

# ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

## 2023



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Lawyers Alert Nigeria

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS	DEFINITION
ACJL	Administration of Criminal Justice Law
ACSM	Advocacy Communication and Social Mobilization
ADPON	Alliance for the Decriminalization of Petty Offences in Nigeria
AEPB	Abuja Environmental Protection Board
AFRILAW	African Law Foundation
CBO	Community-Based Organizations
CHRDA	Center for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa
CISLAC	Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Center
CLEEN	Center for Law Enforcement Education
CPC	Community Policing Committees
CRG	Communities, Rights, and Gender
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DHDC	Debriche Health Development Centre
EWER	Early Warning Early Response
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICJ	International Criminal Justice
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IEC/T	Information, Education and Communication/Training
IGP	Inspector General of Police
ILO	International Labour Organization
LA	Lawyers Alert
LGA	Local Government Area
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NTBLCP	National Tuberculosis and Leprosy Control Programme
NPO	Non-Profit Organization
NSCDC	Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps
OGP	Open Government Partnership



OSIWA	Open Society Initiative for West Africa
PATB	People Affected by Tuberculosis
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PWD	People Living with Disabilities
SALC	Southern Africa Litigation Center
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Center
SCALE	Strengthening Civic Advocacy and Local Engagement
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SIL	Strategic Impact Litigation
SJN	SGBV Justice Network
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
TB	Tuberculosis
TMG	Transition Monitoring Group
UNHLM	United Nations High-Level Meeting
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAPPL	Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law

## **PREFACE**

The process of compiling this report involved collective effort, dedication, and unwavering commitment. The Lawyers Alert Nigeria team worked tirelessly to gather data, assess impact, and reflect on the journey so far to ensure an accurate representation of the organization's accomplishments.

Our appreciation goes to the Board of Trustees and Governing Board for their strategic guidance and unwavering support. Their leadership has been pivotal in steering our organization towards achieving our goals and expanding our impact, not only within Nigeria but also across six African countries. Our gratitude also goes to our staff and volunteers, whose professionalism, accountability, and dedication have been the cornerstone of our success.

We acknowledge the invaluable contributions of our donors and partners whose support has been instrumental in the successful implementation of our projects. Their collaboration has enabled us to reach more beneficiaries and advocate effectively for justice and human rights.

As we reflect on the past year, we are reminded of the importance of our mission and the impact of our work on the communities we serve. This report is not just a record of our activities but a testament to the resilience, dedication, and collective effort of everyone involved with LA Nigeria. We look forward to continuing our work in 2024, with renewed vigor and a steadfast commitment to our core values of professionalism, transparency, integrity, and respect.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

Prof. Magdalayne Dura  
Chair, Governing Board, Lawyers Alert Nigeria.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

LA Nigeria is a Justice Sector Civil Society Organization in Nigeria that operates as a non-profit, non-partisan, and non-religious entity. Comprised predominantly of lawyers and other professionals, LA Nigeria is dedicated to promoting democracy, the rule of law, and socio-economic development, with a particular emphasis on women's rights and vulnerable groups. Over nearly two decades, the organization has effectively served its target beneficiaries, including women, female sex workers, sexual minorities, people living with HIV, drug users, and people with disabilities.

The organization operates with a team of 23 staff members across its headquarters in Makurdi, Benue State, and a field office in Abuja, with additional outreach facilitated by regional focal persons across Nigeria's six geo-political zones. LA Nigeria also benefits from the support of 20 volunteers.

The organization is governed by a five-member Board of Trustees and a five-member Governing Board led by Prof. Mrs. Magdalene M. Dura. The Board of Trustees provides advisory and promotional support, while the Governing Board sets policies, approves strategic initiatives, and oversees implementation.

In 2023, LA Nigeria adopted a hybrid work model to mitigate inflation impacts and reduce carbon emissions, and expanded its operations to include projects in six African countries. The organization continues to prioritize capacity building, legal literacy, and advocacy through various platforms, including a comprehensive online presence.

Key programs in 2023 included interventions in gender and human rights, campaigns against tuberculosis stigma, advocacy for decriminalizing petty offenses, and strengthening community policing. LA Nigeria is also focused on enhancing access to justice, providing free legal representation, and promoting accountability and good governance through election monitoring and policy advocacy.

The organization's commitment to professionalism, accountability, transparency, integrity, and respect ensures its effective advocacy for justice and the rule of law, significantly impacting the lives of the communities it serves.

## **FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK**

It is with pride that I reflect on our significant strides in 2023. Our commitment to fostering democracy, the rule of law, and socio-economic development, particularly for women and vulnerable groups, remains unwavering. This year, 2024, we have broadened our impact, not only within Nigeria but also across six African countries, reinforcing our vision of a just and equitable society.

Our dedicated team, comprising 23 staff members and 20 volunteers, has been instrumental in driving our mission. Their professionalism, accountability, and dedication have enabled us to implement key programs that address critical issues such as gender and human rights, tuberculosis stigma, petty offenses, and community policing.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our Board of Trustees and Governing Board for their guidance and support.

Their leadership has been pivotal in steering our organization towards greater heights. As we look ahead, we remain committed to our core values of professionalism, transparency, integrity, and respect. Together, we will continue to advocate for justice, uphold the rule of law, and make a meaningful impact in the lives of the communities we serve.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership in this journey.

Rommy Mom  
President, Lawyers Alert Nigeria

## **ABOUT LAWYERS ALERT**

Lawyers Alert Nigeria is a Justice Sector Civil Society Organization that is Non-Profit, Non-Partisan, and Non-religious. It is made up substantially of Lawyers and other professionals committed to the entrenchment of democracy, rule of law, and socio-economic development of citizens with particular emphasis on women. With almost two decades of existence, the organization has actively serviced its target beneficiaries. They include Women, Female Sex Workers, Sexual Minorities, People Living with HIV, People who use and Inject Drugs, and People Living with Disabilities (PWDs), amongst others.

LA Nigeria has a staff strength of 23 people working in both the Head office in Makurdi, Benue State, and the field office in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. It also has regional outreaches across Nigeria with 6 focal persons for each geo-political zone. Additionally, there are about 20 volunteers of which eight are active while 12 are available on demand. The entire staff of the organization is trained, dedicated, and skilled in their thematic areas. The organization has well-equipped and fully functional offices with round-the-clock internet access. The organization has a website, a blog, a Facebook page, an Instagram page, a Twitter handle, a YouTube page, and a LinkedIn page, including web-based e-mail addresses. It has a 5-person Board of Trustees, and an active 5-member Governing Board headed by Prof. Mrs. Magdalene M. Dura.

The roles of the Board of Trustees are multi-dimensional. Some of the basic roles include them standing in trust for the organization in the eyes of the public, they also serve as promoters and custodians of the organization. The Board of Trustees also helps in raising funds and goodwill for the organization among other key functions. In summary, the Board of Trustees plays an advisory and promotional role in the organization.

The Governing Board, on the other hand, sets policies and programmes for the organization. They approve policy and direct policy thinking. They also help in fundraising, approval of appointments of senior management staff, and procurements. The Board also advises and supervises ongoing projects and programs amongst other strategic functions.

Decision-making in LA Nigeria starts from the top of the Organizational ladder down to the bottom. The task of the decision-making process rests with the Governing Board at the Annual General Meeting. The Governing Board initiates a decision process at the Annual General Meeting where the decision is studied closely and inputs are made into it by all members. When satisfied, the decision taken is forwarded to the Management Committee headed by the President for



implementation. This is done to give our decision-making process a collective approach. The chain of command within the organization is structured to flow from top to bottom with instructions emanating from the President through the Departmental heads downwards. Our communication flow is both upward and downward.

### **Mission**

To empower women and vulnerable groups knowledge of their rights and accessible means of enforcing same.

### **Vision**

LA Nigeria envisions a world where women and other vulnerable groups are free from injustice.

To achieve this, we collaborate with pro bono lawyers across the 6 geo-political zones, who dedicate their expertise to litigate cases for the advancement of rights and public interest cases involving human rights and the rule of law. While our primary focus lies in providing legal support for women and vulnerable groups, we also have an objective to enhance the legal landscape in Nigeria by providing training to lawyers and members of the judiciary, as well as facilitating the formation of legal networks across the country.

### **Our Values**

At Lawyers Alert Nigeria, our core values of professionalism, accountability, transparency, integrity, and respect define our mission and guide our actions. Professionalism ensures we deliver the highest quality legal services, demonstrating expertise and ethical conduct in every case. Accountability means we take full responsibility for our actions and decisions, ensuring our clients and stakeholders can trust us to uphold our commitments. Transparency fosters an open and honest environment where information is freely shared, and processes are clear, promoting trust and confidence. Integrity is the foundation of our work, driving us to act with honesty and fairness in all our interactions. Finally, respect underpins our relationships, valuing the dignity and rights of every individual we serve and collaborate with. These values collectively enable LA Nigeria to advocate effectively for justice and uphold the rule of law, ensuring our community's legal needs are met with excellence and fairness.



*Fig. 1*

### **History**

Lawyers Alert Nigeria was established in 2002 and is registered under the laws of Nigeria and Benue state where the headquarters of the organization is situated. We are a Human Rights, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) made up of lawyers and other professionals committed to the promotion, protection, and defence of the rights of vulnerable and marginalized persons with a special bias for women and girls. The vision of the organization is “a world where women and vulnerable groups are free from injustice” and the mission is “to empower women and vulnerable groups through knowledge of their rights and accessible means of enforcing same.”

