dangers of bush burning with a group of local farmers in Ekekhen, Igueben LGA. A total of 17 participants (13 females and 4 males) attended the session.

The campaign focused on educating farmers about the causes, consequences, and alternatives to bush burning. Bush burning as commonly practiced by some farmers during the dry season to clear farmland or flush out game, poses significant environmental threats such as:

- Air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions
- Soil degradation and loss of nutrients
- Biodiversity loss and habitat destruction
- Increased risk of wildfires and damage to infrastructure

Participants shared personal experiences, acknowledging the harmful effects of uncontrolled fires. While many viewed bush burning as a traditional and expedient method, they recognized the need for change.

As part of the training, farmers were introduced to sustainable alternatives, including:

- Composting organic waste to naturally enrich the soil
- Crop rotation to maintain soil health and fertility
- Clearing and gathering vegetation into heaps before controlled burning, minimizing the risk of fire spread

The farmers were also encouraged to become peer educators—sharing knowledge with fellow farmers, hunters, and community members to reduce the prevalence of bush burning and support long-term environmental stewardship.

CORRECTIONAL CENTER APOSTOLATE

Restoring Hope Behind Bars: Uromi JDPCI'S Outreach To Ubiaja Correctional Center

As part of its restorative justice and human dignity mandate, Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) continues to shine a light of hope within the walls of Ubiaja Correctional Center. Through monthly visits, the organization provides spiritual guidance, legal counseling, and emotional support to inmates, encouraging rehabilitation, reconciliation, and a renewed sense of purpose. Between January and March 2025,



Uromi JDPCI reached over 100 inmates, made of male and females, with messages of forgiveness, healing, integrity, and peace. Each session was themed, scripture-based, and deeply interactive, reflecting Uromi JDPCI's holistic approach to inmate support.

The year began with a visit on January 24, led by the Assistant Executive Director, Rev. Fr. Ferguson Ukpebor, alongside the Legal Officer and support team. The session, themed "*How to Get Renewed Hope and Cultivate a Better Future*", focused on inner transformation through spiritual growth and self-reflection.

Inmates were encouraged to let go of past mistakes and embrace God's promise of new beginnings, drawing from Isaiah 43:18-19 and 2 Corinthians 5:17. An inspiring moment occurred when an inmate confessed he had planned revenge against his brother over a land dispute but chose forgiveness after the session, calling it his "turning point." The visit reached 36 inmates (31 males, 5 females), with 12 receiving legal counseling and 11 opting for spiritual support. Five



inmates expressed interest in Catechism classes, and eight received rosaries, alongside the distribution of 20 *Our Daily Strength* prayer manuals.

On February 26, Uromi JDPCI returned to Ubiaja Correctional Center with the theme: "*The Possibility of Making Amends with Victims and Restoring Personal Integrity*." Drawing from Matthew 5:23-24 and Luke 19:8, the session emphasized repentance, restitution, and moral renewal. Inmates explored what it means to take accountability and rebuild their lives through honesty, humility, and a commitment to justice. Proverbs 11:3 and 1 John 1:9 provided a biblical foundation for the call to integrity.

The impact of the session was evident in heartfelt testimonies. One inmate resolved to disclose the identity of an innocent person falsely implicated in his case, freeing them from undeserved punishment. Another reflected on how negative peer influence led him astray after an earlier chance at freedom and committed to making different choices moving forward.

The conversation also tackled the dangers of seeking revenge. Inmates were reminded that true freedom lies not just in release from prison but in freeing the heart from resentment. They were urged that choosing peace over retaliation could be life-saving and life-giving.

The March 28 visit focused on the theme: "*Finding Inner Peace*." Amid the emotional and spiritual turmoil that incarceration often brings, the session offered inmates tools for cultivating lasting peace through faith.

Referencing John 14:27 and Philippians 4:6-7, inmates were encouraged to surrender anxiety, trust in God, and embrace His peace. The importance of forgiveness in both giving and receiving was also emphasized, with Matthew 6:12 and 1 John 1:9 guiding the discussion. Galatians 5:22-23 and Proverbs 3:5-6 further reinforced the role of the Holy Spirit and divine trust in personal transformation. During the interactive session, one inmate who had become an avid Bible reader was encouraged to live out the lessons he had learned.

