

PWAN QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



Rule of Law And Empowerment Initiative
also known as
PARTNERS WEST AFRICA NIGERIA



PUBLIC SENSITIZATION AND AWARENESS ON SEXUAL GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV) PREVENTION, RESPONSE AND REFERRAL AT DCC SHUWARI INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDP) CAMP, MAIDUGURI

An awareness and sensitization session on SGBV prevention, response, and referral was conducted on March 21st, 2023, at DCC Shuwari IDP Camp in Maiduguri, Borno state. The primary objective was to commemorate International Women's Day and educate the individuals, mainly women, who were displaced from Gwoza LGA in Borno state and currently reside in the camp. The training aimed to raise awareness about SGBV prevention, response, and referral, as well as the significance of education and understanding one's rights. The event reached 100 women, including the women leaders in the camp. The training fostered a participatory environment, allowing the women to ask questions and share their concerns.



One woman expressed her uncertainty about reporting her husband's misconduct due to cultural norms regarding family secrets. In response, she was assured that reporting such incidents is not a crime, and appropriate solutions, such as reconciliation and counseling, would be pursued in accordance with the law. Furthermore, another participant highlighted the issue of women being ridiculed for attending adult school, which deters others from pursuing education. The participants were advised to support and encourage one another, as Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN) emphasized women's participation in governance and the detrimental effects of discouraging education, which perpetuates dependency and limits empowerment.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE NETWORK (CJN) COMMUNITY AWARENESS ON FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS, EDUCATION ENROLMENT, AND SELF-RELIANCE.

PWAN established and supported the CJN in Borno and Adamawa states consisting of security and justice actors, to conduct trust-building exercises and physical awareness activities on fundamental human rights, education enrolment, and self-reliance in three targeted areas in Borno state namely: Dala Lawanti, Mashdimami and Gonidamgari area of Jere and MMC, and three targeted areas in Adamawa state namely, Damare community in Girei LGA, Capital School, Jimeta Yola and Dogire Community in Yola. The awareness had over 500 community members including youth groups, traditional and religious leaders in attendance.



Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials depicting know your rights, and information on GBV, child abuse, denial of education with helpline of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and The International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) for the communities to report any human rights violation were produced and distributed to further educate community members.



As part of the physical awareness creation, PWAN also held a legal clinic session where several cases ranging from sexual and gender-based violence were identified by lawyers and total of 17 cases were received in Borno and 16 cases in Adamawa involving 7 minors, 5 males and 28 females. The complainants were referred to appropriate agencies such as NHRC, Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), FIDA, Legal Aid Council of Nigeria, NPF, etc. It is apparent that the citizens in the communities of each state are not aware of the protection offered by the various Laws and their rights and services available to pursue justice under the Laws.

PUBLIC AWARENESS ON THE PROVISIONS OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE LAW (ACJL) OF TARABA STATE 2021



Community members at the public sensitization exercise

PWAN with support from the MacArthur Foundation on 10th February 2023 conducted a public awareness on the ACJL of Taraba state 2021. The activity was aimed at sensitizing the citizens on the provisions of Law with the topic "Know your rights". Discussions were had on the provisions relating to arrest, bail, and search. Furthermore, the citizens were enlightened on the roles and responsibilities of the various criminal justice actors and the proper channel to lay complaints for any violations and against any of the agencies or institutions. In attendance were 250 participants comprising of the village heads, district heads and members of the community (men, women, and children).



A legal clinic was held after the awareness to address any complaints. Some citizens raised their concerns about their ongoing cases and sought for legal advice. Lawyers from PWAN, NHRC, NBA, Legal Aid Council of Nigeria and FIDA attended to them accordingly.

Conducting interventions aimed at ensuring that the citizens are armed with the necessary information to hold public officers accountable cannot be overemphasised. PWAN believes that by creating awareness on the provisions of Laws seeking to address systematic challenges is important in the promotion of the rule of Law and the protection of the rights of the citizens.



PWAN project officer sensitizing the community members

As a build-up from the success of the physical awareness held in both states, PWAN further carried out a 4-day radio sensitization at Gotel Fm in Adamawa state and Al-Ansar radio station in Borno states with guests drawn from the Criminal Justice Network.

The radio program was created to continue to raise awareness and improve the quality of legal education at various levels, particularly in local communities, by discussing pertinent topics and issues on the provisions of the laws, thereby changing the narratives on violations and abuses caused by a lack of awareness of the provisions of the law.

