

Human Rights Agenda Network - Ensuring the Voice of the People is Heard



J4A awarded a grant to the Human Rights Agenda Network (HRAN), aimed at developing the capacity of the network to provide an effective and well respected platform for a coordinated and collaborative civil society in its fight against human rights abuses.

In the last year, since J4A assisted HRAN with the development of a more strategic and structured approach to the way it works, it has increased its membership by 25% and it has developed a mutually beneficial relationship with the National Human Rights Commission. By October 2014, HRAN had issued 37 Human Rights Alerts and media coverage of human rights issues in general and now has a total of 278 registered members. The Network is regularly asked to participate in key discussions at local and national level on human rights issues.

“J4A’s grant has allowed for the seamless sharing of information and experiences thereby strengthening the capacity of HRAN’s registered members to respond individually and collectively to human rights violations throughout Nigeria .”

Coordinator
HRAN

HRAN has trained a total of 429 persons while step down training has covered a total of 339 participants across the country. Along with these capacity building workshops, the Network has continued to play an important role in galvanising Civil Society response to emerging human rights, democracy and justice issues in the country and has acquired prominence as a leading voice for civil society in the media.

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Changing the Way Voluntary Policing Services are Rendered in Kaduna State

The J4A programme, in collaboration with the CLEEN Foundation, replicated the Voluntary Policing Service (VPS) training in Sabon Tasha and Zaria City in Kaduna State. The training which took place in March 2014 involved a total of 160 VPS leaders and managers. The course was aimed at improving participants' knowledge on human rights, basic policing skills, organizational and conflict management skills.

The post-training evaluation commissioned by J4A six months after the training revealed that VPS members have improved understanding and attitudes in rendering policing services to their community members particularly on human rights issues.

93% of the respondents confirmed that they now use the skills, tools and techniques acquired at the training in solving problems and carrying out their duties. They also revealed that they refer back to the training material when they experience difficulties in their jobs.

The respondents also confirmed that there is an improvement in the leadership of various VPS group in Kaduna State.

The post training evaluation discovered a genuine sense of change in practice in line with what had been taught at the training, with clear indications that work has improved and is now more efficient and more stringently observes human rights. The consequence has been to improve the relationship between the VPS organisations and their respective communities.

"I always refer to the human rights lecture every time a suspect is brought into the office".

VPS participant,
Kaduna

Citizen's Mediation Centre Gains Government Support

The Citizens' Mediation Center (CMC) Lagos supported by J4A organized a 15th year anniversary on the 28th of September 2014. This event was aimed at showcasing the impact the center has made on the lives of the citizens of Lagos State.

The occasion was attended by traditional rulers, directors of CMCs from 16 states, representatives of other justice agencies (Police, Judiciary, Prisons and the Ministry of Justice), users of the CMCs and other government agencies like the Ministry of Women Affairs, Academia, Legal practitioners, Donors, etc.

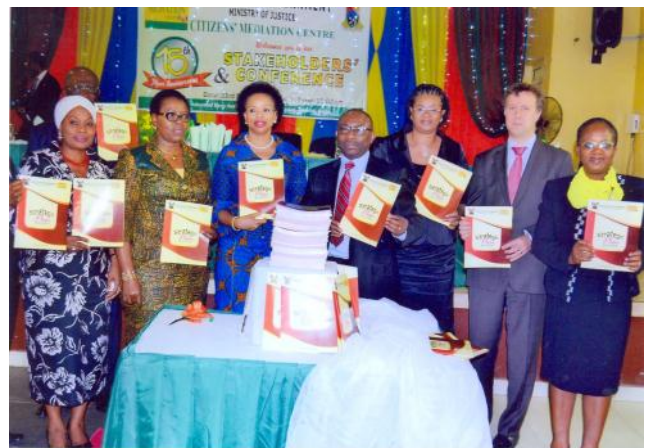
The event was used as an opportunity to call for more support from both the state government and non-governmental agencies. It also sought to enlighten participants on the importance of CMCs and also promote the concept of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).

There was a consensus that there is a need to increase the use of mediation in resolving not only civil disputes but also minor criminal offences and the need to create more centers. Government participants also promised to provide more support for the CMCs.

It is expected that participants from other CMCs in various states will replicate some of the successful approaches that were implemented by the Lagos CMCs.

"I am comfortable using the services of the centre my mediator has been very professional. The high costs of lawyers and the time taken to resolve disputes at court has made me prefer using the mediation centre".