LA Nigeria uses the instrumentality of the law to create a legal knowledge-based democratic society that will at all times recognise, promote, protect, and enforce the fundamental rights of Nigerians irrespective of creed, race, sex, political affiliations, background and sexual orientation. The organization emphasizes legal literacy owing to the belief that a deep understanding of the law by both the state and the governed would create needed awareness for the citizens to demand their rights while the state operates with clarity, its mandate as encapsulated in the constitution and other statutes of the land. Lawyers Alert foresees a society anchored on an empowered citizenry that will guarantee sustainable and balanced development.

We are the foremost Civil Society Organization (CSO) in Nigeria deploying lawyers to offer free legal services in the promotion and defense of human rights. Though an uphill task, LA Nigeria has carved a niche for itself in this field for close to two decades. These free legal services have given it a level of credibility that is beneficial with regard to community mobilization and empowerment. Her reputation precedes her in the use of legal research, documentation, and advocacy to contribute to the improvement of compliance by the State and the demand and enjoyment of rights by the citizenry.

In about a decade and eight years of its existence, LA Nigeria has implemented programs that revolve around its core area of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), Gender Based Violence (GBV) of vulnerable groups, capacity building, good governance, and advocacy, among others.

### **Administration**

The administration of LA Nigeria is guided by a governing board, ensuring strategic oversight and adherence to its mission and values. This board comprises experienced and ethical individuals who provide direction and maintain the organization's integrity. Their leadership is crucial in driving the initiatives and programs implemented, all aimed at creating a just and equitable society. Through collaborative efforts and unwavering dedication, the administration strives to make a meaningful impact in the lives of the communities it serves, promoting justice, equality, and sustainable development.

### **Work, Programs and Services**

Prior to the commencement of its activities in 2023, LA Nigeria adhered to its established practice of conducting comprehensive reviews of the preceding year's activities, initiatives, and actions, alongside the collective development of an Annual Work Plan for the year tailored to the specific objectives and needs of our target groups/beneficiaries. Throughout this process, numerous sessions dedicated to the development, scrutiny, and endorsement of the 2023 Annual Operation Plan were convened. These meetings were conducted both in physical and virtual forms, ensuring the attendance and active participation of all staff members and beneficiaries.

### **Highlights from January 2023 to December 2023**

**New Staff:** In 2023, LA Nigeria welcomed five new staff to the family; Grace Tyowua, Media Officer; Jennifer Adasu, Media Intern; Ifechi Aleke, Legal Officer; Francisca Uhembe, Front Desk Officer; Elvis Torkuma, Program Officer.

**Send-forth:** LA Nigeria bid farewell to Ms. Aishat Abdullahi, Media Officer, and Ms. Miriam Yua, Front Desk/Admin Officer. We wish them success in their future endeavors.



*Pix 1: Send-forth of the former Media Officer, Ms. Aishat Abdullahi*



*Pix 2: Front Desk/Admin Officer, Ms. Miriam Yua, also got a befitting send forth*

**New Designation/Positions:** LA Nigeria in the year 2023 introduced new positions, including Associate Director roles for M&E, Programs, Media, Finance, Legal, and HR; Advisor positions for M&E, Programs, Media, Finance, and Legal; as well as Senior Officer positions for M&E, Programs, Media, Finance, Legal, and IT. These new positions led to the promotion of deserving staff members who have met the established criteria for promotion.

**New Project Countries:** In alignment with one of our strategic priorities to expand programs and our mandate to other African Countries and the world at large, as captured in our 2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan, LA Nigeria undertook multiple projects across six African Countries in 2023. They encompass Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, and Nigeria.

**Introducing Hybrid Work Model:** The implementation of a hybrid work model, comprising three days of in-person work and two days of remote work, in response to the impact of inflation on staff and as a measure to reduce carbon emissions, aligning with our commitment to address climate change has been pivotal to keeping operations running smoothly.

## **LAWYERS ALERT NIGERIA ANNUAL REPORT 2023**

Lawyers Alert Nigeria presents its 2023 Annual Report, a comprehensive overview of accomplishments throughout the year. These achievements were made possible through the effective execution of the organization's Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025, exemplary leadership, and the professionalism exhibited by our dedicated staff. As an organization, we strengthened our operational frameworks and demonstrated a commitment to fostering accountable and secure work environments both internally and externally through the successful implementation of our various projects and interventions. Our program areas for the year in review encompass:

- i. Gender and Human Rights
- ii. Campaigns and Movement Building
- iii. Security and Access to Justice
- iv. Informal Sector Work
- v. Elections, Democracy, and Good Governance.

Each of these focus areas reflects our commitment to advancing critical causes and effecting positive change within our communities.

## **GENDER AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

LA Nigeria envisions a world of gender equality, equitable access to resources and services, inclusive decision-making processes, and fair treatment for all individuals irrespective of gender, health status, physical appearance, or any other defining characteristic. Within our gender and human rights program, our activities are geared toward challenging the stigma and discrimination faced by women and other marginalized groups. Interventions carried out in the year 2023 under this program aligned with the overall goals and objectives of the organization.

In TB, for instance, LA Nigeria convened a one-day meeting which focused on mapping, categorizing, and documenting instances of rights-based violations associated with TB. The anticipated outcome is the expansion of LA's monitoring and documentation tool, known as "LadockT", to include comprehensive data on rights infringements in TB cases.





*Pix 3: The meeting to map and identify rights-based violations related to TB.*

An advocacy visit was paid to the Lagos State Tuberculosis Control Program to advance efforts toward implementing a rights-based approach to Tuberculosis (TB) intervention. During the visit, the report detailing previous interventions was presented to Dr. Rotimi Agboolagorite, the Director of Disease Control, acknowledging the significant support provided by the Lagos State Tuberculosis Control Program, which greatly contributed to the success of the project.

Furthermore, the importance of ongoing collaboration in reinforcing the TB coalition and structures was emphasized. This collaboration aims to align TB interventions with the National Human Rights and Gender Action Plan for TB Care and Prevention, thereby ensuring a rights-based approach to TB management and prevention in Lagos State.



*Pix 4: The advocacy visit to the Lagos State Tuberculosis Control Program.*

Additionally, LA Nigeria participated in a community consultation meeting regarding the National Communities, Rights, and Gender (CRG) Action Plan, with a focus on securing priority funding within the Global Fund Grant.

Still in the TB sector, LA Nigeria and Stop TB Partnership Nigeria held a strategy meeting towards the development of strategies on how CSOs can engage with

the Federal Ministry of Health, alongside the National Tuberculosis and Leprosy Program concerning the September United Nations High-Level Meeting UNHLM in New York. Part of the outcome of the UNHLM is the Declaration on Ending TB. The purpose of the CSO meeting was to ensure that Nigeria could present a context-specific ask at the UNHLM in New York. This is geared towards specific commitments to achieve targets by 2025 which focuses on Costed CRG, Community-Led Monitoring, and Gender and Human Rights.



*Pix 5: The strategy meeting with Stop TB Partnership Nigeria.*

A capacity-building workshop focused on Evidence-Based Advocacy and Documenting Rights Violations Associated with TB was carried out to enhance an Effective Community Rights and Gender-Based Response. This workshop was organized with support from the Stop TB Partnership.

The objectives of the workshop were:

- i. To strengthen coalitions and movements to engage in advocacy, monitoring, and evaluation of Community, Rights, and Gender (CRG) interventions in Lagos and Abuja.
- ii. To provide coalition members in Lagos and Abuja with the necessary skills to collect and input data on rights violations into the online tool (LadockT) for evidence-based TB advocacy.
- iii. To develop a Joint Action Plan for coalitions and provide training on the use of scorecards to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the National Human and Gender Action for Tuberculosis Care and Prevention in Nigeria.



*Pix 6: Some pictures from the meeting in Abuja.*



*Pix 7: The meeting in Lagos.*

LA Nigeria in partnership with Debriche Health Development Centre (DHDC) held a press conference to address the TB Stakeholders' Key Asks and Nigeria's commitment to the political declaration at the September 2023 United Nations High-Level Meeting (UNHLM), which focuses on enhancing TB care, redressing the burden of TB, poor diagnosis, and treatment of TB and funding limitations for TB control in Nigeria at the UNHLM. During the press conference, Rommy Mom, the President of LA Nigeria, highlighted the following demands to be met by the Nigerian government:

- i. That Nigeria exhibits the highest Political intention/will in the adoption of the political declarations by the personal attendance of his Excellency President Bola Nigeria Ahmed Tinubu at UNHLM on TB held on 22nd September 2023.
- ii. That the Government supports inclusion and participation of the TB program, parliamentarians, Civil Society Actors, and TB Affected Communities in its official delegation at the UNHLM to show the inclusiveness of addressing issues.
- iii. That the Federal Government through the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs intervenes on the issues of visas to non-government organizations

[Government charged to increase funding for TB-related activities - The Nation Newspaper \(thenationonlineng.net\)](https://thenationonlineng.net)





*Pix 8: The Press Conference in pictures*



LA Nigeria also attended the Pre-National Stakeholder's Consultation Meeting to review the progress of Commitments at the UNHLM from 2018 till date in comparison with country targets set in 2018.



*Pix 9: LA Nigeria Project Officer, Ayomide Joshua, at the Consultation Meeting in Lagos.*

A meeting of in-country partners from Nigeria and Zimbabwe was facilitated by LA Nigeria in Nairobi, Kenya. The discussion focused on the CFCS Round 11 regional project in each country, aiming to achieve greater accountability among TB decision-makers and ensure access to justice for PATBs.



*Pix 10: With in-country partners in Nairobi, Kenya.*

Another meeting was also held with Advocacy Communication and Social Mobilization (ACSM) unit of the National Tuberculosis and Leprosy Control Programme. The meeting was to discuss strategies to improve TB community rights and the gender response to ensure access to justice for rights violations associated with TB.