This also included a live call-in component where over 20 citizens (within and outside the communities of intervention) called in to make inquiries, express their appreciation on the program and get clarifications on human rights-related issues. The CJN members who were guests on the program responded to their inquiries and referred citizens to the appropriate institutions that will respond to their complaints.

The media sensitization campaign is the amplification of awareness and legal education through a widely accessible medium. By utilizing radio, PWAN extended its reach and engaged with a larger audience, allowing for the dissemination of crucial information on human rights and legal provisions. The live call-in component further facilitated direct engagement and provided listeners with an avenue to seek guidance and support.



PUBLIC SENSITIZATION ON ELECTION SECURITY AND SAFETY

PWAN with support from National Endowment for Democracy (NED) set up Citizens' Support Centres (CSC) on election in Kano and Gombe states ahead of the 2023 Elections in Nigeria to deepen citizens' participation in governance and provide credible access to information on the elections through the 'Beyond Voting (V): Increasing Women's Participation in the Political Process Project'. On the 2nd of February 2023, Volunteers from the Citizen Support Center took to the streets of Farm Center Market at Tarauni LGA Kano state to sensitize citizens of Kano state on election security, electoral procedures and the citizens support centre.

The volunteers together with PWAN staff and accompanied by security agencies sensitized the public on the need to maintain peace ahead of the elections and the existence of the Citizen Support centre. The awareness was held physically in an open space with Jingles and microphones to draw the attention of the public and fliers containing key pieces of information relating to election security and the sensitization were distributed.



This intervention has equipped citizens in Kano and Gombe states with information about their roles and responsibilities in ensuring peaceful and credible elections. By establishing the Citizen Support Centre and conducting the awareness campaign, PWAN enhanced citizens' understanding of electoral processes, encouraged active participation in the political process, and foster a peaceful election environment. The distribution of informative materials further served to provide citizens with access to credible information and support throughout the election period which is vital for peaceful democratic processes and the overall development of the country.



PWAN CSC volunteers during an ongoing awareness session at farm centre market in Kano.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION ON THE 'PROMOTING EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE & COMBATING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA PROJECT' IN KANO STATE.

PWAN in partnership with Shehu Musa Yaradua Foundation and with support from Swiss Confederation organized a focus group discussion on the 'Promoting Effective Participation of Women in Governance & Combating Gender Based Violence in Nigeria Project' in Kano State. The focus group discussion brought together various stakeholders, including representatives from the Kano State Ministry of Women Affairs, Traditional Institutions, Faith-Based Organizations, Media, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the Sexual Assault Referral Centre, Women Peace and Security Network, Hisbah, and the National Orientation Agency (NOA).

The aim of the focus group discussion is to develop effective messages to incorporate in advocacy content with messaging that can be designed to galvanize collective action to support implementation of sustainable policy to promote women's involvement in decision-making processes and combatting gender based violence. This activity also engaged use of interviews to obtain feedback on early drafts in order to refine messaging for maximum impact.

The main significance of this activity is the development of effective advocacy messages that can galvanize collective action and support the implementation of sustainable policies. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, the focus group discussion fostered collaboration and ensured that the messaging incorporated various perspectives and expertise. The refined messaging has the potential to raise awareness, mobilize support, and promote women's participation in governance while combatting gender-based violence. Ultimately, the aim is to create a more inclusive and gender-equitable society in Kano State and beyond.



The Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) was passed by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2015 to promote efficient management of the criminal justice system. As, an organisation, PWAN has been involved in monitoring the implementation of Laws in the states that have passed it and ensuring that the ACJMC, which is the oversight body for the implementation, is inaugurated.

PWAN in collaboration with the Administration of Criminal Justice Monitoring Committee (ACJMC) and with support from MacArthur Foundation on 6th February 2023 conducted the inaugural meeting of the Administration of Criminal Justice Monitoring Committee in Taraba state.

In accordance with section 462 of the ACJL, Taraba state 2021, the ACJMC developed a 2-year action/work plan and a reporting template to ensure that an M & E structure is in place while implementing the Law. The outcome of this intervention is the institutionalization of the oversight mechanism for the implementation of the ACJL of the focal states. In attendance were all the members of the ACJMC committee.