CMC User
Lagos State,



Garki Market Safety Partnership: Setting the Pace for Others

The J4A programme is providing support for the replication of a Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in Garki Model Market, Abuja. This support is aimed at promoting a trust based relationship between all market stakeholders including the police, so as to ensure a safe environment for all users.

The Garki Market CSP, which had its inaugural meeting on the 18th of June 2014, has already started delivering results and making changes. The most noticeable changes include the market access control and the newly acquired security equipment deployed at the entrance of the market, the clean and serene entrance, which used to be a Keke Napep Car Park and the vibrant market management company. These changes were made possible as a result of the agreement reached between all the stakeholders during the CSP meetings.

The Garki Market Management Company also revealed that the CSP has added value to the way they perform their duties mainly because the CSP is used as an avenue for assessing the performance of the services they deliver to the market users.



“Before now there was no platform for discussing issues or receiving feedback on our performance but with the CSP we now receive feedback and ideas for carrying out our duties”.

Manager Garki Model Market,
Abuja Management Market

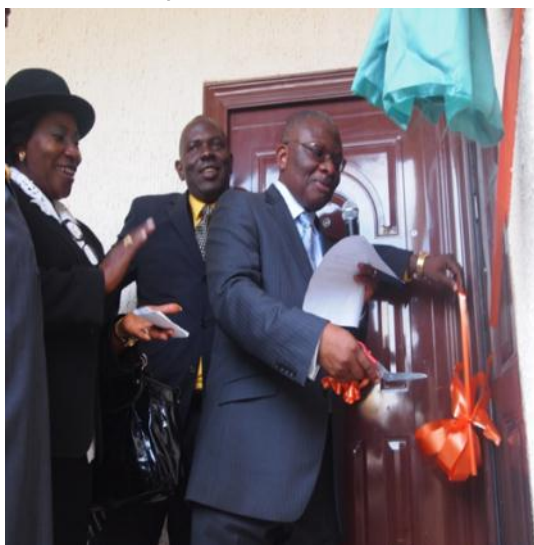
“The CSP has created a platform where the voices of the masses can be heard.”

CSP member,
Abuja

Enugu High Court Commissions its First Witness Support Unit

The J4A programme supported the establishment of a Witness Support Unit (WSU) at the premises of the Enugu State judiciary, which was commissioned by the Attorney General of the state in June 2014.

The WSU was established to provide a focal point and advisory services for witnesses who have been invited or summoned to testify in courts cases.



The Attorney General of Enugu State at the commissioning of the WSU

J4A renovated and furnished the WSU facility and also provided technical support to enhance the capacity of staff members of the WSU in order to improve service delivery. For instance, WSU staff now provide information on the location of specific courts, court procedures and the role of witnesses.

This initiative is facilitating the provision of care and direct support services to vulnerable witnesses in Enugu State. This means that witnesses now have a safe waiting place prior to the hearing of the cases. It is expected that this will lead to an increase in the number of witnesses who are willing to testify in courts. This will reduce the length of time awaiting trial persons spend in custody.

Northern Traditional Rulers Endorse J4A Capacity Building Initiative and Call for Replication

Traditional rulers (TRs) in northern Nigeria have expressed satisfaction with J4A's intervention to improve the capacity of TRs to settle disputes. They also called for the replication of the intervention in more states in the north. The traditional rulers made this known at the Traditional Rulers Summit organized by the Jigawa State government in collaboration with J4A. The event was aimed at showcasing the impact of the intervention in the pilot communities.

At the summit the Jigawa state governor publicly agreed to support the replication of the intervention in all the five emirate councils in the state.

The summit provided an opportunity for the leaders of the formal justice system (represented by the Attorneys Generals and representatives from the JRTs) to have a better understanding of the informal justice system and how it complements the formal justice system.



Northern Traditional Rulers and the Governor of Jigawa State, at the Traditional Rulers Summit

The Nigerian Police Force Creates a Gender Unit



The Inspector General of Police, (IGP) Suleiman Abba has appointed CSP Olabisi Kolawole as the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) Gender Adviser to head the Gender Unit. CSP Kolawole is a member of the Technical Working Group and the Change Management Team supported by the J4A programme to assist in the formulation of core strategies designed to sustain policing reform in the NPF.

This means that the NPF can now deal with all gender related issues using a holistic approach. J4A will continue to provide advice and assistance to support reform initiatives in the NPF.

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We welcome your feedback and contributions.

Email: info@j4a-nigeria.org

J4A Programme Offices

Abuja

Tel: 07098121548-49

Enugu

Tel: 042290962

Kano

Tel: 064969112

Lagos

Tel: 018418479