



# Women's Voice

## NEWSLETTER



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## EDITORIAL

**W**e welcome you to the second half of this year. As we continue in our struggle vis-à-vis our mission i.e. to reduce social inequalities among grassroots women and the girl child, you are all invited to join in this cause for the betterment of our society.

In this edition of our newsletter, you will find details all our activities in the last six months.

Take a walk with us as we present in this edition our activities with the police on the donation of workstations to some police stations in Lagos State.

Also look out for more information on our efforts towards good governance especially at the grassroots level, as we have begun sensitization on women participation in governance.

Get informed on legal aid cases, our activities with ACP Help Agencies and of course, our incomparable youth project in schools as we're committed to the vision "catch them young".

Please do us a favour by contributing to our discourse on gender-based violence. This you will find in the column 'Perspective'.

Finally, we use this medium to thank our donors, partners and friends whose invaluable contributions we have leaned on to attain sustainable growth over the years.

## ACP DONATES CHAIRS, TABLES TO POLICE STATIONS



*Alhaja Raliat Danliju (second left) shaking hand with immediate past Area "B" Police Commander, Mr. Femi Oyeyeye (ACP) at the donation of workstations to the Police stations.*

**F**ebruary 6, 2008 was a memorable one for men and women of the Nigerian Police Force, especially police stations under Area "B" Police Command, Apapa-Lagos, as *Ajegunle Community Project* donated workstations to nine police divisions under the command.

The motive behind the project, according to the ACP Executive Director, Alhaja Roll Raliat Danliju was "the need to establish a *Women Desk* in our police stations to take care of gender-based violence cases." "And as part of our social responsibilities and efforts to reduce the social inequalities among women, *Ajegunle Community Project* decided to

provide working tools for the policemen who will work on the *women desk* of each police station. Hence, the need to provide the women desks with chairs and logbooks".

This gesture, Alhaja Danliju said would go a long way in proper documentation of gender-based violence cases in our police stations. "*The Ajegunle Community Project* expects among others, prevention to a large extent of the frequent occurrence of gender-based violence, especially sexual harassment, rape, child abuse and wife battering". These are the most prevalent gender-based violence cases in our recently conducted research exercise in Ajeromi Ifelodun

*Cont. on page 1*

### ANTI VIOLENCE CLUBS' MANUAL REVIEWED

The compilation of anti-violence clubs' manual for adoption into the curricula for Secondary Schools in Lagos State is meant to reduce incidence of violence and discrimination among the youth, and also to enlighten them especially the female ones on how to handle potential and real sexual and gender based violence and discrimination practices.

The manual, which has been used to train students in some Secondary Schools in Education District IV of Lagos State, was reviewed on April 16, 2008 in line with the yearning of stakeholders in the education sector for a better project manual.

The development of training manual contents for ACP Anti-Violence Club in school held at the ACP Secretariat, saw school

head teachers, representatives of civil society groups, the media, counselors etc contributing to the development of the new manual.

Speaking at the event, the ACP Youth Coordinator, Mrs. Mubo Akosile said that the manual as it was being used was due for reviewing because of its general acceptance in schools; adding that there was the need to take another look at the contents, the structure and its general outlook so as to come up with a better manual.

Mrs. Akosile added that the new manual would be in a book format as the organization itself is growing bigger.

The ACP Programme Manager, Mrs. Olushoia Akai, in her address, said that teachers play very important roles in the development of the manual as they closely work with the

students.

One of the resource persons at the workshop and the ACP Board Chairman, Mr. Lanre Osaze, while thanking the participants for their support for ACP, said that his experience with Civil Liberty Organisation (CLO) gave him much knowledge of the manual development.

The manual was reviewed from its objectives, contents to the structure while topics like Effective Communication, Self Confidence and Self Esteem, Assertive Training etc were added.

Also, the manual is now split into "Terms," in line with school curriculum while social activities are introduced for teaching to be more interesting.



*Participants at the review of the manual for the ACP Anti-violence Clubs in Schools*

## ACP Donates

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Alhaja Rafiat Danjija with Area "B" Commissioner Mr. Femi Oyeleye at the donation of workstations to Police Stations

Local Government Area", she concluded.

The Area Commander, Area "B" Police Command, Mr. Femi Oyeleye, an Assistant Commissioner of Police, while expressing joy over the donation, praised Alhaja Danjija for her initiative of bringing succour to the masses most especially at grassroots level and her gesture toward assisting the police.