JUNE 1, 2030



A group photograph with the judges



A group photograph with the magistrates



A group picture with defense counsel (NBA, FIDA, Legal Aid and other private practitioners



A group photograph with officers of the Nigerian correctional services



A group photograph with court support staff (registrars, bailiffs and clerks)



Group photograph with prosecutors and investigators

The meeting was conducted to ensure that the committee inaugurated commence discharging their roles and responsibilities as envisaged by the ACJL by providing the necessary oversight to agencies and institutions implementing the Law. PWAN believes that without proper oversight, the innovations in the ACJL will not be complied with and there will be no transparency and accountability. Having the established committee develop an action plan for the next 2 years will promote activities aimed at increasing oversight and synergy amongst the criminal justice actors who form part of the committee.

Training of Judiciary support staff in Ondo State



PWAN with support from Macarthur Foundation held a one-day training of 30 judiciary support staff on the provisions of the ACJL of Ondo state 2015 and other complementary laws of the state. The training held on February 8th, 2023, and was aimed at building the capacity of these support staff on the existing criminal laws and procedures in the state to improve their efficiency in carrying out their roles and responsibilities as the judiciary support staff, and to effectively complement the activities of the judiciary.



In attendance were court registrars, bailiffs, court clerks, and commissioners of oath.

The training was conducted as a result of the gap discussed from PWAN's court observation, showing that one of the reasons for delays in the trial process was as a result of challenges of proper case management by the support staff and lack of understanding of their roles and duties in order to enhance the implementation of the ACJL. PWAN believes that this training will enhance the ability of the staff in scheduling and managing the cause lists of their judges, leading to improved access to justice and job efficiency.

Topics for the training focused on

- The roles of the support staff in implementing the provisions of the ACJL and other complimentary Laws of Ondo state
- The duties of the support staff in ensuring proper case management at pretrial, during trials, and post-trial of cases
- Client information/ information management
- Recognising conflict of interests (collusion with prosecution/defence and the effects /consequences of failure of the support staff to effectively carry out their duties.

TRAINING OF LAWYERS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICE DUTY SOLICITORS SCHEME (PDSS) AND PROVISIONS OF PRO-BONO LEGAL SERVICES.



In a bid to expand pro-bono service to indigents, access to justice in matters relating to Gender and Sexual Based Violence, and the implementation of the Police Duty Solicitor Scheme, in Niger and Kaduna states, a one-day intensive training of the PWAN'S pro-bono Lawyers (20 lawyers, 10 in each state) was held on the 27th of April 2023. The training was held physically with a team of three Facilitators; Mr. Hyginus Ibega Maduka, Mrs. Rabiatu Ibrahim Abdullahi, and Mr. Sulayman Dawodu in Kaduna state and four facilitators Mrs. Bola Jibogun, State Coordinator of the Legal Aid Council of Nigeria; Jude Thaddeus Akaeze, Esq., O. C. Legal Nigerian Police Force, Niger State; and Folarin Aluko, Esq., of NBA in Niger state. The major objective of the training is to effectively train PWAN's duty solicitors in the implementation of the PDSS Kaduna State. Sessions held on Pre-trial detention, rights of detainees, Relationships between the Police, and the duty solicitors, Gender Based violence based in accordance with the provisions of the applicable Laws, and the Police Duty Solicitor scheme as elucidated in Force Order 20.

Resulting from the training, the duty solicitor's knowledge on the scheme, their roles and responsibilities and the applicable Laws was increased.



Police officers and officers of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) seated at the training.



In promotion of effective implementation of ACJL in focus states and as part of the advocacies to promote human rights in preparation for the 2023 general elections, PWAN with support from Macarthur Foundation held a 2-day intensive training for 70 low ranking police and NSCDC officers on the provisions of the ACJL of Ondo State 2015.

The training was held on the 15th and 16th of February 2023 and aimed at strengthening the capacity of the low-ranking police officers to effectively implement, as first responders at the stations the provisions of the ACJL.

The topics focused on

- The overview of the ACJL which included the innovative provisions of the ACJL.
- The roles of police, roles of prosecutors and human rights provisions as provided in the ACJL.
- The detention time limits.
- Arrest, bail, search, and preventive justice,
- The rules of evidence and preservation of evidence.

In attendance were station officers, investigative police officers, prosecutors, and crime inspectors, and officers of the NSCDC.