### **Towards Decriminalizing Petty Offences in Nigeria**

In collaboration with its partner organization, Ikra Foundation for Women & Youth Development, LA Nigeria visited the office of the Speaker of the State House of Assembly in Bauchi State, Rt. Hon. Abubakar Y. Suleiman. The purpose of the visit was to present a draft Bill aimed at Decriminalizing Petty Offenses in the State. This proposed legislation seeks to repeal discriminatory colonial laws that unfairly criminalize and penalize poverty. This is in alignment with LA Nigeria's broader efforts to decriminalize petty offenses in Nigeria, facilitate synergy in advocacy efforts geared towards this goal, as well as to provide legal representation to individuals accused of petty offenses.



*Pix 11: Advocacy Visit to the Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Bauchi State, RT Hon. Abubakar Y. Suleiman.*

In Benue state, LA Nigeria visited the Chairman for Public Petition, Bills Review, and Appraisal Benue State House of Assembly. Hon. Jonathan Agbidyeh. Again, the draft Bill to Decriminalize Petty Offences in the State was presented. It is important to stress that, enshrined in the Nigerian penal code are provisions with the potential to oppress poor persons, making poverty a crime, through the criminalization of certain behaviors. These offenses encompass activities such as loitering, drunkenness, hawking, vagabond (homeless and wandering persons), and other related offenses. The Bill seeks to repeal laws that criminalize poverty.





*Pix 12: Visit to the Chairman for Public Petition, Bills Review, and Appraisal Benue State House of Assembly.*

LA's team has also engaged in discussions with Chinwike Okereke of the African Law Foundation (AFRILAW) towards the Decriminalization of the recreational use and possession of drugs as a petty offense in Nigeria.



*Pix 13: Meeting with AFRILAW.*

In Kano State, LA Nigeria engaged the Hisbah Board to establish a collaborative working relationship. Here also, the focus was on facilitating synergy towards the decriminalization of petty offenses and advocating against the criminalization of poverty in the State. The visit also emphasized the importance of adopting a human rights approach in the conduct of cases by the Board.



*Pix 14: LA Nigeria visit to Hisbah Kano with CID Sulaiman Abba Isa.*

Members of the Alliance for the Decriminalization of Petty Offences in Nigeria (ADPON) and LA Nigeria engaged in discussions about their activities, addressing challenges encountered, particularly in advocacy and legal support as related to the decriminalization of petty offenses in Benue, Bauchi, Kano, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Additionally, lawyers conducted reflection meetings to assess the project's implementation.

These sessions involved identifying next steps and drawing lessons to inform future interventions aimed at advancing the decriminalization of Petty Offenses agenda in the country. These meetings were in partnership with the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) towards the decriminalization & declassification of petty offenses in Nigeria.



*Pix 15: One of the Lawyers' reflection meetings.*



*Pix 16: Brainstorming session on the modus of data collation.*

LA Nigeria released an updated report on petty offense violations in Nigeria, revealing deep societal challenges and the need for reform. In a press release, LA Nigeria underscored her commitment to documenting reports of petty offenses violations in Nigeria as part of the mission to decriminalize these offenses.

Additionally, ADPON held a brainstorming session for deliberations towards harnessing inputs in preparation of an Amicus brief in a matter filed before the ECOWAS Court on petty offenses. The said matter filed by LA Nigeria seeks declaratory reliefs from the ECOWAS Court to declare certain sections of the

penal code as anti-human rights and in conflict with the African Charter. These sections list loitering, vagabond, etc as offenses.



*Pix 17: The brainstorming meeting.*

### **Addressing Sexual and Gender Based Violence**

LA Nigeria with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through Palladium under Component 5 of the Strengthening Civic Advocacy and Local Engagement (SCALE) project, continued its intervention and worked towards the activation and implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) and Administration of Criminal Justice (ACJ) Laws in Bauchi, Benue, Enugu, Kaduna, Osun, and the FCT.

This was aimed at speedy justice service delivery for SGBV victims and survivors in these states. This intervention was in partnership with organizations (National Association of Women Journalists, Ikra Foundation for Women and Youth Development, Community Advancement Initiative for Self-Reliance, League of Women Voters, Legal Awareness for Nigerian Women, and Agbani Farms Limited) across these states under the cluster model approach, with our cluster called SGBV Justice Network (SJN) Cluster. Series of engagements and activities were held towards the effective delivery of the mandate of the SJN Cluster.



*Pix 18: The SJN's third Cluster Coaching session with SCALE.*





*Pix 19: SJN's fourth Cluster Coaching session with SCALE.*

The SGBV Justice Network, SJN, paid an advocacy visit to the Director of the Center for Gender Studies, Prof. Member George-Genyi, at Benue State University. During the meeting, the achievements of the SJN, particularly in Benue State, were highlighted. The purpose of the visit was to secure collaboration with the Department in engaging the government to establish a monitoring committee for the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act and accelerate the commissioning of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). Additionally, the meeting aimed to enhance awareness and capacity-building among students, state actors, and other relevant agencies through sensitization efforts.



*Pix 20: Advocacy visit to the Director of the Center for Gender Studies, Benue State University.*

The SJN further convened a press briefing to urge the Benue State Government to expedite action towards commissioning the established Sexual Assault Referral Center (SARC). While commending the initiative taken by the office of the first lady in establishing the SARC, SJN members emphasized the need for its commissioning, and advocated for the expansion of shelter facilities within the center and the allocation of a dedicated budget line to ensure its sustained operation. Such measures, they emphasized, would significantly enhance the delivery of expedited justice services for survivors of SGBV.

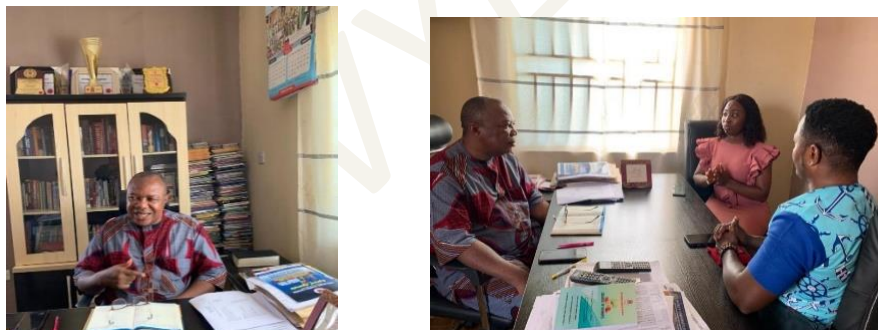
Furthermore, the SJN Cluster called upon relevant stakeholders to address the reform of both the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law (VAPPL) and the

Administration of Criminal Justice Law (ACJL), recognizing the importance of legal frameworks in combating SGBV effectively. <https://sunnewsonline.com/sjn-cluster-requests-benue-govt-to-commission-sexual-assault-referral-centre/>



*Pix 21: The Press Conference.*

The cluster also paid an advocacy visit to Reverend Adoka Amuta, the Bishop of the Methodist Church in Makurdi, aimed at fostering awareness, facilitating dialogue, and enhancing understanding of SGBV and justice delivery for victims within the community. Recognizing the influential role of religious leaders as guardians of faith and esteemed members of society, the visit sought to leverage their platform and influence. During the meeting, Bishop Adoka Amuta commended the SJN for its advocacy achievements and expressed a commitment to establishing platforms that would amplify awareness and deepen understanding of SGBV among his constituents.



*Pix 22: Advocacy visit to the Bishop of Methodist Church, Adoka Amuta, Makurdi, Benue State.*

A milestone was achieved in Benue State with the establishment and official commissioning of a new Sexual Assault Referral Center (SARC), overseen by the state Governor. This significant development marks a notable accomplishment for the SJN Cluster, signifying progress in ongoing efforts to address issues of sexual violence and provide essential support services to survivors.





*Pix 23: Cross section of the audience at the commissioning of the SARC centre by the former Governor of Benue State, Chief Samuel Ortom.*

USAID/Nigeria representatives conducted a visit to Bauchi to engage with Ikra Foundation for Women & Youth Development, a member of the SCALE Project SJN cluster. Discussions revolved around SJN advocacy efforts in Bauchi State, particularly aimed at advocating for the passage and implementation of the Administration of Criminal Justice Law (ACJL) and the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law (VAPPL), and the increase of Chief Magistrates jurisdiction to try rape cases in the state.

The SJN cluster received commendation for its dedicated efforts in advancing initiatives aimed at expediting justice service delivery for survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Bauchi State.



*Pix24: USAID's visit to Bauchi State.*

The SJN led by LA Nigeria further paid an advocacy visit to the Chief Justice of Benue State, Justice Maurice Ikpambese. During the visit, the team raised concerns about the poor handling of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)

cases, which often leads to perpetrators escaping accountability and denying justice to survivors or victims of SGBV and. The cluster called for:

- i. The designation of specialized courts dedicated to expeditiously adjudicating SGBV cases to ensure prompt delivery of justice.
- ii. Amendment of existing laws to broaden magistrates' jurisdiction to adjudicate SGBV cases.
- iii. Creation of a dedicated Civil Society desk within the judiciary to facilitate collaboration between CSOs and the judicial system.

The Chief Justice expressed appreciation for the efforts of SJN in protecting the rights of vulnerable groups, recognizing their role in holding perpetrators accountable. He affirmed the judiciary's readiness to collaborate with CSOs in enhancing justice delivery. Additionally, he emphasized the importance of judicial independence, highlighting its crucial role in ensuring the proper functioning of the judiciary.



