

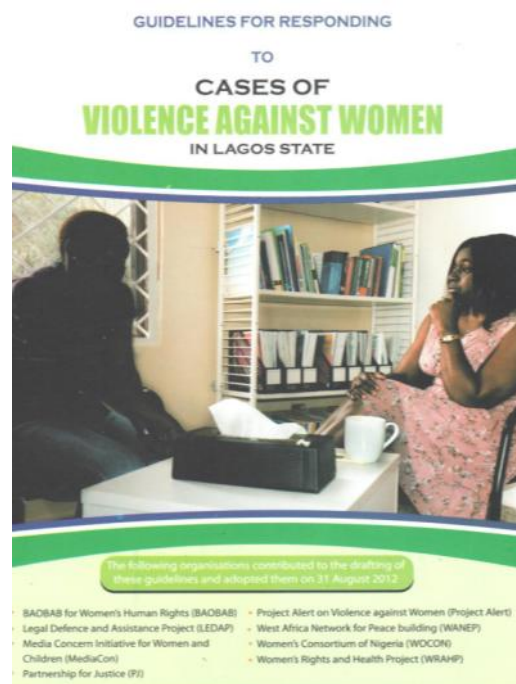
J4A and Violence against Women in Lagos State

An area of particularly serious concern in Lagos State is Violence against Women (VAW). VAW was defined by the United Nations in 1993 as “Any act of gender based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.” Women and girls can be especially vulnerable to injustice because of their gender.

In 2011, J4A engaged with gender-focused civil society organisations (CSOs) in Lagos State to help tackle this issue. The CSOs advocated for a more coordinated approach to the problem. They highlighted the lack of structured support systems for victims, the inadequacy and inaccessibility of related medical services, the lack of clarity around procedures for reporting violence, and the frequently unresponsive and dismissive attitudes of those responsible for investigating complaints.

In May 2012, J4A began supporting a concerted response to these issues through a group of eight gender-focused CSOs. The CSOs developed a set of guidelines to enable a consistent and structured approach to assisting and supporting women that are victims of gender-based violence. The guidelines, whilst not intended to be prescriptive provide a framework for responding to the immediate and longer-term needs of victims.

The VAW guidelines are for use by CSOs and other formal and informal organisations involved in responding to cases of gender based violence. They contain a list of organisations and government agencies available for referrals, and guidance in different aspects of dealing with victims. The guidelines represent a small but significant step towards developing a more cohesive and powerful alliance to address the issue of violence against women and the effort to ensure women have equal rights and access to justice in every aspect of their lives.



Violence against Women by percentages

- 28% of women in Nigeria have experienced physical violence by age 15
- 45% of Nigerian women have experienced acts of violence by their current husbands or parents
- 45% of Nigerian women who have experienced physical or sexual violence did not seek help from any source or tell anyone about the violence

Source: National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) 2011

Violence against Women by numbers

- 1 in 3 women and girls aged between 15-24 in Nigeria have been victims of violence
- 1 in 5 women in Nigeria have experienced some form of physical violence
- Most 15-24 year old women in Nigeria think it is reasonable for a husband to beat his wife if she burns the food, refuses sex or goes out without his permission

Source: British Council /DFID Gender in Nigeria Report 2012

“Adeola”, a 15-year-old girl in Lagos, blamed herself when she was raped by a lodger, a friend of her father, and became pregnant. Violence was a frequent occurrence in the family home. Her father had physically assaulted her mother, who had subsequently left the house. He accused Adeola of being a prostitute after he found out about the rape. Instead of protecting her from further violence, her parents ostracised her. She fled the house, eventually finding her way to the a shelter for women in Lagos...”

Nigeria, Unheard voices
2005 Amnesty International report

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Community engagement with the Voluntary Policing Sector (VPS) in Lagos State

In Nigeria, the word ‘vigilante’ refers to people, male and female, who provide voluntary night-time security service for their communities, a practice that has existed for many years. The formation and organisation of these groups vary, but all are tailored towards ensuring safety and security. Vigilante groups, have in the past, operated without regard for the communities they serve; rather they pledge their loyalty and respect to financiers. Their management systems were not designed for oversight to ensure that they operated within the remit of the law; whilst their membership was almost always structured along political party lines and affiliations. In many cases the police saw them as illegal establishments without respect for the rule of law making, nonsense of their original reason for existence.

To support the process of addressing these problems and ensure that these groups recognise both their role and their responsibility in the communities they serve, J4A through CLEEN Foundation in 2010 initiated various programmes and training aimed at improving service delivery, accountability and management systems for three identified vigilante groups in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos State. These are Gbogunleri/Isale-Oja vigilante group, Adeyemi/Asade vigilante group and Ajegunle vigilante group. J4A, also working through CLEEN Foundation supported the establishment of a Community Accountability Forum (CAF) and a VPS/Police Coordination Forum. The CAF is made up of various interest groups - community elders, women, youths etc. Through CAF, more women and youth have been encouraged to be active members of the VPS groups with female operatives in the Gbogunleri/Isale-Oja group increasing from 3 to 10 in recent months. Results of a recent survey demonstrate that the forum has successfully provided a platform for the community to hold the VPS groups to account; and has also led to increased financial and material support being offered from the community.