Oyelaya revealed his impression about Ajegunle Community before now as a biblical story of Nazareth, which people believed nothing good could come out from. He said it is very ironical now that the community that was labeled as "home of thugs and gangsters" is now a new place, where Alhaja Danjija came from to donate workstations to the police.

The police stations that benefited from the scheme included; Ajegunle, Trinity, Tolu, Layeni and Kirikiri Police stations. Others were Ijora-Badiya, Amukoko, Apapa and Area 'B' Police Divisions.



Police officers interacting with workstations donated by Alhaja Rafiat Danjija

## WORKSHOP

### HELP AGENCIES MEET, STRATEGISE ON GBV CASES PROJECT

In order to do the appraisal of the documentation of gender-based violence (GBV) cases project a roundtable discussion on the way forward by stakeholders of the project was held on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2008 at the ACP Secretariat so as to know the challenges and re-strategize on an approach for better result.

The stakeholders of gender-based violence, also known as help agencies, comprise the police, medical/health care personnel, the media, customary courts etc.

Participants at the meeting shared their experiences during the course of compilation of the cases at their various offices. They also proffered useful information on how to move forward about the project.

Speaking at the meeting, the ACP Programme Manager, Mrs. Akai said the idea to document gender-based violence cases was conceived after a meeting with stakeholders on the rampant gender-based violence cases in our communities, like rape, wife battering, sexual harassment, etc.

It was at the meeting that the need for proper documentation of GBV cases was raised. According to the ACP Programme Manager, for the project to achieve its aims, Help agencies were formed. These include the Police, customary courts, medical/health care officers, the media etc. Also, Logbooks were distributed to all the help agencies. This according to Akai was to facilitate proper documentation of the gender-based violence cases in their respective offices.

Akai said further that the

meeting/roundtable discussion with all help agencies was necessary in order to rub minds together on the problems encountered or challenges being faced during the documentation of the GBV cases.

There was also the need to do general appraisal of the project in order to re-strategise our approach towards achieving the aims and objectives of the project.

Sharing their experiences, some of the participants expressed disgust over the attitude of women toward reporting to appropriate authorities whenever they are violated.

According to them, poverty, stigmatization, lack of awareness and education are responsible for women keeping silent when they are being maltreated or violated.

They enjoined Ajegunle Community Project to do more in term of awareness campaign for women and the girl child on the need to report gender-based cases.



Alhaja Rafiat Danjija with the Obi Babamale Akran of Bakajery during an advocacy visit

## STAKEHOLDERS POST-SURVEY BRIEFING ON GBV & D RESEARCH

**A**s a follow up to the research findings on the prevalence of gender-based violence and discrimination in Ajeromi/Ifeledun Local Government Area of Lagos State, there was the need for a post-survey workshop. This was in order to arrive at a point and take a concrete decision on the way forward towards eradication of gender-based violence in our communities.

The objective of the post survey is to have more inputs from the stakeholders, experts and other interests in the fight against gender-based violence.

Also, there is the need to present to stakeholders the findings of the research for observations before final compilation of the report.

To this end, a one-day post survey workshop was held for the purposes mentioned earlier.

The ACP Executive Director, Alhaja Raliat Daniju, while delivering her welcome speech, thanked everybody for the love they have for ACP saying that the organization appreciates their coming and that ACP cannot work without people as a tree cannot make forest.

Daniju emphasised the need to have a post survey workshop, adding that contributions from outsiders would make subsequent research better.

Mr Taiwo Daniju of the ACP Research and Documentation department presented the research work to the participants.

According to him, the research was conducted within 15 days, of which the process involved the services of field workers,

volunteers, the entire staff of ACP. Also some resource persons from the Department of Political Science, University of Lagos were involved.

Some of the participants at the briefing commended ACP for job well done.

Mr Patrick Olowojaye of the Lagos Ministry of Justice queried that if an NGO is doing something like this, what was the government at the grassroots doing? He charged ACP to involve local governments in its activities.

In his own comment, Mr Maxwell Owakwe of the National Orientation Agency commended ACP for the good work they are doing. According to him, he was highly impressed with the activities of ACP.

He promised to forward the research finding presentation to his Agency head office in Abuja, adding that he would list ACP first of the two NGOs demanded by the World Bank from Ajeromi/Ifeledun to benefit from its programme.