*Pix 25: LA NIGERIA Advocacy visit to the Chief Justice of Benue State, Justice Maurice Ikpambese (in grey suit).*

This SJN cluster commenced the second phase of the SCALE project titled "Consolidating Advocacy for Effective Justice Delivery for Survivors of SGBV in Nigeria." Dr. Omar Zaman Sayedi, the Project Director of the SCALE Palladium project, attended the coaching session and lauded the cluster's commendable efforts thus far. He acknowledged the impactful work and positive outcomes achieved by the cluster and expressed the commitment of the SCALE Palladium project to provide continued support to the cluster. The "Consolidating Advocacy for Effective Justice Delivery for Survivors of SGBV in Nigeria" project represents a continuation of the previous initiative titled "Advocacy Towards Effective Justice Delivery for Survivors of SGBV in Nigeria." The project will build on the significant achievements and successes attained during the first phase.



*Pix 26: SJN's first cluster coaching of the second phase with Dr. Omar Zaman Sayedi (extreme right)*



*Pix 27: SJN's cluster coaching sessions, various phases*

The SJN Cluster also held a training on Policy Review and Analysis. The training aimed at strengthening the capacity of participants in policy and analysis, and empowering them to impact public policies towards providing speedy justice delivery to SGBV Survivors.



*Pix 28: Policy Review and Analysis Training.*

The cluster also held a round table discussion regarding best practices for addressing SGBV through the implementation of the ACJL and VAPP laws in Benue and Kaduna States. The purpose of the session was to speed up the



adoption of effective practices among the committees responsible for enforcing these laws in Benue State.



*Pix 29: Roundtable Discussion on Best Practices in Benue State.*



*Pix 30: Roundtable Discussion on Best Practices in Kaduna State.*

Laptops were also presented to SJN with support from Nigeria SCALE. The laptops are meant to enhance efforts of cluster members in advocacy for speedy justice delivery of SGBV survivors.



*Pix 31: LA presenting a laptop to a cluster member.*

The SJN Cluster, anchored by LA Nigeria, held its Benue State Bi-Annual Shared Learning Event and Dialogue Session on Public-Private Partnership (PPP) and Private Sector Engagement (PSE), with support from the USAID-Scale Project. A primary focus of this meeting was to advocate for private sector involvement in funding and equipping the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in Benue State.

However, despite the initial excitement surrounding its launch by the former Governor of Benue State, Chief Samuel Ortom, the SARC has since fallen into disuse, remaining unstaffed and inadequately equipped to assist survivors and victims of sexual violence. This has left individuals affected by sexual violence, such as rape victims, without adequate support. The private sector was urged to contribute to this cause in the spirit of Corporate Social Responsibility. The Bi-Annual Summit was also held in Kaduna State.



*Pix 32: Cross section of participants at the Bi-Annual Summit in Benue State.*



*Pix 33: Pictures from the Bi-Annual Summit in Kaduna State.*

A dialogue session was held with media practitioners and journalists in Benue State to discuss the ACJL and VAPP laws. The purpose of the session was to leverage media networks and agencies to amplify advocacy efforts on the implementation of laws aimed at eradicating sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in Benue State. Notable public and private media houses in the state were present at the meeting.

The session aimed to garner commitment from media practitioners to raise awareness and amplify key advocacy points. Success for both the advocacy group and Benue State is marked by the commitment from all attending media practitioners to support and raise awareness on the following key issues: a review of the VAPP law, the operationalization of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), and the establishment of family courts.





*Pix 34: The Media Dialogue Session in Benue State.*

LA Nigeria also paid an advocacy visit to the Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice and Public Order of Benue State, Mr. Fidelis Mnyim. The purpose of the meeting was to present the bill for the Violence Against Persons Prohibition, VAPP, Law and discuss the key requests of the SJN cluster regarding the implementation and review of the VAPP Law. The AG/Commissioner made strong commitments on the passage of the submitted model VAPP bill by LA Nigeria, including other concrete measures towards prompt justice delivery for victims/survivors of SGBV.



*Pix 35: The President of LA Nigeria with Mr. Fidelis Mnyim during the Advocacy Visit.*

### **Administration of Criminal Justice Law**

A meeting was held with the Secretary of the Benue State Administration of Criminal Justice Law (ACJL) monitoring committee, Nathan Gwebe, to enhance the committee's capacity. The focus was on developing strategies to ensure the effective implementation of the law and the operationalization of the committee's mandate. To achieve these goals, a comprehensive meeting involving all relevant stakeholders in the justice sector is being planned.



*Pix 36: Visit with the Secretary of the Benue State ACJL Monitoring Committee.*

Additionally, media professionals were engaged to design and develop communication messages for the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly project. This project seeks to advocate for a Nigeria where every Citizen can promote, pursue, and defend common interests collectively without fear of arrest or restrictions of any kind in public or private, both online and offline as a matter of fundamental rights as guaranteed by the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and other International Instruments. LA Nigeria is implementing a project titled “Increasing Civic Rights and Freedom of Peaceful Assembly in Nigeria” in collaboration with Hope Behind Bars Africa, with support from CIVICUS.



*Pix 37: Meeting with media experts*



LA Nigeria also led and conducted a focus group discussion with members of the ACJL Monitoring Committee at the High Court pavilion in Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. The exercise assessed the committee's capacity to identify gaps, opportunities, and areas of support for informed strategic decisions.



*Pix 38: LA Nigeria meeting with ACJL Monitoring Committee.*

LA Nigeria was represented by Prosper Gabriel and Jennifer Adasu at the Defence Headquarters Gender Mainstreaming Conference 2023. The organization was invited to make a presentation and showcase our online and offline platform where women with internet and non-internet-compliant phones can seek to find free service delivery centers for SGBV, including information on their rights as it concerns SGBV via USSD codes. The codes show them the services nearest to them including the information sought. The USSD/ Short Code (\*7006\*24#) has been in existence for two years.



*Pix 39: Her Excellency, Haija Nana Shettima, Wife of the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria at Lawyers Alert stand.*

In pursuit of activating SARCs and advocating for VAPPL's review, LA Nigeria, Spring of Hope, and BENGONET conducted an advocacy visit to Hon. Saater Tiseer, the Majority Leader, Benue State House of Assembly. The objectives were to secure collaborations with the Majority Leader's office and the entire State Assembly, urging their support in operationalizing SARCs.

To underscore the importance of establishing a dedicated agency or ministry to oversee Sexual Assault Referral Centers (SARCs) and implementing proposed



amendments to the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPPL) to improve justice for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), the Majority Leader was presented with the updated VAPPL and a comprehensive SARC Policy Framework/Strategic Roadmap during the meeting.

The collaboration between the Majority Leader's office and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) was emphasized, encouraging increased partnerships. Additionally, a preliminary bill aimed at granting special protections to the vulnerable and impoverished elderly population in Benue State was introduced to the Legislative Assembly of Nigeria for evaluation and feedback.



*Pix 40: The Advocacy Visit*



LA Nigeria proposed a much-needed review of the VAPP Law, which was received by the Governor of Benue State, represented by the Chief of Staff, Hon. Paul Biam. The government assured Benue Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that they would expedite the passage of the reviewed VAPP law. Additionally, plans are in place to establish a SARC Centre with the necessary amenities. This commitment represents a significant step towards a safer and more just Benue State for women and girls. LA Nigeria also joined CSOs and the State Ministry of Women Affairs in a rally against GBV, commemorating the 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women and Girls.



*Pix 41: Meeting with Hon. Paul Biam and the rally in Benue State.*

## **CAMPAIGNS AND MOVEMENT BUILDING**

LA Nigeria under our campaign and movement-building program enhanced the capacity of organizations towards empowering them and enhancing synergy in addressing the issues of GBV, SRHR, Petty Offenses, and TB. Given that Network and Movement building remains the most effective and efficient means of achieving holistic social change, LA Nigeria places much priority and attention on networking and movement building. Interventions carried out in the year 2023 under this program aligned with the overall goals and objectives of the organization.

### **International Women's Day**

In commemoration of International Women's Day, LA Nigeria joined in the campaign to challenge gender stereotypes, combat discrimination, and highlight instances of bias. Furthermore, citizens and networks were encouraged to play active roles in advocating for and embracing equity across all platforms, no matter their scale or influence.



*Pix 42: L A's Staff strike the #EmbraceEquity pose to commemorate the IWD 2023.*

### **Celebrating 16 Days of Activism**



The 16 Days of Activism were marked through various activities undertaken by LA, these activities include; online campaigns (pictures and videos) against every form of GBV, legal literacy series on various GBV issues on Facebook, awareness creation on free legal services provided by LA Nigeria to indigent citizens on social media handles. The year's unite campaign theme was – “Invest to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls.”



*Pix 43: Prof. Magdalene Dura, Chairperson, Governing Board of LA Nigeria speaking on Gender Equity and Inheritance from the celebration of the 16 days of Activism.*



*Pix 44: LA Nigeria Staff during the 16 days of Activism.*



*Pix 45: LA Nigeria Staff during the 16 days of Activism.*



Pix 46: LA Nigeria Staff and Partner during the 16 days of Activism.



Pix 47: LA Nigeria Staff sensitizing market women on their rights during the 16 days of Activism.



Pix 48: The SJN Multi-Stakeholders Meeting – 16 Days of Activism.

## Tuberculosis

In commemoration of the World Tuberculosis Day Celebration, LA Nigeria joined other stakeholders and organizations dedicated to ending stigma and discrimination faced by Persons Affected by Tuberculosis (PATBs) in a solidarity walk, aligning with this year's theme: "YES! We Can End TB". The objective of the walk was to raise awareness and promote education about TB, as well as to advocate for an end to discrimination against PATBs. The year 2023 marked a pivotal moment for tuberculosis efforts and it is crucial for us all to actively engage in TB-related initiatives. This is aligned with the mandate of the Stop TB Partnership, as the year is championed as the 'year of hope,' emphasizing the

need for collective support, attention, and effort towards achieving the goal of ending TB.



