

## The Community Paralegals and Village Mediation Programme (CPVMP)

The training for potential Community Paralegals and Village Mediators in Enugu state has commenced. This activity is part of J4A's support to pilot a Community Paralegal and Village Mediation Programme (CPVMP) in two rural communities in the state - Ogwuogo and Nara in Enugu East and Nkanu East Local Government Areas (LGAs) respectively. Already two training sessions have held. The first was a one week foundation course on the basic elements of paralegal practice and the second was a week's training on mediation skills.

The CPVMP is being implemented in partnership with the Civil Resource Development and Documentation Centre (CiRDDoC), an Enugu-based civil society organisation; the Paralegal Advisory Services Institute (PASI), Malawi; and the Institute for Professional Legal Training of the University of Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa. The Programme will build the capacity of members of Enugu's rural community to manage their own disputes by training, mentoring and supervising potential volunteer paralegals and mediators who are resident within the target communities.

The foundation course which held in May 2012 was for twenty-eight potential Community Paralegals. Of these (twenty-eight), only twenty-one (fifteen male and six female) were selected to undergo the second more intense five-day course in mediation skills which took place in June. This second event also served as the opportunity to identify a cadre of 'trainee teachers' who will act as trainers of potential village mediators. Those assessed to have the ability to be trainers / teachers will over a period of six months receive additional mentoring and will be invited to attend a Certificate Course in Paralegal Assistance training organised by the Institute for Professional Legal Training of the University of Kwa Zulu Natal in conjunction with the Paralegal Advisory Services Institute between July and October 2012.

The CPVMP seeks to address the limited availability of human rights based mediation services in rural communities. The existing government sponsored systems are urban-based with little or no outreach capacity and limited scope for expansion given the cost of employing lawyers and rent-



Participants of the foundational training course for 28 potential Community Paralegals



Participants at the 5 day mediation skills training

ing accommodation in multiple locations for what is not considered to be a high priority function for government. The skills transferred to the communities through the CPVMP will improve resolution of non-criminal matters such as family disputes, land matters, local trade and neighbourhood issues, as well as appropriate misdemeanors and petty offences. More serious cases will be handled by the Community Paralegals through the provision of legal information, guidance and onward referral to a lawyer or to the police if the case requires.

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## J4A's support to the Federal Ministry of Justice (FMOJ) and Anti-Corruption Agencies (ACAs)

### Training of draftsmen from the Federal Ministry of Justice

Law reform or legal reform is the process of examining existing laws, and advocating and implementing changes in a legal system, usually with the aim of enhancing justice or the efficiency of the legal system.

The Justice for All Programme (J4A) set up a Legal Review and Implementation Team in 2012 to look at the laws within the anti-corruption sector, identify gaps and develop intervention plans to address these gaps with a view to improving the enforcement capacity of the Anti-Corruption Agencies (ACAs) in Nigeria.

The Team started work in January 2012, and has trained one hundred and forty lawyers of the Federal Ministry of Justice. The aim of the training was to develop legal drafts-

men (drafters) with cutting-edge drafting skills that meet international best practices. Fifty-eight of the lawyers from among the one hundred and forty were given the opportunity to become trainers.

### Financial Crimes Investigators certification by the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (NIALS)

Following the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Nigeria Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) and NIALS, courses on financial investigation run by the NFIU and other Anti-Corruption Agencies will be professionalised and certified by NIALS. This decision was taken to help motivate prospective investigators within Anti-Corruption Agencies make financial investigation a career; and to increase the capacity of current investigators to detect financial crimes.

**Transparency International (TI) corruption index of 2010 rated Nigeria as number 136 out of 146 most corrupt countries in the world. Corruption in Nigeria translates to widespread poverty, crime, violence, and underdevelopment.**

### New Bills and Revised Acts on Anti-Corruption in Nigeria

The Legal Review and Implementation Team have to date developed five new bills:

- Proceeds of Crime Bill
- Mutual Legal Assistant Bill
- Administration of Criminal Justice Bill
- Whistle Blower Bill
- Witness Protection Bill

They also have reviewed four existing laws to further strengthen the Anti-Corruption Agencies (ACAs):

- Anti Money Laundering Act (AML)
- Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) Act
- Public Complaints Commission (PCC) Act
- The Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) Act

The final versions of these Bills and Acts are due for submission to the Honourable Minister for Justice and Attorney General of the Federation.

### Federal Ministry of Justice drafts regulation on the Recovery of Proceeds of Crime

As part of the legal review process, the Federal Ministry of Justice Working Group on Asset Recovery drafted a regulation on the Recovery of Proceeds of Crime. This regulation will guide Anti-Corruption Agencies (ACAs) in the recovery of stolen assets pending the enactment into law of the Proceeds of Crime Bill. The regulation was drafted based on the powers of the Attorney General to regulate asset forfeiture procedures as provided in the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Act, the National Agency for Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP) Act, and the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) Act.