Another sought advice on dealing with individuals who refuse to forgive; he was reassured that healing takes time and is often built through consistent transformation.

That day, 27 inmates were reached. Five received spiritual counseling, ten sought legal assistance, and eight signed up for Catechism classes.

Throughout the first quarter of 2025, Uromi JDPCI's visits to Ubiaja Correctional Center have sown seeds of hope, healing, and faith.

These engagements were more than just mere visits, as they were lifelines that reminded inmates that their pasts do not define their future and that redemption is always within reach. Uromi JDPCI, through legal support and pastoral care, continues to foster an environment of accountability, forgiveness, and spiritual growth, proving that transformation behind bars is not only possible but that it is already happening.

PARISH JDPC

Strengthening Parish Structure for Justice and Peace

In the first quarter of 2025, Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) intensified efforts to strengthen Parish Justice Development and Peace Commissions (JDPC) across Uromi Diocese. This was done through virtual engagement, capacity-building activities, and structural expansion. Uromi JDPCI continued to empower parish communities to promote justice, peace, and active citizenship from the grassroots.

Virtual Engagement: Uromi JDPCI organized an online meeting for Parish JDPC members using WhatsApp platform. The meeting was used as a platform to assess progress, share experiences, and reinforce the structure of Parish JDPCs across the Diocese. Seven parishes participated in the session, out of which four parishes submitted their activity reports. This virtual gathering served as both a review mechanism and a community-building tool.

Follow-up Calls to Strengthen Local Action: To ensure continuity and support local momentum, follow-up phone calls were made to Parish JDPC members. These calls focused on monitoring the

implementation of previous action plans, particularly step-down trainings, and offering technical support to ensure the sustainability of Parish JDPC structures.

Step-Down Trainings on Roles and Responsibilities: A significant achievement this quarter was the successful facilitation of step-down trainings in six parishes. These sessions enhanced members' understanding of the JDPC mission and their specific roles in promoting justice and peace. In total, 48 members (22 females and 26 males) were trained.

These trainings contributed to improved coordination and clarity of purpose within the participating Parish JDPCs.



Inauguration of New Parish JDPC: A major milestone was the inauguration of a new Parish JDPC at Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Egbele Uromi, with 9

persons in attendance (6F, 3M). This inauguration brings the total number of active Parish JDPCs in the Diocese to 18, demonstrating steady progress in diocesan-wide engagement.

MICRO Credit Desk

Building Livelihoods, Restoring Dignity: The Impact of Uromi JDPCI's Micro Credit Scheme

In the heart of Edo Central, where small-scale enterprise and agriculture sustain families and entire communities, Uromi Justice Development Peace and Caritas Initiatives (Uromi JDPCI) continues to champion economic justice through its Micro Credit Scheme. In this quarter, the scheme strengthened its mission of empowering vulnerable individuals, especially women, by supporting small businesses and farming initiatives across 18 rural communities. The focus in this quarter was on giving access to capital and equipping beneficiaries with the tools to manage and grow their businesses.

The Micro Credit Scheme reached over a hundred individuals through its community-based approach, using group structures that foster mutual support, accountability, and shared learning. The beneficiaries, many of whom are women working as petty traders, smallholder farmers, or informal producers, received support to grow their enterprises, increase household income, and improve their standard of living.

What makes this intervention unique is its holistic nature. Each loan disbursed is accompanied by financial literacy training that helps beneficiaries understand how to plan, save, and invest. Participants are introduced to simple but powerful concepts in

budgeting, record keeping, reinvestment, and goal-setting. This combination of access and education builds not just businesses, but also confidence, independence, and resilience.

Success in the Story of One Woman

Among the many inspiring stories in this quarter is that of a woman from Igueben, a member of one of the groups. She began with a modest loan to support her provision store, which had struggled to meet local demand. With her new capital, she was able to stock more products and expand her customer base. Her daily earnings grew, and she was soon able to meet her family's needs with less stress.

Because of her consistency in repayment and clear progress, she qualified for a second, larger loan. This enabled her to further diversify her inventory and stabilize her business. She spoke passionately about the encouragement the scheme offered, especially the low interest rate, which made growth possible without the fear of being trapped in debt.

Her story is just one among many proof that small, well-structured interventions can spark long-term transformation in families and communities.