*Pix 49: L A's Staff at the solidarity walk to commemorate World TB Day.*

Furthermore, LA Nigeria's Peace Okeshola, and human rights lawyer, Brian Citro, gave a presentation at the African TB summit holding in Nairobi on the LA Nigeria CFCS Round Regional Project focused on strengthening TB laws to protect Human rights and provide remedies to people affected by TB in Anglophone Africa. The project is being implemented in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi and Zimbabwe. The presentations gave an overview of LA Nigeria's CFCS Round 11 regional project, the Human Rights-Based TB Response, the recent TB Legal Research, and the Way Forward.



*Pix 50: Peace Okeshola and Brian Citro at the African TB Summit in Nairobi, Kenya*

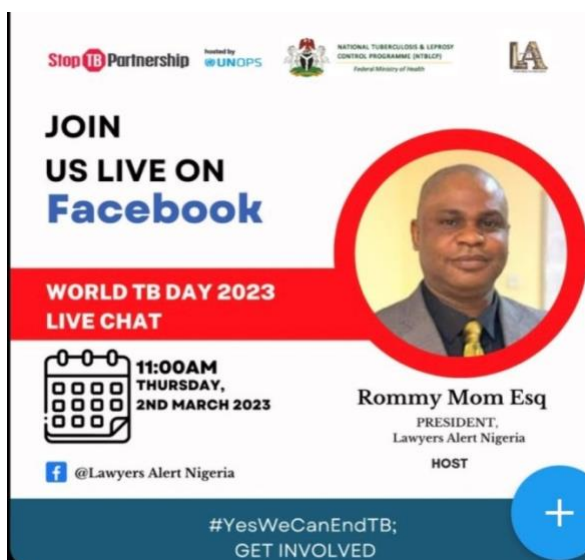
LA Nigeria also attended the UN Multi-stakeholder Hearing on Tuberculosis held in New York. Following the event, the President of the United Nations General Assembly, His Excellency Dennis Francis, will convene a multi-stakeholder hearing on Tuberculosis (TB) in preparation for the High-Level Meeting on the fight against TB. The Hearing will be an opportunity for all stakeholders to contribute to the ongoing preparatory process for the High-level meetings, with a focus on the current state of efforts and the need to accelerate TB response.





*Pix 51: Rommy Mom with Chief Austin Obiefuna, Vice Chair, Stop TB Partnership, and James Mallar of Stop TB at the event in New York.*

A live session on promoting literacy and awareness on the significance of "Activating the Power of Communities, Human Rights & the Law to End TB," was also held by LA Nigeria to align with this year's theme #YesWeCanEndTB #GetInvolved.



*Pix 52: L A's Live Session for the World TB Day Celebration.*

The President of LA Nigeria, Rommy Mom, held a meeting with the Nigerian Mission in New York, with the objective of engaging the Mission in efforts to influence the United Nations High-Level Meeting (UNHLM) on Tuberculosis (TB) and to generate concrete declarations aimed at ending TB. Additionally, the meeting sought to ensure heightened advocacy efforts and the active involvement of civil society in advocating for TB-related priorities. Mr. Mom was accompanied by Chief Austin Obiefule, Vice Chair of the StopTB Partnership; Hon. Abubakar Dahiru Sarki, Chairman of the AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria

Control Committee in the House of Representatives; and Dr. Mustapha Gidado from KNCV.



*Pix 53: The meeting with the Nigerian Mission in New York.*

In commemoration of World TB Day, LA Nigeria also collaborated with the National Tuberculosis and Leprosy Control Programme (NTBLCP) during World TB week, to create more awareness and sensitization of the disease, and to end the discrimination against PATBs.



*Pix 54: L A's Staff strike the #YesWeCanEndTB pose to commemorate World TB Day 2023.*

LA Nigeria paid an advocacy visit to KNCV Nigeria to strengthen partnerships towards TB human rights interventions in Nigeria. KNCV pledged to engage in LA's legal literacy sessions as part of its community outreach initiative for the TB project.





*Pix 55: Advocacy Visit to KNCV Nigeria.*

Led by LA Nigeria, Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) actively participated in the National Tuberculosis Testing Week in Lagos and Abuja. Collaborating closely with the NTBLCP and various stakeholders and partners, LA Nigeria conducted community awareness and enlightenment campaigns. These initiatives focused on promoting a rights-based tuberculosis (TB) response and documenting violations associated with TB.



*Pix 56: Day 1 of the National TB Testing Week at Opebi Bus Stop, Lagos.*

<https://thenationonlineng.net/world-tb-day-discrimination-against-victims-rights-violation/#:~:text=A%20non%2Dprofit%20human%20rights,of%20their%20rights%20and%20justiciable>

<https://theeagleonline.com.ng/lawyers-alert-commemorates-world-tb-day/>  
<https://dailytrust.com/world-tb-day-stakeholders-warn-against-discrimination/>

LA Nigeria with the Global TB caucus paid an advocacy visit to Hon. Amobi Godwin Ogah, the Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Health, towards ensuring collaboration and support for the TB movement in Nigeria. The message to the Honorable Chairman of the committee on Health was clear regarding government's high-level participation at the UNHLM. Hon. Ogah pledged his support and that of his committee in the fight against TB in Nigeria.



*Pix 57: LA Nigeria Advocacy Visit to Hon. Ogah*



In a press conference, LA Nigeria urged the Government of Benue State to expedite interventions on the VAPP, SARC, and the OGP. The following gaps in the VAPPL were highlighted:

- i. The failure to provide for the establishment of SARC and its operational guidelines.
- ii. The lack of a monitoring committee to ensure the effective implementation of the law.
- iii. The absence of a trust fund for the implementation of the law and the protection of victims and survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV).

LA Nigeria also called for the immediate operationalization of the SARC and urged the Benue State Government to join the OGP, to foster a partnership between the people and the government thereby enhancing participation and accountability in the state.

### **Worker's Day Celebration**

In commemoration of the 2023 Workers Day Celebration, LA Nigeria directed its attention this year towards highlighting the challenges faced by informal and domestic workers in Nigeria.



## Workers Day Celebration: The Plight Of Informal And Domestic Workers...

Roseline Oghenebrume A report by th...  
universalreportersng.com

Pix 58: Snapshot of LA's Workers Day Celebration in the news.

<https://newsexpressngr.com/news/188679-Workers-Day-Celebration-The-plight-of-informal-and-domestic-workers-in-Nigeria>

<https://newsnowonline.com.ng/2023/04/28/workers-day-celebration-the-plight-of-informal-and-domestic-workers-in-nigeria/>

<https://theeagleonline.com.ng/workers-day-celebration-plight-of-informal-and-domestic-workers-in-nigeria-by-roseline-oghenebrume/>

<https://universalreportersng.com/workers-day-celebration-the-plight-of-informal-and-domestic-workers-in-nigeria/>

## World Cancer Day

LA Nigeria in commemoration of the World Cancer Day participated in the walk organized by Project PinkBlue, alongside Amnesty International and various other organizations with the year's theme #CloseTheCareGap. This year's theme, #CloseTheCareGap, emphasized the importance of addressing disparities in cancer care. The purpose of the walk was to increase awareness about cancer, inspire action against the disease, and shift perceptions about cancer within African communities. The event highlighted the importance of creating additional advocacy initiatives focused on cancer awareness and prevention.



Pix 59: World Cancer Day activities 2023.

## Female Genital Mutilation



On the occasion of the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, LA Nigeria took the opportunity to raise awareness about the detrimental effects of FGM. This literacy campaign discussed the harmful practice of FGM which not only results in severe medical complications but also inflicts emotional and psychological trauma upon its victims.

Beyond the physical pain and permanent damage caused by the mutilation of female genitalia, the use of unsterilized instruments poses significant health risks. Furthermore, FGM constitutes a clear violation of women's rights. On the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation 2023, LA Nigeria urged everyone to prioritize efforts and resources towards programs aimed at eradicating this practice from our society. We must unite in our commitment to protect the rights and well-being of women and girls.



*Pix 60: L A's campaign on the International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM 2023.*

### **Women's Rights**

LA Nigeria attended the Women Deliver Conference in Kigali, Rwanda. The WD2023 is the world's largest conference on gender equality and the health, rights, and wellbeing of girls and women in the 21st century held for the first time in Africa. The team spoke at the side event of Litigating Reproductive Justice.





Pix 61: Rommy Mom (centre) at the Women Deliver Conference with two other participants 2023 in Kigali, Rwanda.



Pix 62: Rommy Mom at the side event speaking on Litigating Reproductive Justice in Kigali, Rwanda.

## Human Trafficking

LA Nigeria joined in a walk commemorating World Day Against Human Trafficking 2023, organized by the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) in Benue State. The theme of the event was "Reach every victim of trafficking, leave no one behind." The purpose of the walk was to enhance awareness about human trafficking in Benue State and Nigeria as a whole.



Pix 63: LA NIGERIA at the walk in commemoration of the 2023 World Day Against Human Trafficking.

## World Humanitarian Day

In commemoration of the World Humanitarian Day 2023 LA Nigeria joined the campaign and appreciated all who have been instrumental in providing supplies to the poor and marginalized in the society.

<https://fb.watch/iegfohlGue/?mibextid=cr9u03>

### **Legal Literacy**

LA Nigeria in a bid to enhance rights awareness and legal literacy has created interventions for enhanced legal awareness for vulnerable and excluded groups (legal literacy). This includes weekly Facebook presentations with discussions on burning issues from the universality of human rights and several others; forums and focus groups discussions; and celebration of World days that are relevant to our target groups. Our campaigns in the year 2023 directly reached over 10,609,000 persons and indirectly impacted 21,997,000 persons.