J4A's support to this regulation is aimed at closing the existing gaps in Nigerian laws as well as to reduce the incentives, and increase the risks associated with the stealing of public funds by civil servants.

## Network meeting of Justice Sector Reform Teams (JRTs) in Nigeria

The Federal Justice Sector Reform Coordinating Committee (FJSRCC) in collaboration with the Justice for All Programme (J4A) recently organised a workshop for Justice Reform Teams (JRTs). The event which held in Abuja brought together representatives of seven Justice Reform Teams (Ekiti, Enugu, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Kwara and the Federal team); and Attorney-Generals and Chief Judges of J4A's five new focal states - Niger, Zamfara, Anambra, Yobe and Katsina.

The aim of the workshop was to enable JRTs review experiences, exchange information and look at common problems that justice sector reform teams in the country are trying to address, such as the slow speed of criminal justice delivery.

Declaring the workshop open, the Honourable Attorney-General of the Federation, Mohammed Bello Adoke, SAN, OFR, represented by the Solicitor-General of the Federal Ministry of Justice recalled the first meeting of the network in Kaduna in 2009 and noted how far the JRTs have come since then. He called on all states to participate fully in the networking process and encouraged all those states that do not yet have JRTs to create them as soon as possible.

JRTs at the workshop presented their initiatives, achievements and plans for the future. They also appealed to their respective state governments to assist in their funding to enable them achieve their goals. The workshop focused on pertinent challenges facing the sector like criminal justice delays, quality trials and the federal / state dichotomy. Experiences were shared across states and possible solutions were considered. Other issues discussed at the workshop included data / case tracking systems as presently operating in Kano, Enugu and Lagos states; abuse of processes, the role of police prosecutors and a proposed national prosecution policy as well as options to reduce trial days.

**“ It is no longer about laying blame but having a unified objective – what do we do to ensure speedy delivery of justice...? ”**

*Honourable Justice Darius Khobo, Chairperson, Kaduna Justice Sector Coordination Group*



Representatives of Justice Sector Reform Teams from Ekiti, Enugu, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, and Kwara states and the Federal team; and observers from Niger, Zamfara, Anambra, Yobe and Katsina states

## Tackling gender crimes through the establishment of Family Support Units (FSUs)

The Justice for All Programme (J4A) has commenced work on the establishment of Family Support Units (FSUs) incorporated into the Model Police Station (MPS) design. This support is expected to help the police improve their capacity to receive reports on gender related crimes, respond to them and resolve them. The presence of an FSU is expected to encourage more women, children and vulnerable people to report crimes committed against them.

The FSU will be staffed by specially trained police officers who will work in collaboration with relevant government agencies and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) on cases of sexual assault, child molestation/abuse, domestic violence, rape and other crime against women and children. This should ensure that victims of sexual abuse are able to access professional, and able police and social welfare services. The FSU will be equipped to undertake a thorough effective joint criminal investigation covering the issues of whether, from a police perspective, a crime has been committed and whether, from the social welfare perspective, the victim is in need of protection from further abuse from the perpetrator.

The first of the FSU's will be located at the Isokoko Model Police Station Agege LGA, Lagos State. At the same time, J4A is supporting the establishment of a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). The SARC will be set up in a medical facility (a general hospital or a local primary health care centre) for easy access by victims of assaults and will provide for forensic medical examinations, medical treatment for victims, medical

evidence for any court proceedings and longer term support (by SARC counsellors) for the child or woman victims. The SARC will work closely with the FSUs and will also have links to women's shelters in the state (where they exist) and will be able to provide some degree of safety for the victims.

The FSU will also play a role in sensitising society on issues of gender crime and violence against women and children, thereby increasing the social awareness and willingness of communities to report such crimes, demand an effective police response, and increase the likelihood that the police will be able to respond to and possibly resolve such crimes.



Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Umar Manko's visit to the Isokoko Model Police Station (seated 4th from right)

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### Coming up...

In the coming months, J4A will:

- start work on the second pilot of the *Speeding Up Criminal Justice* project. This work will begin with a presentation to the Nigeria Prisons Service (NPS) headquarters, Abuja by J4A, the Enugu Controller of Prisons and PRAWA on the progress so far in the Enugu pilot;
- commence mediation skills training for mediators of the Citizens Mediation Centres in Lagos which will be delivered by the Lagos Multi-Door Court House;
- organise a *Connecting with Communities* training for all Commissioners of Police nationwide;
- carry out a broad range of surveys across Nigeria to assess current levels of satisfaction and knowledge of the justice system.