The training was conducted as a result of the findings from the implementation of the PDSS in various states by PWAN which revealed the need for increase in capacity on the jurisdiction of the police, their roles, and responsibilities in accordance with the provisions of the ACJL and other complimentary Laws



Resulting from the training through the dissemination of post-training evaluation questionnaires, it was found that the participants had an increase in knowledge on the provisions of the ACJL. PWAN believes that this increase will lead to an increase in compliance by the officers with the provisions of the Laws and thereby cause an increase in access to justice and a reduction in pre-trial detention issues

Court observation

PWAN with support from the MacArthur Foundation and US department of state Bureau of International Narcotics & Law Enforcement (INL) continued the observation of courts in the FCT and Ondo State to monitor the implementation of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act / Law (ACJA/L) of the states and to strengthen the criminal justice institutions and enhance access to justice, transparency and accountability in the judicial sector.

The aim of the projects was to promote implementation of the ACJ Act/Law in FCT and Ondo States; and enhance citizen's participation in judicial processes through daily observation of court processes, case monitoring and user satisfaction survey by the citizens observers in each state. A total of 34 court rooms are being observed in the two states (FCT – 22 and Ondo – 12). The data collected from the observation and survey is periodically analysed and the findings released publicly to the judiciary and other stakeholders in the criminal justice and security sector.

The court observation has continued to serve as an advocacy tool with the judiciary and the findings used to develop strategies to address the challenges in court proceedings. Resulting from the court observation, PWAN has

- Mapped and deployed technological solution to courts in the FCT to improve productivity of the courts and access to justice.
- Begun implementation of the police duty solicitor scheme to address pre-trial detention and limit induction into the criminal justice system from the entry point (the police stations).
- Trained the support staff of the judiciary in order to improve case management and capacity on the innovative provisions of the ACJA.
- Trained low-ranking police officers on the provisions of the ACJA and other complimentary Laws in order to improve the prosecution of cases and limit the cases struck out by the courts for want of diligent prosecution

Implementation of the Police Duty Solicitors Scheme (PDSS)

PWAN with support from the MacArthur Foundation and the US department of state, Bureau of Intl Narcotics & Law Enforcement (INL) continued the implementation of the Police Duty Solicitor Scheme. A total of 58 lawyers are deployed to 58 police stations across 4 states (22 police divisions in the FCT, 12 police divisions in Kano state, 12 police divisions in Jigawa state and 12 police divisions in Bauchi state) offering free legal services to unrepresented suspects, participating in the taking of statements by the suspects, providing legal advice to the investigating police officers and referring unrepresented suspects to pro-bono lawyers for legal representation.

From their reports,

- Some of the police officers in the stations have been found to unlawfully arrest and detain suspects contrary to the provisions of the ACJA.
- Some detainees were found to be held in custody outside the prescribed time stipulations in accordance with the ACJA (48 hours).
- Some of the detainees who are unable to satisfy the bail conditions continue to be held in custody pending perfection of their bail terms.

In this quarter, under the PDSS project, the lawyers have been able to facilitate the release of 2,927 detainees via bail and provided other legal assistance such as mediation on civil and criminal matters to 837 individuals. Police officers also referred a total of 2,405 cases to the PDSS lawyers stationed in the police division.

The implementation of the PDSS has led to an increase in access to justice for suspects and a reduction in pre-trial detention by intervening where suspects would have ordinarily been remanded in the custody of the correctional centers while investigations are being conducted by the police. The duty solicitors stand in the gap ensuring that the provisions of the Law are adhered to, the rights of the detainees are protected, the police work within their jurisdiction, and that only perpetrators of non-bailable offences are detained within the prescribed time limits.

PWAN partners with the Nigerian Police Force, Legal Aid Council of Nigeria, and The Nigerian Bar Association to implement this activity.

Inaugural meeting of the Administration of Criminal Justice Monitoring Committee (ACJMC) Taraba state



The Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) was passed by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2015 to promote efficient management of the criminal justice system. As an organisation, PWAN has been involved in monitoring the implementation of Laws in the states that have passed it and ensuring that the ACJMC, which is the oversight body for the implementation, is inaugurated. PWAN in collaboration with the Administration of Criminal Justice Monitoring Committee (ACJMC) and with support from MacArthur Foundation on 6th February 2023 conducted the inaugural meeting of the Administration of Criminal Justice Monitoring Committee in Taraba state.

In accordance with section 462 of the ACJL, Taraba state 2021, the ACJMC developed a 2-year action/work plan and a reporting template to ensure that an M & E structure is in place while implementing the Law. The outcome of this intervention is the institutionalization of the oversight mechanism for the implementation of the ACJL of the focal states. In attendance were all the members of the ACJMC committee.