*Pix 64: L A's literacy series.*

### **Research**

LA Nigeria also engaged in carrying out relevant research, documentation and advocacy on Gender Based Violence, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, petty offenses and TB. This was implemented through the documentation, analysis and publishing of copies of SRHR, GBV and petty offences finding. These findings are published on our website (<https://www.lawyersalertng.org/resources>) and this was intended to serve as a resource material for advocacy and/or policy formulation for both State and Non-State Actors working in the area of SRHR, Petty Offences, and TB.

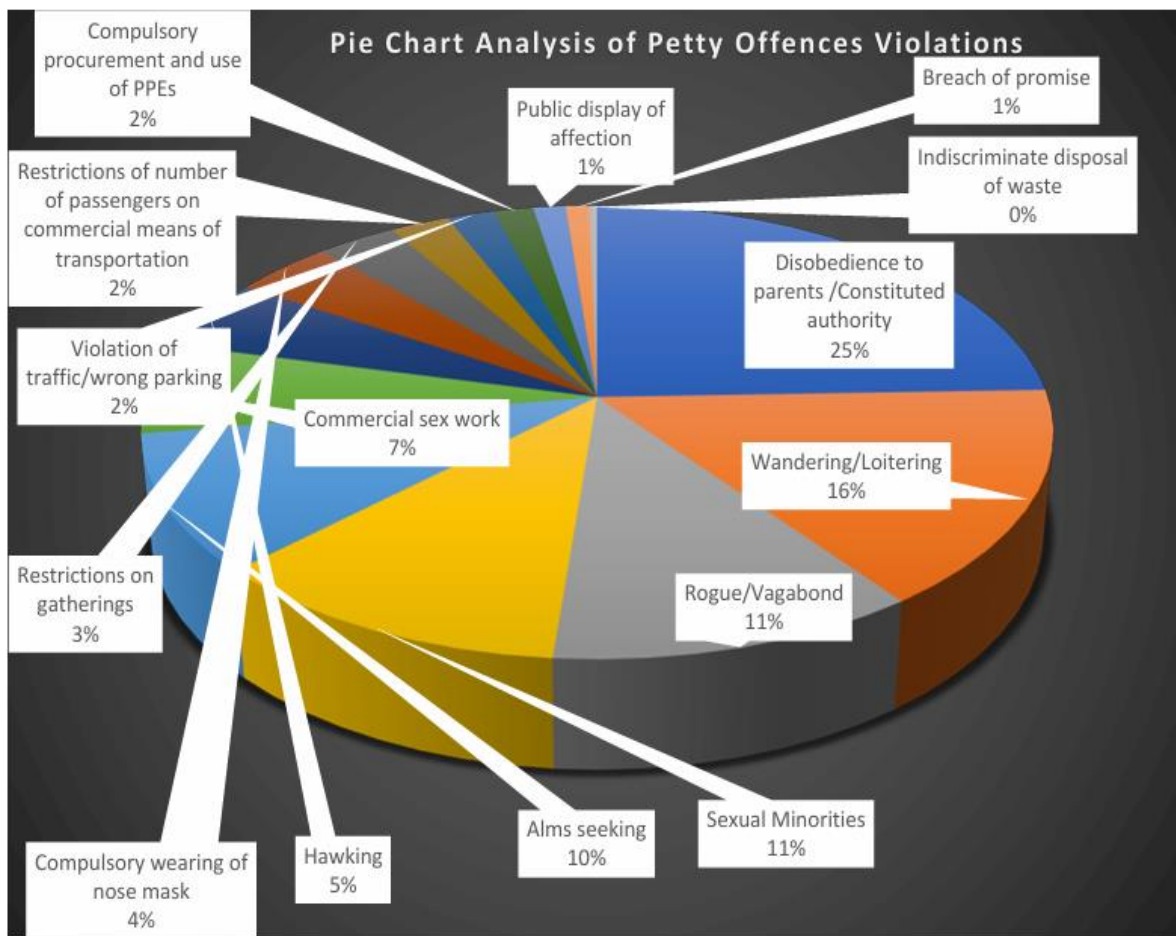


Fig 2: Analysis of Petty Offenses Violations.

### Enhanced Innovation and Technology

LA Nigeria participated in the 2nd National Organizational Development Summit focused on "Enhancing Innovation and Technology for Organizational Resilience and Performance." The summit organized by USAID in collaboration with Palladium and supported by the Ford Foundation and One Foundation, convened international fund donors, CSOs, and other agencies to explore strategies for building organizational resilience to enhance performance.



Pix 65: National Organizational Development Summit.

The Inaugural Regional Reproductive Justice Litigation Meeting in Entebbe, Uganda was attended by Bamidele Jacobs, Director, Legal. The meeting which was hosted by AHAKI Afya Na Haki with the support of other organizations had the theme: Re-imagining a Regional Afrocentric Approach. Jacobs, seen top right, participated in the panel discussion - "The Media plays a key role in the awareness of Reproductive Justice".



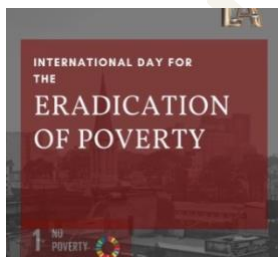
*Pix 66: Bamidele Jacob at the Inaugural Regional Reproductive Justice Litigation Meeting in Uganda.*

### **International Day of the Girl Child**

In commemoration of the International Day of the Girl Child 2023, LA Nigeria joined the campaign via the online literacy platform on the need for joint efforts to reduce the surge in early girl-child marriage in Nigeria.

### **International Day for the Eradication of Poverty**

In commemoration of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 2023, LA Nigeria urged citizens to unite in the fight against poverty and injustice by creating a world where every individual has the opportunity to thrive, and no one is left behind.



*Pix 67: Snapshot from campaign.*

### **International Youth Day**

In commemoration of the International Youth Day 2023, LA Nigeria joined the campaign via the online literacy platform to celebrate youths around the world in line with year's theme "Green Skills for Youth towards a Sustainable World".



### **Africa Social Impact Summit**

LA Nigeria also attended the Africa Social Impact Summit (ASIS) 2023 at Eko Hotels & Suites, Lagos. The theme for the year's ASIS is Global Vision, Local Action - Repositioning the African Development Ecosystem for Sustainable Outcomes, organized by One Sterling Foundation with the support of international communities.



*Pix 68: The Africa Social Impact Summit in Lagos, Nigeria.*



*Pix 69: Cross section of faces at the Press Conference.*

In commemoration of the International Day of Peace, LA Nigeria enlightened the public on the importance of peace. #PeaceDay serves as an earnest call to action, acknowledging our shared responsibility in nurturing peace. It assumes profound significance as we celebrate not only the absence of human rights violations but also our collective commitment to prioritize peace over violence.

### **World AIDS Day**

In commemoration of World AIDS Day 2023, LA Nigeria joined the campaign via the online literacy platform.

### **Human Rights Day**

In commemoration of Human Rights Day 2023, LA Nigeria hosted a comprehensive literacy session titled "Women's Rights Are Human Rights." This event delved into the need to recognize and uphold women's rights as a part of human rights. The session aimed to educate and empower participants by exploring the historical context, legal frameworks, and challenges related to women's rights. Experts shared insights on the intersectionality of gender and human rights, highlighting the critical role of women's rights in achieving social justice and equality. The event underscored the necessity of continued

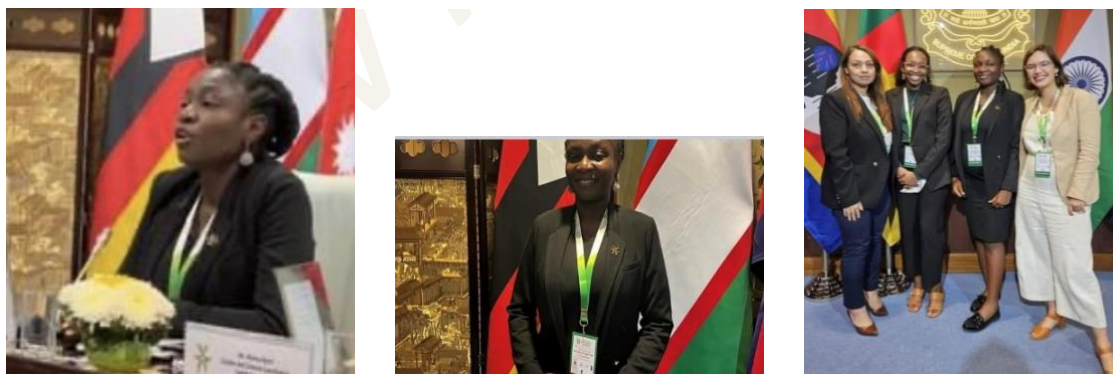
advocacy and action to ensure that women's rights are universally recognized, respected, and protected.



*Pix 70: Snapshot from the Human Rights Day activity.*

### **Legal Aid**

The 1st Regional Conference on Access to Legal Aid took place in New Delhi, India, aiming to strengthen access to justice in the Global South and enhance lesson-sharing among key stakeholders from various countries. LA Nigeria was represented at the event by Legal Advisor, Peace Okeshola, whose presentation was on "How legal aid facilitates access to justice in family law, including divorce, child custody, domestic violence, and child support." She also participated in panel discussions, sharing best practices from Nigeria.



*Pix 71: Peace Okeshola Nigeria at the conference in New Delhi, India.*

Her counterpart, Precious Ozobulu, representing LA Nigeria on Afia TV spoke on SGBV & the establishment of SGBV mobile courts, with support from Sexual & Gender-Based Justice Network (SJN). A screenshot of the appearance is shown below.