The Area B Commander's representative, ASP Udeh commended ACP for the various awareness programmes embarked upon. He said LOVE is the only key that would put a stop to all societal violence.



Alhaja Raliat Daniju (second right) with other guests at the post survey workshop.

# PHOTOSPEAK!



*One of ACP Micro Credit beneficiaries collecting her cheque from Mrs. Obashola Akai, ACP's Project Director*



*Group Photograph of Help Agencies representatives at the review and presentation of ACP logbook on GBV cases.*



*Cross section of participants at good governance workshop for political Aspirants in Ajeromi/ Ifelodun Local Government*



*Alh. Kolat Danjiri handing over ACP Logbook on GBV cases to Mr. Femi Oyelese of Area "B" Police Command Apapa.*



*Mr. Frans Wirema Cordaid representative with Staff of Ajeunle Community Project ACP*



*Participating teachers and ACP Staff at the review of Manual for Anti-Violence Clubs in schools*



*Cross Section of participants at the review of ACP Logbook*



*Mr. Frans of Cordaid with Mrs. Obashola Akai, the Project Director of ACP*

## ACP LEGAL AID CASES

### CASE 1

A woman (name withheld) came to our office with the complaint that the man that responsible for her pregnant has denied it. The said man was invited but still insisted he was not responsible for the pregnancy despite all efforts to settle the matter. The case has been referred to the Juvenile Court for appropriate action while the woman is still carrying the baby.

### CASE 2

Another woman (Mrs K) came to report that the father of her two children has failed in his responsibilities to take care of her and the children for months, thereby subjecting them (the woman and their children) to untold hardship.

The man was invited and after some deliberations, he agreed to take up his responsibility having pleaded with the woman.

### CASE 3

A young lady came to our office with a complaint that she was raped by a guy. ACP assisted in reporting the matter to the police. The alleged rapist was arrested. After a thorough medical examination, it was confirmed that the lady was

indeed raped. The accused has been charged to court while ACP has arranged to provide free legal aid for the lady in court.

### CASE 4

Mrs. G reported to our (ACP) office that her 4 year-old daughter was defiled by their neighbour (a middle age man). The suspect was arrested after the complaint. The victim was

*A young lady came to our office with a complaint that she was raped by a guy. ACP assisted in reporting the matter to the police. The alleged rapist was arrested. After a thorough medical examination, it was confirmed that the lady was indeed raped. The said accused has been charged to court.*

taken to the hospital while the suspect has since been charged to court.

### CASE 5

A woman and her daughter rushed to our office with a report that one man living beside their compound was threatening the girl (daughter) with rape. In order not to take the matter with levity, ACP went to the place with policemen but found out that the said man has run away and never came to the area since then.

### CASE 6

A woman (name withheld) reported to our office that her husband has refused the paternity of their four children. When ACP invited the man he claimed that only one of the children was his but failed to explain the reason for the denial of other children. The ACP has taken up the case and plans to take it to court soon.

### CASE 7

Mrs. F came to complain that the father of her three children had since abandoned them, having denied the children. The man was invited and after much explanation, the man agreed to be paying N6000 monthly as allowance for the children's up-keep.

### CASE 8

Another woman (Mrs. M.J.) came with the complaint that her husband has not been taking care of her together with two children. The ACP lawyer and welfare department intervened. The man said he was no longer interested in the relationship but agreed to be paying N7000 monthly as allowance for the children's up-keep.

**NOTE:** *The original names of the people in these cases were intentionally withheld to protect the confidentiality of the victims.*

## ACP HOLDS WORKSHOP ON GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR ASPIRANTS

In realization of its set objective i.e. reducing social inequalities among the grass root women and the girl child, Ajegunle Community Project on April 23, 2008 organized a one-day workshop for political aspirants. These are for the positions of local government chairmanship and councillorships, political parties leaders and market women, women leaders, community leaders and civil society groups in Ajeromi/Ifelodun Local Government Area of Lagos State.

The workshop, titled "Civil Education Towards Good Governance", was aimed at achieving the following:

- To provide women with skills which will enable them deal with the issue of marginalization in their local government areas;
- To provide a forum for the local government areas elected officials, women and young people to interact;

- To sensitize the elected officials on their roles and responsibilities, based on democratic principles and policies as they affect the well being of the people especially the women;

- To enlighten women on the duties and responsibilities of the elected representatives and the constituents rights to demand accountability, transparency and good governance among others.