Madam Mulikat Akinola, a women’s leader in Gbogunleri/Isale-Oja and a member of the CAF, noted that the support the VPS groups are receiving is benefiting both the groups and the communities they serve. According to her, members of the VPS groups are more courteous, especially to women, and provide regular updates on their patrols to the forum which meets monthly. This improvement in performance has led to her supporting the groups by providing free refreshments (soft drinks) to patrol teams at night.

“We now sleep better, and it is for free. My providing refreshments is my own little way of showing my support and appreciation.”

Madam Mulikat Akinola

An another exciting example of the community’s support to the VPS groups is the recent funding provided for the construction of locally made street lights to aid night patrols especially in the Gbogunleri/Isale-Oja area where there are many *dark spots* that are inaccessible to vehicles. VPS operatives had reported this as a challenge and CAF agreed on the solution above, proving that with community buy-in and support, most local security and safety concerns can be solved locally. Replication of this kind of VPS, community collaboration will ease the burden on the police and improve security in the state.



Madam Mulikat Akinola and some members of the VPS groups in Agege



One of the street lights locally made by the VPS groups

Working with the Citizens Mediation Centre (CMC) Lagos

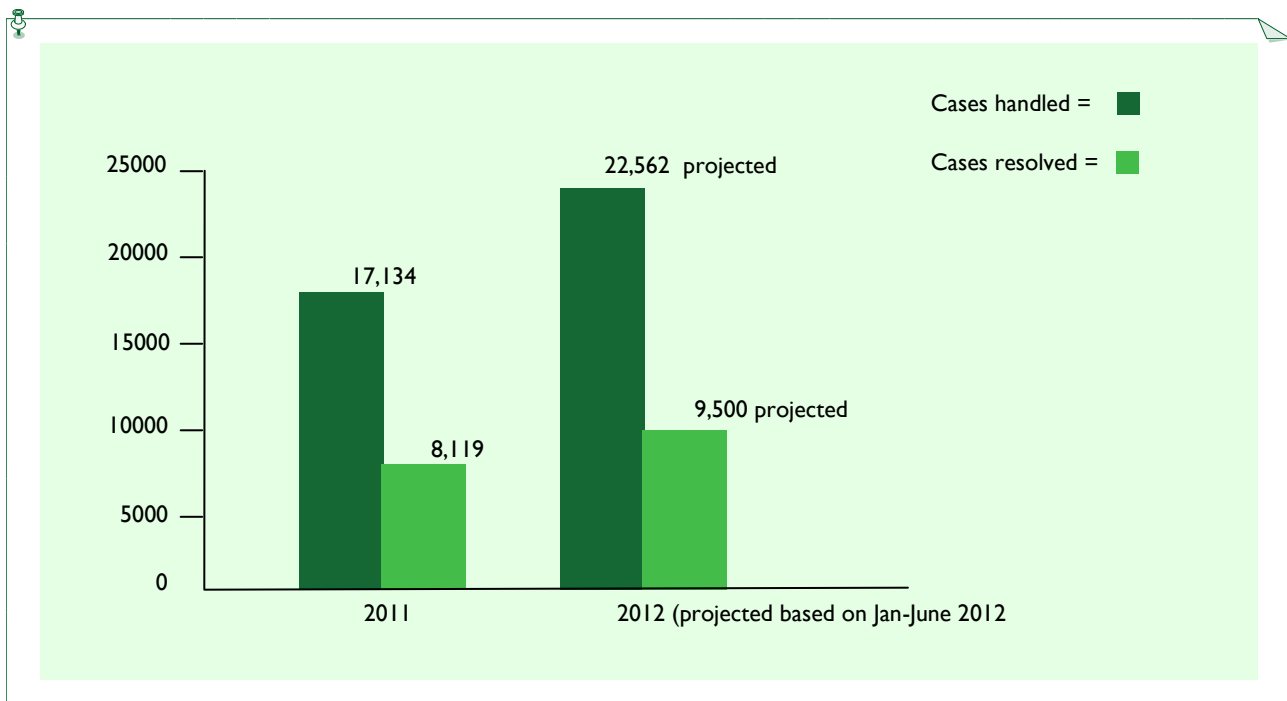
The Citizens Mediation Centre, Lagos was established in 1999 and provides mediation services to citizens of the state. It is a particularly attractive option for poor and vulnerable citizens because it is a less expensive way to resolve disputes than the formal justice system usually with more rapid resolution.

An assessment of the CMC carried out with J4A support in 2011 showed that improvements could be made to the mediation services offered. The assessment report showed that strengthening the capacity of the centres to resolve disputes effectively would increase their patronage, increase the confidence of citizens to use them, and ultimately provide increased access to justice for poor and vulnerable people.