*Pix 72: Screenshot of the TV Program.*

LA Nigeria paid a courtesy visit to the Solidarity Center office in Nigeria. The visit highlighted some of L A's work and achievements in advancing the rights of the Nigerian worker. Bamidele Jacobs spoke on the case recently filed at the National Industrial Court in Abuja on behalf of informal and domestic workers and the need for advocacy around the same. In response, Mr. Sonny Ogbuehi, Country Program Director, thanked LA Nigeria for the efforts carried out so far and solicited more collaboration and engagement between the two organizations.



*Pix 73: Picture from the visit to Solidarity Centre, Nigeria.*

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) was visited to present reports on Petty Offenses and SRHR violations. During the presentation, findings from both reports were highlighted, emphasizing that the reports serve as valuable data on the trends of SRHR violations and rights violations associated with petty offenses to guide policy reforms. Chief Tony Ojukwu, CFR, the Executive Secretary of the NHRC, noted the significance of the reports and emphasized their pivotal role in addressing prison congestion related to petty offenses and the implementation of favorable laws concerning SRHR violations.





*Pix 74: Advocacy visit to the NHRC.*

## **SECURITY AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

LA Nigeria envisions a world where women and vulnerable groups are free from injustice. Activities under our security and access to justice program are geared towards unfettered access to justice for all, accountable policing, women's rights in conflict situations, and dignified treatment in detention.

Interventions carried out in the year 2022 under this program aligned with the overall goals and objectives of the organization.

### **Security Sector Governance**

In collaboration with the Center for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRNA), LA Nigeria is utilizing a rights-based approach to enhance security sector governance and accountability in Cameroon and Nigeria. This initiative places particular emphasis on understanding the interplay between insecurity, crises, and human rights. The project facilitates the strategic engagement of partnerships between law enforcement agencies and communities, employing problem-solving techniques to proactively address underlying conditions contributing to conflict and social unrest.

The primary objective of the project is to establish community-oriented policing initiatives, fostering close collaboration between law enforcement agencies and local communities through Community Policing Committees (CPC). This intervention aims to cultivate stronger ties between communities and the police, thereby enhancing trust and cooperation. Furthermore, the intervention seeks to promote a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between crises and development within communities. It aims to equip communities with the tools and mechanisms, such as Early Warning Early Response (EWER) systems, to effectively manage tense situations and mitigate the escalation of conflicts into full-blown crisis.





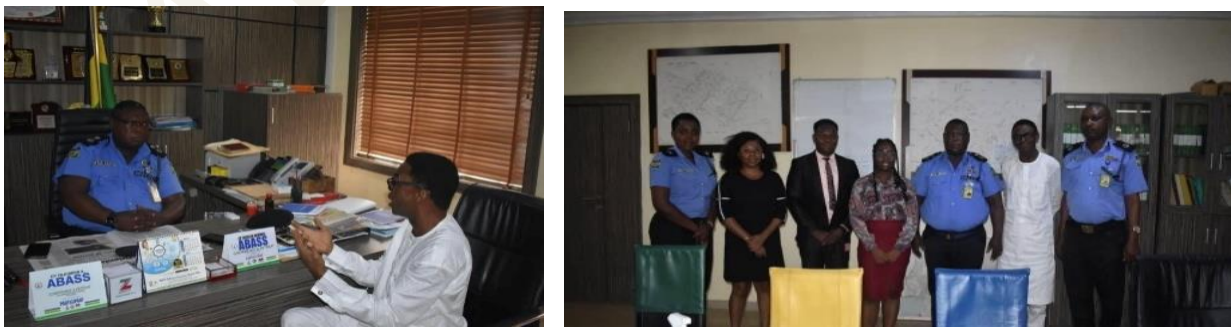
*Pix 75: Pictures from the Project start-up meeting with representatives of the Center for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRNA) from Cameroon and LA NIGERIA in Abuja, Nigeria.*

### **Community Policing**

LA Nigeria paid an advocacy visit to the Commissioner of Police in Benue State to establish a partnership for the "Empowering Community Policing Structures in Nigeria" Project. During the meeting, we discussed the objectives of the project and highlighted the importance of community policing, emphasizing the role of the police in collaborating with stakeholders to foster trust and enhance security in communities.

Mr. Wale Abah expressed enthusiasm for the project and reiterated the significance of its implementation within the communities. LA Nigeria was encouraged to engage all relevant parties involved in conflicts across different local government areas to participate in the community policing structure.

He emphasized that this approach would facilitate meaningful peace dialogues and reconciliation efforts. He commended LA Nigeria for spearheading the initiative and concluded by emphasizing the importance of prioritizing trust-building and partnerships over coercive measures for effective policing. LA Nigeria also visited the Nigeria Civil Defence Corps, Benue Command and in Guma Command, the Community Volunteer Guards, and the Traditional Ruler in Guma LGA.



*Pix 76: Advocacy visit to the Commissioner of Police in Benue State.*



*Pix 77: Advocacy visit to the Nigeria Civil Defence Corps, Benue Command.*



*Pix 78: Advocacy visit to the New Commandant of the Nigeria Civil Defence Corps, Benue Command.*



*Pix 79: Pictures from the Advocacy visit to the Nigeria Civil Defence Corps, Guma Command.*

An FGD with women and youth groups was also conducted by LA Nigeria in Guma LGA of Benue State, Nigeria, as part of efforts to establish community policing initiatives in the state.





*Pix 80: FGD with the women's group in Guma LGA of Benue State.*



*Pix 81: FGD with the youth group in Guma LGA of Benue State.*

The Traditional Council, Nigeria Civil Defence Corps, the Divisional Police Officer, and Volunteer Guards in Katsina-Ala Nigeria LGA were also engaged to secure buy-in to establish a partnership for the "Empowering Community Policing Structures in Nigeria."



*Pix 82: Engagement with the Traditional Council Members in Katsina-Ala Nigeria LGA.*



*Pix 83: Advocacy visit to the Nigeria Civil Defence Corps in Katsina-Ala Nigeria LGA.*



*Pix 84: Advocacy visit to the DPO in Katsina-Ala Nigeria LGA.*

LA Nigeria visited the Inspector General of Police at the Louis Edet House, Police Headquarters in Abuja. The advocacy visit was to intimate the IGP regarding LA's work on empowering Community Policing Committees (CPCs), toward conflict reduction, promotion of human rights compliance, security response, and accountability in Benue state Nigeria. CP. Ihebom Chukwuma, representing the IGP, welcomed the team and thanked LA Nigeria for taking this initiative. He stated that we are all stakeholders in security issues as it concerns every member of the society in regardless of your religious affiliation, ethnicity, or race.



*Pix 85: Pictures from the advocacy visit to the Police Headquarters in Abuja.*



In Benue state, the inaugural session of the Steering Committee (SC) on Community Policing was convened at the LA Nigeria headquarters in Makurdi. It is a significant milestone in advancing collective commitment to fostering safer communities. The gathering marked the commencement of deliberations and preliminary measures for the implementation of the Community Policing project within the pilot Local Governments of Guma and Katsina-Ala.

LA Nigeria underscored the need for the SC to own the project as the only way to ensure success. It comprises members of both the Benue Command Police Force, and the Benue arm of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps. The committee promised robust technical support and devotion to engaging with grassroots communities and CPC within the project's designated locations. The representatives of the NPF Benue Command and the Civil Defense commended initiatives set forth by L A, commending their steadfast dedication to policing, security, and communities in Benue State.



*Pix 86: Pictures from the Inaugural Session of the Community Policing Steering Committee.*

The Community Policing Committee (CPC) in Katsina-Ala and Guma LGAs, of Benue State were also inaugurated. Stakeholders pledged their dedication and adherence to the cause which entails partnership between security agencies and communities to restore peace, social order, and confidence in security agencies. A CPC of 20 members each was then established, with each member taking the oath of allegiance to reaffirm their duty as a member of the Community Policing Committee in Katsina-Ala Nigeria and Guma LGAs. The committee cuts across all the relevant groups in the LGA namely, the Traditional Rulers, Nigerian Police Force, NSCDC, Volunteer Guards, Religious Leaders, Women, and Youths. Of utmost importance, the CPC shall act as the community's representative in Katsina-Ala Nigeria and function as overseers, advocating for the community's interests throughout the policing process.



*Pix 87: Members of the CPC at the Inaugural Meeting in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area.*



*Pix 88: CPC Inaugural Meeting in Guma Local Government Area.*

Post the successful establishment of Community Policing Committees in Guma and Katsina-Ala, the LA Nigeria team at the headquarters in Makurdi convened a reflection meeting. The meeting reviewed the project achievements with regards to implementation, identified challenges, and devised strategies to address them. A plan was developed for future engagements and initiatives related to the project and its stakeholders.



*Pix 89: Staff at the Project Team Reflection Meeting in Makurdi, Benue State.*



In September 2023, L A's Director of Programs, HQ, Lazarus Ahangba, and the M&E Advisor, Isese Sor, visited the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) in Cameroon, which is headed by Mr. Felix Agbor. The purpose of the meeting was to conduct a comprehensive review of the progress made in implementing the "Empowering Community Policing Committees towards a Rights-Based Approach to Security Sector Governance and Accountability Project." This visit was crucial in assessing the project's effectiveness, identifying successes and challenges, and strategizing on ways to enhance the rights-based approach to security sector governance and accountability.



*Pix 90: Lazarus Ahangba and Isese Sor (seated to the left) with the CHRDA Team in Cameroon.*

LA Nigeria also hosted the Open Society Africa Team during their monitoring visit at the organization's field office in Abuja. The meeting's objective was to review progress and share learnings on “Empowering Community Policing Committees towards Rights Based Security Sector and Governance in Nigeria and Cameroon.”