The workshop, which was sponsored by AFRICA WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT FUND (AWDF) and held at the Embassy Hotel, Olodi-Apapa witnessed a large number of participants; including aspirants in chairmanship and councillorship positions for the forthcoming local government election in Ajeromi/Ifelodun Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Speaking at the event, the ACP Executive Director, Alhaja Rallat Daniju represented by the organization programme manager, Mrs. Olushola Akai said,



*A councillorship aspirant to the incoming Lagos Local Government election, Mrs Isahin Akilu speaking at the workshop on good governance.*

"Today's event is a follow-up to the women interactive forum, which exposed the peculiar nature of the rights of women."

A lot of women are not fully represented in the decision making of the government. As a result, we want more women to participate in politics. Not only that, we are emphasizing the need to ensure "accountability and transparency in governance".

Three papers were presented on Communication, consultation and conflict management; Roles, powers and functions of local government and; Management, leadership, accountability and transparency by Mrs. Bukola Adelehin, Dr. Shobowale and Mrs. Olushola Akai respectively.

Participants at the workshop including aspirants for the position of chairmanship and councillorships in Ajeromi/ Ifelodun Local Government, expressed delight in the programme. They agreed that for any meaningful development to take place especially at the grassroots level, there must be mutual understanding between the people and elected officers and the need for accountability and transparency in governance.

There were also calls for women participation in governance and the need to support them (women) while aspiring for any political office.



*Group photograph of women at the good governance workshop*

# PERSPECTIVE

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN FIGHT: IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

There is no gainsaying that violence affects the lives of millions of women worldwide, in all socio-economic and educational classes.

Infact, violence against women takes a dismaying variety of forms, from domestic abuse and rape to child marriages and female circumcision. This pandemic or problem is being regarded as an obstacle to achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace globally.

In spite of universal concerns and the UN adoption of Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the problem continues to grow.

Violence against women cases is recorded every minute while unreported ones are higher. In our society, it cuts across cultural and religious circles.

Until recently, government tended to regard violence against women largely as a private matter between individuals, and not as a pervasive human rights problem requiring state intervention.

Unfortunately, despite hue and cry from all quarters on the need for total elimination of violence against women, our society just adopted the declarations in theory while in practice, most people are guilty of the offence but pretending to have abided by the laws, treaties or conventions on the elimination of violence against women.

In fact, it is noted that domestic violence constitutes highest number of violence against women and a larger percentage of domestic violence is physical assault by a partner.

In many society, boys not exceptional, violence against women starts from day one when the child is being conceived.

Some females fall prey to violence before they are born, when expectant parents abort their unborn daughters, hoping for sons instead. The problem of male preference affects women in society where this practice occurs in term of care and education for girl child.

The former US boxing champion, Muhammad Ali in an interview was said to have asked how many children he had fathered, his reply, "One boy and seven mistakes". This type of notion is applicable in almost every part of our society.

In some parts of Nigeria, girls are subjected to such traditional practices as circumcision. In others, they are compelled to marry at an early age before they are physically, mentally or emotionally mature.

At the adult stage, women are prone to all forms of violence like sexual harassment, rape, beating, prostitution etc.

Employers abuse their authority to seek sexual favours from their female co-workers or subordinates promising promotion or career advancement. Rape occurs anywhere even within the

family.

In our society, sexual assault by a husband on his wife is not considered to be a crime: a wife is expected to submit.

While the violence against women persists, one feels concerned if our government is doing anything to ameliorate the sufferings of the women.

Another area that needs to be looked into is our society itself. Are we not concerned as an individual, group or community? Are the women not an integral part of us? Are they not our daughters, sisters, aunts, nieces, wives or mothers?

Though the alarming global dimensions of female-targeted violence is now being acknowledged by the international community and it has been drawing increasing political attention here in Nigeria, there is a lot individuals, groups and the community can do in fighting this menace.

Let's take it upon ourselves today by stopping the violence against women, from our homes, then to our neighborhood and community by telling the perpetrators of violence against women to desist or better still, report them to the appropriate authority. You don't know if the next victim of violence against women may be your daughter, wife, niece, aunt, or mothers. So join the fight today.

We will appreciate your contributions to this discourse. Please send your comment and responses to our office.



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