The meeting was conducted to ensure that the committee inaugurated commence discharging their roles and responsibilities as envisaged by the ACJL by providing the necessary oversight to agencies and institutions implementing the Law. PWAN believes that without proper oversight, the innovations in the ACJL will not be complied with and there will be no transparency and accountability. Having the established committee develop an action plan for the next 2 years will promote activities aimed at increasing oversight and synergy amongst the criminal justice actors who form part of the committee.

LAUNCHING OF Q-SOFT DENOVO TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTION DEPLOYED IN COURTS IN THE FCT.

PWAN with support from the US department of state, Bureau of International Narcotics & Law Enforcement (INL) supported the FCT Judiciary (2 high courts and 1 magistrate court) with an electronic recording and transcription equipment. The solution is primarily aimed at eliminating longhand writing by the judges and accelerating justice procedures. It not only records audio and video proceedings from the courtroom but also, in real-time, converts speech to text with great accuracy. Both the hardware and software components of this system are entirely designed and made in Nigeria and it is the first of its kind in Africa.



On Tuesday, 21st February 2023, PWAN successfully launched the Q-Soft Denovo technological support installed in High Court 22 Jabi and magistrate court 5 wuse zone 2 FCT, Abuja under the chairmanship of the chief judge of the FCT, Hon. Justice Hussein Baba Yusuf ably represented by Hon. Justice Josephine Obanor of court 29 of the High Court of the FCT, Jabi. In attendance were representatives from INL, security and criminal justice actors and other CSO's. In this quarter, the following was the summary of cases handled by the magistrate court 5, wuse zone 2 using the technology. The court,

- Attended a total number of 112 cases
- Delivered 6 rulings and
- Entered 124 judgments.

PWAN from its data received through its court observation which commenced since 2017, has consistently revealed that delays to proceedings in the courts was partly occasioned as a result of judges taking down entire court proceedings by long hand. With the deployment of this solution, we have received feedback from the beneficiaries emphasizing its success in improving their productivity and limiting the medical constraints related to taking down proceedings by long hand. It is our belief that the deployment of the solution will not only be beneficial to the judges but will lead to an increase in access to justice and limit the challenges of judges not being able to attend to all cases on the cause list on a daily basis. The solution will also serve as an M&E collection tool and an electronic database for the cases attended to in the courts.



Cross pictures of participants at the launching of the technological support for the FCT judiciary

Promoting Community Engagement, Access to Justice and Protection of Marginalized Populations in Kaduna and Niger States.

PWAN with support from the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the UK government conducted a baseline assessment to determine key stakeholders and communities to engage in the 'Promoting Community Engagement, Access to Justice and Protection of Marginalized Populations' project in Kaduna and Niger states. Resulting from the assessment, advocacy visits were conducted on the ... in Niger state and from the 19th – 20th of April in Kaduna state to key stakeholders identified.

The stakeholders included

- The Commissioner, Ministry for Human Services and Social Development,
- Director, Planning and Budget Commission,
- Chairperson, International Federation of Women Lawyers,
- State Co-Ordinator, Legal Aid Council of Nigeria,
- Solicitor General of Kaduna State representing the Kaduna State Attorney General
- State Coordinator of the National Human Rights Commission
- The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA)
- The NSCDC

The intent of the visits was to discuss the objectives of the project, get the buy-in and support of all stakeholders, and nominations from the agencies for membership into PWAN's Mixed Observers Team in the states.

PWAN believes that at the inception of every intervention, it is important for the assessments to be conducted to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are engaged in the intervention and the peculiarities of the state are taken into consideration.

Mixed Observers Team (MOT) Framework Validation Workshop in Niger State



PWAN held a MOT guidance framework validation workshop on April 27, 2023, at the Haske Luxury Hotel, Minna. The participants of the workshop were the nominees from the stakeholders engaged during the advocacy visit, which include the formal and informal security institutions: the Nigerian Police Force, the NSCDC, the Police Community Relations Committee, the Niger State Vigilante Corps, FIDA, government institutions such as the Ministry of Women Affairs, the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), the NHRC, the NDLEA, and community and traditional leaders.

The workshop was conducted to gather input from the stakeholders on the framework designed and to ensure that the key stakeholders and peculiarities of Niger state were incorporated into the framework. Resulting from the workshop, a comprehensive framework was designed to ensure proper engagement and project delivery with targeted grassroots participation.