J4A supported the development and delivery of a 6 months comprehensive Mediation Skills Training (MST) programme aimed at improving the effectiveness of CMC mediators. This programme, which will be concluded in November 2012, is the first customised mediation skills training for CMC mediators in Nigeria. It combines classroom lectures, mentoring/observation, and an assessment process for the structured mediation training.

All 60 mediators in the CMC Lagos are participating in the training, which is a first for many of them. The training is beginning to have an impact on the resolution rate of cases; there has been a reduction in the number of cases being returned for enforcement as a result of parties reneging on agreements reached during mediation. Work was also undertaken to improve the data management system at the Lagos CMC to provide more accurate data on cases and performance of staff and units. This training was provided to more than 70 staff, including mediators and administrators. The system is now able to report more accurately the status of cases. The records currently show that 11,281 cases were handled in the first half of 2012.

In addition, heads of units and directors in the CMC, with the support of J4A, received management training to strengthen their capacity to lead and motivate their staff. The training provided the CMC managers with the skills to draft a 5 year action plan to improve the performance of their individual units and the CMC as a whole.



Number of mediation cases handled and resolved by the Citizens Mediation Centre in Lagos

A second area of support has been that provided for the development and implementation of the CMC's communication strategy. The strategy was developed to increase awareness of the CMC among residents of the state as well as improve relations between CMC staff and users.

Fighting corruption through the End Impunity Now (EIN) Campaign

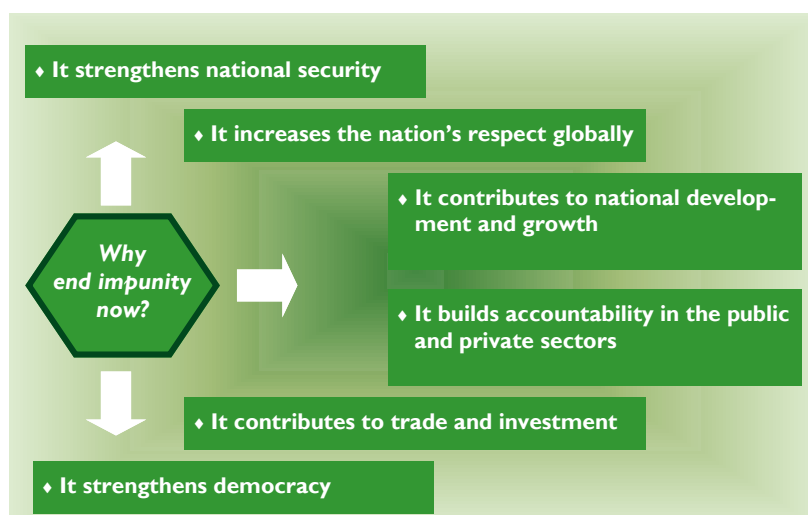
The Africa Network for Environment and Economic Justice (ANEEJ) is leading the anti-corruption campaign - End Impunity Now (EIN). The campaign was born out of recommendations made in the House of Representatives report on the oil subsidy probe (events of January 2012) which indicted some oil marketers in the oil and gas sector. The campaign, which was launched in May 2012 has a membership of civil society organisations, academia, professional bodies, artisans and other like-minded organisations committed to end the culture of impunity on graft in Nigeria.

In June 2012, ANEEJ organised activities to further strengthen the fight against corruption. This included a visit to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) head office in Abuja to seek collaboration with the commission to address corruption especially in the oil and gas sector. The EIN campaign is pleased with progress made to date, especially efforts made by the Commission to prosecute indicted oil marketers but believes that even more progress can be made.

The EIN campaign plans to continue the fight by gathering petitions from members of the public for the faster prosecution of indicted offenders in the oil and gas sector; staging a day of action to mobilise key stakeholders across the country particularly civil society groups; and organising another visit to the EFCC to see how the Commission is following up with the probe reports and to agree more areas of collaboration. The visit will also present an opportunity for the group to submit the petitions gathered to the Commission.



L-R: Juliet Ibekaku (Director-Nigeria Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), Nta Ekpo (Chairman-Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC)), Ibrahim Larmode (Chairman-Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)), Sam Saba (Chairman-Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB)) - at the EFCC strategic planning workshop in Abuja



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Coming up...

In the coming months, **J4A** will be:

- starting work on the second pilot of the Voluntary Policing Sector activity in Enugu. The team's first visit to the state will be a scoping visit which will identify the communities and groups to work with;
- organising a National Stakeholders Conference on the Administration of Criminal Justice bill. This will be followed by the inauguration of a working group to review key issues emerging from the conference;
- organising a Law Reform Conference for justice sector stakeholders in Kaduna State;
- supporting the training of traditional rulers on human rights, alternative dispute resolution (ADR), and Islamic law;
- organising training for Anti-Corruption Agencies on ethics and integrity;
- launching the next Model Police Station (MPS) site in Enugu.