

## Towards Establishing a SARC Advocacy Network in Nigeria



J4A supported the inaugural meeting of the Network for Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs), which took place at the Nike Lake Hotel in Enugu State on 25 April, 2016. In attendance were commissioners, permanent secretaries, representatives of the Office of the Vice President, CSOs and SARC from 11 states (Kano, Kaduna, Ekiti, Jigawa, Cross River, Yobe, Zamfara, Akwa Ibom, Niger, Lagos, Enugu) and FCT who have either established or are in the process of establishing SARC in their states.

The event provided the opportunity for each team to share lessons and challenges experienced in building relationships and seeking support from their state governments. Six states revealed that they were making positive progress with their state government who are providing support for the identification, refurbishment and establishment of SARCs. For example, the Akwa Ibom State Governor has approved the establishment of three centres which have started renovation work but which are still looking for more resources to fund consumables. In Jigawa, the Justice Sector Reform Team has identified new facilities that will be used as SARCs in the state and the Rayuwa SARC in Niger State has treated a total of 81 survivors of sexual/gender based violence since its training from J4A in November 2015. The Mirabel and TAMAR Centres explained issues with sustainability, benefits of linkages with the police, the prosecution process, data collection and awareness-raising initiatives.

**“Since they were established to March 2016 the TAMAR and Mirabel Centres have handled a total number of 1771 clients, of these 1730 are females while 41 are males”.**

At the end of the meeting, participants drafted “Terms of Reference” for the establishment of the network of SARCs and agreed that one representative from each state would be nominated to establish a working group that will help with the process of developing the SARC Network. The aim is to ensure the sharing of best practice, the collection of comprehensive data from across the states and continued advocacy for the idea of SARCs.

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## Dissemination of Sharia Court Reform Initiatives: Collaboration with ABU Zaria

The J4A programme in partnership with Ahmadu Bello University's Centre for Islamic Legal Studies (CILS), Zaria held a dissemination workshop in Kaduna, in April 2016 for Grand Kadis from Sokoto, Zamfara, Katsina, Yobe, Kano, Bauchi and Gombe States.

The workshop was used to present J4A's supported reform initiatives in Sharia Courts in Jigawa state. The presentation highlighted interventions, results, impact and the challenges to implementing the initiatives. It also explored the possibilities of replicating the initiatives (inspection systems to strengthen oversight; establishment of information desks to assist court users; introduction of case/record management systems to provide information on performance of personnel and for evidence based decisions) in the participating states.

Participants welcomed the initiatives and identified some of the specific interventions they would like replicated in the Sharia Courts in their respective states and revealed challenges faced by their Sharia Courts of Appeal in fulfilling their mandates. It was observed that there is need for uniformity in the operations of the Sharia Courts in Nigeria. To achieve this, they agreed the need to establish a forum that will bring Grand Kadis together periodically to discuss challenges faced by the courts and share reform initiatives in their respective states.

It was also agreed that CILS, which is charged with research and training on Islamic legal issues, should take responsibility for the training of Sharia Court personnel.

**“... after listening to presentations about J4A Sharia Court reforms in Jigawa State, Katsina State is definitely interested in all of them. The Grand Kadi should should champion this cause”.**

Fatima Jibo  
Solicitor General and Permanent Secretary,  
Ministry of Justice, Katsina State



*Cross section of participants above: First row R-L: Grand Kadi, Katsina state; Director CILS, ABU Zaria; Solicitor General Katsina State; J4A Consultant. Second Row: R-L: Grand Kadi Jigawa state; Prof Tabiu (J4A); Solicitor General, Bauchi State; Third Row R-L: Grand Kadi, Kano State; Grand Kadi, Yobe State; J4A Consultant*

## Kaduna State Ministry of Justice Speeds Up Reform Initiatives

The appointment of the new Attorney-General / Commissioner for Justice (AG), Mrs Amina Dyeris-Sijuwade has put a spring in the work of the justice sector in Kaduna State. The new AG has already begun the implementation of a series of reform initiatives.

J4A has been a catalyst for many of these reforms including the establishment of Case Management Systems (CMS) in the Offices of the Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and Directorate of Civil Litigation (DCL). The programme has provided guidance on the design and implementation of the CMS and the Ministry has provided the equipment and personnel. The system at the office of the DPP has commenced implementation while the system in the DCL is expected to start operations soon.

