

## Fact or Fiction: The Nigerian Justice Sector<sup>1</sup>

- 70% of the prison population are awaiting trial prisoners (ATPs)



*The Minister of Interior, Mr. Abba Moro, confirmed in March 2013 that the total prison population in Nigeria is 54,000, of which 38,000 are awaiting trial and only 16,000 have actually been convicted.*

- The Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Bill (VAPP) has been passed



*On 14 March 2013, the VAPP bill, championed by the Legislative Advocacy Coalition on Violence Against Women (LACVAW) was passed by the House of Representatives (the lower house of the National Assembly).*

- The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has secured a restraining order on the United Kingdom accounts of fraudsters of the fuel subsidy regime



*The Chairman of the Commission made this known on Wednesday 27 March 2013 when the British High Commissioner to Nigeria made a courtesy visit to the EFCC office in Abuja.*

- Nigerians are generally dissatisfied with policing services in the country



*A survey carried out by Justice for All shows that the level of satisfaction with the Nigeria Police Force in Lagos went from 47% in 2011 to 63% in 2012.*

<sup>1</sup>The term justice sector is used here in a broad sense, comprising the judiciary, justice and interior ministries, the police, the prisons system, human rights bodies, non-state mechanisms (e.g. traditional systems of justice) and civil society organisations involved in justice work.



Girls at play in Kano

## Using traditional systems to improve justice delivery in Northern Nigeria

J4A is working with traditional rulers in Jigawa state to improve their knowledge and skills to deliver justice. J4A's support is based on the findings of an assessment study of traditional justice systems in the Dutse emirate. The study showed that traditional rulers had not received any formal training when appointed to their positions.

Traditional justice systems are based on the use of mediation and conciliation by locally appointed traditional rulers. In the north of Nigeria where a majority of people live in rural communities and access to formal justice systems is limited, it is becoming increasingly evident that traditional justice systems are meeting the needs of the poor and disadvantaged in resolving disputes even in these modern times.

To address the shortcomings revealed by the assessment, J4A facilitated the development of training materials and delivery of training to ward heads, village heads and district heads in the emirate. 100 traditional rulers, including one from each of four other emirates in the state, were trained on the basic principles of law, human rights, alternative dispute resolution and Islamic family law.

The traditional rulers trained are now able to resolve disputes based on knowledge and not instinct. 39 traditional rulers' wives were among those trained to provide services to women who are more comfortable sharing their disputes, especially marital, with only other women. The training has provided better opportunities for citizens of the state to access justice.

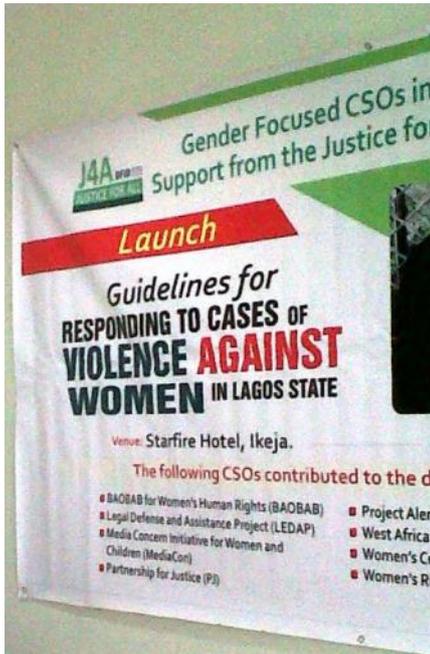
## In this issue:

**PAGE 2** Building basic policing skills in the Police

**PAGE 3** Providing free legal advice in Lagos

**PAGE 4** J4A Highlights

## Coordination group on VAW in Lagos state: making a difference



Banner at launch of the guidelines for responding to cases of violence against women in Lagos state

With J4A's support, a coordination group on violence against women in Lagos has been formed. The group is called Working Group of Eight on Violence Against Women (WG8 on VAW) and is made up of eight civil society organisations.

The group was formed in response to the concern of the rising prevalence of violence against women in Nigeria and the world. According to a recent newspaper report, "Violence kills more women than road accident, malaria" (Vanguard, Tuesday 12 March 2013).

In 2012, WG8 on VAW organised some events during the '16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence', a campaign to raise awareness on gender-based violence as a human rights issue at the local, national and international levels.

One of the events was to increase public awareness of domestic violence was at a bus garage in a densely populated area of Lagos. Over 2000 stickers with anti-violence messages were distributed to bus drivers, traders, commuters and street (area) boys. Questions on gender based violence including locations of victim referral centres were also answered.

As a result of the events during the campaign period, the organisations that make up WG8 on VAW report an increase in the number of domestic violence cases reported in person to their offices.

*"...efficient justice delivery is central to our national economic growth and development."*

Mohammed Bello Adoke, SAN, Attorney General of the Federation and Minister for Justice

## Building basic policing skills in the Nigeria Police Force

If the Nigeria Police Force is to change from the 'as is' situation to the 'to be' vision in the reformation agenda of the Inspector General of Police, basic policing skills need to be developed in its officers. To achieve this, in January this year, J4A designed and delivered a training of trainers course to police officers in Lagos. The aim of this was to create a pool of competent officers who would then train other officers from the rank of constable to inspector.

The 10 officers selected to be trained as trainers for the Basic Policing Skills Course were chosen after an intensive selection process. Their training was delivered in four phases: preparation, presentation, practice and performance. At the end of the two and a half week exercise, each participant was provided with a comprehensive training manual and training materials.

"You have helped us to grow in our professional ability so that we can choose the best way to pass on knowledge and teach others like you have thought us," said a police officer after the training. Police response to community needs often fall short of expectation due to the low skill levels of police officers preventing them from providing quality services to their communities.



Police officers on duty in Lagos

The Basic Policing Skills Course has been designed as a five-day course for a maximum of 15 police officers at a time. A total of 32 courses will be delivered to 431 officers from three divisions in Lagos (Isokoko, Adeniji Adele, and Ilupeju) between Monday 18 February to Friday 21 June 2013. Each course will have elements of organisational and personal ethics and values, joint problem solving, intelligence-led policing, neighbourhood policing and dealing with offences against women and children.

## Networking to prevent corruption

In a bid to prevent corruption and increase cooperation between anti-corruption agencies, civil society organisations, development partners and the public, a network was formed to monitor and evaluate the performance of anti-corruption agencies in February 2013.

The network called Network of Anti-Corruption Agencies, Civil Society Organisations and Media (NACAM) will be the platform on which J4A will work to increase preventive measures against corruption. Civil society organisations in the network are representative of grass root communities, youth, women and other vulnerable groups.



A culture of integrity, transparency and corruption prevention are the shared responsibility of all members of society. Ending corruption is not as easy as taking medicine for a cold. Citizens should be willing to cooperate with the relevant authorities in investigating corrupt practices, but can only do this when they have access to information. Anti-corruption agencies also need to have their capacity built to be able to prevent and combat corruption. They should be able to produce evidence based reports on corruption and the impact their organisations are having.

With J4A's support, NACAM has received training on how to monitor corruption in the country. The network will begin to use monitoring toolkits to find out where corruption occurs, what types of corruption are happening, corruption's effect on the nation and factors associated with or contributing to corruption. The training also covered how to support the media to report corruption issues more accurately.

*"Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are."*

Benjamin Franklin

## Lagos solicitors providing free legal advice at Isokoko

In July 2012, J4A introduced a legal advice and monitoring scheme as one of the initiatives at the Isokoko Model Police Station. The goal of the scheme is to improve the legal rights of suspects and arrested persons at the police station, and increase confidence in the police.

Under the Nigerian constitution, a maximum of 24 hours is allowed for the detention of a suspect by the police. Unfortunately, because no agency monitors this, many detainees fall between the cracks and end up spending a longer time in police cells.

The law firms, working on a weekly rotation, visit the police station daily, without prior notification to the police, to check on detainees and offer free legal advice. If any irregularities are discovered such as detainees being held for longer than 24 hours, the divisional police officer is immediately notified.

Six local law firms are currently involved in the scheme which is voluntary. Representatives from the National Human Rights Commission in Lagos also provide support. Entries in the station custody records show that the scheme is gradually reducing the number of detainees held for more than 24 hours in Isokoko

The success of this scheme has led to the state Commissioner of Police giving his approval on its expansion to 13 other police stations across the state. According to Mr Kunle Fadipe, one of the solicitors on the scheme, "If this is possible in Isokoko, it is possible everywhere!"



Information and suggestion boxes outside the Isokoko Model Police Station, Agege

## Enugu hosts the Justice Sector Reform Teams' network

In order to promote sharing of information and best practice between Justice Sector Reform Teams (JRTs), the Federal Ministry of Justice with J4A's support established a JRT network. The network meets twice a year to share experience, knowledge and lessons of best practice in justice reform.

The most recent JRT network meeting took place in Enugu in February this year. The meeting brought together more than 50 representatives from across Nigeria. Over the course of the two day meeting, delegates shared experiences and ideas on how to address many of the justice related problems facing Nigeria today, including how to promote professionalism and accountability in the justice sector.

At the end of the meeting, some of the lessons delegates had learnt were the need to always identify and address the root cause of any problem if the reform is to be sustained in the long term, and to use the collective influence of JRT members to find creative, locally-owned solutions to problems which focus on improving access to justice for all Nigerians.



Honourable Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice Enugu State, Anthony Ani giving the key note address

## Highlights from our work with JRTs

- There are currently 10 JRTs in Nigeria:
  - Federal Justice Sector Reform Coordinating Committee
  - Enugu State Justice Reform Team
  - Kaduna Justice Sector Coordination Group
  - Kano State Justice Sector Reform Team
  - Jigawa Justice Sector and Law Reform Commission
  - Katsina Justice Sector Reform Team
  - Bayelsa State Implementation Committee on Justice Sector Reform
  - Ekiti State Justice Reform Team
  - Kwara State Justice Reform Team
  - Anambra State Justice Reform Team
- Enugu JRT is working with the Nigeria Police Force on a pilot to reactivate Human Rights Desks in some police stations in the state.
- In 2012, the Nigerian Prison Service, with support from the Federal Justice Sector Reform Coordinating Committee developed new Prisons Standing Orders - a key step in helping to modernise the prisons.
- Between mid-2012 and early 2013 Kaduna JRT cleared a significant backlog of cases in a pilot group of magistrate courts through joint working between the police, Ministry of Justice and the courts.
- The Jigawa JRT has worked with a range of government and non-government partners to introduce nine Community Law Centres to provide free legal services at grass root level in the state.

## We want your ideas!

J4A is looking for photo ideas for the theme 'Ending corruption'

Send your suggestions to: [info@j4a-nigeria.org](mailto:info@j4a-nigeria.org)

The best ideas will win a small gift bag (please include your name and some information on why and what you think your idea will say about corruption and the need to end it)



### Ask J4A

Any questions? Any suggestions? Any contributions?  
Send an email to [info@j4a-nigeria.org](mailto:info@j4a-nigeria.org)

We hope to hear from you.

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