This initiative is a good example of how successes in other locations are permeating throughout the justice sector in Nigeria and being replicated semi-independently. The introduction of these systems mean that there are now more than 20 CMS operating across Nigeria using the design first implemented by J4A and its predecessor programme.

Other new initiatives of the Kaduna State Ministry of Justice include the establishment of Sexual Assault Referral Centres, drafting of the Administration of Criminal Justice Bill and the drafting of an Administration of Criminal Justice Law for northern states.

## JSRTs Grow in Influence with More States Establishing Reform Teams

More states are adopting and establishing Justice Sector Reform Teams (JSRTs) following their participation in J4A supported JSRT meetings and conferences. In the last year four new JSRTs have been established in Imo, Plateau, Cross River and Delta States. This reflects the recognition of the Justice Sector Reform Team as the preferred model for reforming justice systems in states across Nigeria.



As a result of this growing influence, the Executive Governor of Akwa Ibom State, His Excellency, Udom Emmanuel hosted and sponsored the recently concluded Network of JSRTs conference in Uyo in April 2016. He praised JSRTs for their work in the sector and advocated for more transparent legislation because of its impact on investments.

The J4A programme, UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Vice President's Office all played a key role in ensuring the event was a success. The conference recorded the largest number yet of participants from different states, which provided the platform for discussing national justice and law reform initiatives. These discussions led to the adoption of the need to establish Sexual Assault Referral Centres, Domestication of the ACJ Bill, Review of state laws and

the establishment of Multi-Door Court Houses.

To sustain the network conference JSRTs recognised that different states must share the cost of hosting future conferences. Furthermore, other donors are indicating interest in funding the conference as they have recognised it as a platform for sharing their reform agendas to a wide range of stakeholders in the justice sector.

**“There are a total of 19 JSRTs now functioning and influencing policy decisions in different states across Nigeria”.**

## NPF Amends Force Order: Adopts J4A Interventions

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has amended its Community Policing Force Order (FO) to reflect J4A's proposed reform interventions. The NPF Force Order is a binding legal document that will ensure that directives and instructions on Community Policing are adhered to and carried out by the whole police force.

The FO will help the NPF to deliver effective and accountable modern policing services through community based and human rights policing for the benefit of all Nigerians. The new FO, which is being implemented in three phases, recommends 12 thematic areas of reform and restructuring for the NPF. These interventions are currently being implemented at the federal level and in seven different pilot model police commands.

The FO will help to ensure the sustainability of J4A's reform interventions in the NPF after the programme has closed.



## Courts in Enugu State to Engage the Services of Sign Language Interpreters

The Chief Judge of Enugu State, Honorable Justice Innocent Umezulike has approved the provision of Sign Language Interpreters (SLIs) in courts.

This is aimed at ensuring that the Deaf have equal access to justice like other citizens in the state. This approval is the outcome of advocacy led by Women Information Network (WINET) in partnership with Enugu State Association of the Deaf under the Justice for All (J4A) funded project. Reacting to this, the Chairman Enugu State Association of the Deaf, Mr. Emeka Ude said, **“We give glory to God as this is good news to all of us”**.

J4A supported WINET to trained 150 people with disabilities including the deaf, blind and the physically challenged to ensure better access to the judicial system. In addition to this, a radio programme known as **‘The Courts Procedure’** was created and broadcast to further empower people with disability on the procedures for commencing cases in the three levels of courts.

This initiative is in line with J4A’s objective of increasing citizens’ knowledge of justice options through the courts. It is targeted at ensuring equal access to justice for People with Disabilities (PWDs) in Enugu State.

## Police Training School Fully Adopts J4A Supported Initiatives

The Police Training School in Ikeja, Lagos State with the support of the J4A programme has successfully trained Juvenile Welfare Centre (JWC) officers in 63 different police stations and Area Commands in the state on best practices for investigating domestic and sexual offences. The training has covered 9 out of 13 Area Commands and their Divisions in Lagos State.

The Police Training School has now taken over completely the delivery of the training, which is coordinated by Inspector Okafor Kenneth Emegwamor. He is working to ensure that all officers in JWCs in all police Divisions within the Lagos State Command receive the investigation skills training that will help to further their capacity in investigating sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). It is hoped that by the end of July all Area Commands and Divisions in the state would have benefited from the training. This will help to ensure that survivors of SGBV will receive the same standard of treatment and investigation irrespective of where the crime is reported.



*Inspector Okafor delivering lectures of crime scene search and child's interview during a training session.*

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