*Pix 91: Pictures from the Open Society Africa Team visit.*

The Community Policing Steering Committee convened at LA Nigeria headquarters in Makurdi, Benue State. The meeting was to examine and deliberate upon the outcome of the Community Policing Committees (CPC) established in the two LGAs. Stakeholders shared valuable insights and

collectively devised a roadmap for fostering the effectiveness and functionality of the CPCs in the designated project implementation areas.



*Pix 92: The meeting with the CPC Steering Committee.*

### **Early Warning, Early Response**

LA Nigeria participated in a three-day workshop for citizen reporters on Early Warning and Early Response, EWER, strategies to mitigate community conflict. Organized by Equal Access International in collaboration with the CLEEN Foundation, the workshop equipped participants with the skills to identify key stakeholders involved in conflict management and foster collaboration with early warning response agencies, particularly at the grassroots level within local communities.

As the Local Resource Organization (LRO) for Equal Access International, LA paid a courtesy visit to the Brigade Commander of the 401 Special Force Brigade and the State Commandant of the NSCDC, Yakubu Ibrahim, in Makurdi, Benue State. The visit aimed to establish a partnership with the respective commands and advocate for their inclusion in established civilian security platforms within the state. This collaboration is part of the ongoing "Securing Nigeria Communities" project, aiming to facilitate an early response to crises.

Additionally, LA Nigeria attended a two-day workshop for Local Resource Organizations and community stakeholders in Benue State. This event focused on EWER strategies aimed at bolstering Civilian Security (Civ-Sec) in high-risk areas within Nigeria's North West and Middle Belt regions. Organized by Equal Access International in collaboration with the CLEEN Foundation, the workshop aimed to mitigate enabling environments for inter-communal violence and public unrest.

### **Free Legal Representation**



Legal Aid and Pro bono Services have been the foundation of LA Nigeria from inception till date. Indeed it was on the back of a pro-bono case that LA Nigeria came into existence. In the year 2023, we intervened in over 500 cases across the country. These cases range from human trafficking, rape, GBV, petty offenses, and other human rights violations. In the year 2023, we held a series of brainstorming sessions with pro-bono lawyers and had other meetings with in-house lawyers' towards devising strategies to better serve our target groups.

### **Litigation**

LA Nigeria on the 30th of October 2023, secured a conviction in a rape incident involving a 13-year-old girl, raped and abandoned in an uncompleted building. This conviction will not only encourage other survivors to come forward and report violations, but also serve as a deterrent to would-be perpetrators that ultimately, the long arm of the law will surely catch up with them. This is a testament to our continuous commitment and partnerships to prune violations of human rights and the dignity of a person.



*Pix 93: Picture from the Court premises with Lawyers, CSOs, and Women Groups.*

While acknowledging the efforts of the judiciary, Benue Women CSOs and Activists have expressed concern about how the State v. Denen Agene judgment might set a bad precedent for future SGBV cases.

On the 30th of October 2023, he was sentenced to six years in prison and fined of NGN.100,000.00 (one hundred thousand naira) the equivalent of \$70.00 (seventy dollars) by current exchange rates. Women activists therefore gathered at the LA Nigeria headquarters to appeal to the state for a review of the judgment. Notably, the sentencing did not consider the maximum penalties stipulated in Penal Code, life imprisonment or a lesser term for such offenses; or the VAPPL which imposes the maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

It was also suggested in the meeting that the Judge should consider the severity of the assault on the victim in using his discretion to impose a lesser

term, as stated in the Penal Code. The women emphasized the need for the case to serve as a deterrent against future acts of violence against women, and girls, thereby serving as a proactive measure to boost the confidence of survivors and victims to speak up and be heard. Most importantly, they sought assurance that survivors receive the full backing of the law.



*Pix 94: Picture from the meeting with women groups and activists in Benue State.*

**Case of Master X** – In 2023, LA Nigeria continued legal representation for this case instituted at the Federal High Court, Division of the Federal Capital Territory seeking the Enforcement of the fundamental human rights of Master X a 12-year-old pupil of Command Secondary School, Suleja who was born HIV positive but has been on the necessary treatment and care from inception. The latter was expelled from the said Command Secondary School, Suleja owing to his HIV status. The said pupil in the company of his mother both was allegedly embarrassed, humiliated, and escorted off the school premises. The case seeking the enforcement of the Fundamental Human Rights of Master X as guaranteed under sections 43 & 42 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Articles 2,4,5,16 and 19 of the African Charter on Human and People's Right (Ratification and Enforcement) Act Cap A9 LFN 2004 is ongoing.

LA NIGERIA continued the prison decongestion movement across various correctional centers and represented detainees assigned to human rights lawyers offering free legal assistance.

### **Public/Strategic Impact Litigation**

In 2023, LA Nigeria held series of brainstorming meetings on instituting strategic impact cases in Nigeria. One of such sessions focused on the rights of Persons Affected by Tuberculosis (PATBs). The meeting discussed issues to be brought before the court: compelling government to enhance physical access to DOT centres; confidentiality when on treatment; counseling for TB testing and treatment; and the need for policy on isolation to be human rights compliant.



*Pix 95: LA Staff at the Brainstorming meeting.*

Additionally, brainstorming session was held in Abuja to review the drafted processes for homeless persons and street traders. Supported by the Southern Africa Litigation Center (SALC), the initiative aims to enhance human rights and decriminalize poverty in Nigeria, particularly addressing the demolition of shanties in FCT, Abuja, by the government.



*Pix 96: The brainstorming session.*

With the support of Afya na Haki, a moot court trial was held to prepare for a Strategic Impact Litigation aimed at ensuring Nigeria's full compliance with the Maputo Protocol as ratified. The Strategic Impact Litigation will be filed before the ECOWAS Court. The moot court proceedings aimed to strengthen arguments and refine legal reasoning using both local and international legal frameworks. Senior lawyers argued briefs on both sides in a session presided over by a Judge of the Federal High Court. At the close, the ruling was reserved, with the judge commending the efforts of the lawyers and activists in strengthening Nigeria's human rights regime.



*Pix 97: Cross section of participants at the Moot Court Trial.*

The SIL filed with regard to the fundamental rights suit built on the grounds of the ban and destruction of bikes in Kastina – Ala Nigeria Local Government and environs in Benue State Nigeria is still ongoing.

LA NIGERIA v Federal Republic of Nigeria before the Community Court of ECOWAS in Abuja, FCT. The Strategic Impact Litigation (SIL) filed with regard to Vagrancy Laws and Petty Offences is ongoing. LA NIGERIA in the year 2023 made an application for default judgment given the Federal Government did not file in their defence. This SIL is ongoing.

The case of LA NIGERIA v Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB) & 2 Ors, is ongoing.

The SIL on TB where LA NIGERIA sued the Minister of Health to further expand the frontiers of People Affected by Tuberculosis (PATB) Rights and address issues of stigma and discrimination. The action instituted at the Federal High Court Abuja is ongoing.

LA NIGERIA produced and presented a Bill to decriminalize petty offenses in Bauchi and Benue states. Both Bills are before the States Houses of Assembly and still in the reading stage.

The human trafficking case of COP v Jennifer Patrick in Benue State is ongoing.

## **INFORMAL SECTOR WORK**

LA Nigeria convened a meeting with potential applicants from the informal sector in Nigeria, aimed at advocating for the rights of informal sector workers, including domestic and private sector workers, through litigation. The litigation



seeks to advocate for the inclusion of informal sector workers' rights within the framework of the Nigeria Labour Act, thereby ensuring comprehensive employment rights and legal protection.

During the meeting, it was highlighted that domestic workers in the informal sector face significant challenges, including precarious working conditions, rights violations, and marginalization. Many domestic workers are deprived of minimum wage, exacerbating their vulnerability. Addressing this issue necessitates extending the provisions of the Minimum Wage Act to cover informal and domestic workers. Additionally, there is a need to domesticate the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 189 and enforce labor and employment laws universally to safeguard the rights of all individuals.



*Pix 98: Cross section of representatives at the meeting on Informal Sector Workers.*

Lawyers held various brainstorming meetings focused on the litigation of rights of domestic and informal workers in Nigeria. The meetings were to collaboratively analyze and streamline the issues to be litigated concerning the rights of these workers, as well as to strategize on the most effective approaches for litigation. The overarching aim of this litigation is to advocate for the inclusion of rights for workers in the informal sector in the Nigeria Labour Act.



*Pix 99: Lawyers' brainstorming sessions at LA Nigeria office*

LA Nigeria convened a meeting focused on Litigating the Rights of Domestic and Informal Workers in Nigeria. Present at the meeting were Ziona Tanzer from the

Solidarity Centre International and representatives of domestic and informal workers. During the meeting, lawyers briefed the union members on strategies to be adopted in prosecuting cases in court. Additionally, union members were tasked with identifying individuals within their unions whose rights had been violated, in preparation for the legal action to be initiated.



*Pix 100: Meeting with Solidarity Centre International and Informal Sector Workers.*

## **SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS**

LA Nigeria, in partnership with Afya na Haki (Ahaki), is implementing the Litigating Reproductive Justice in Nigeria (LIRN) Project. This initiative is designed to facilitate access to reproductive justice for women and girls across Nigeria. One key aspect of the project involves establishing reproductive rights networks, through which members can engage in interventions at various levels, including progressive and collaborative sexual and reproductive health (SRH) litigation.

In a meeting with stakeholders and lawyers, it was emphasized that the primary objective was to establish a Legal Support Network dedicated to advancing reproductive justice. A jointly developed Action Plan was an outcome of the meeting and was shared with the network. This is the first network in Nigeria, focusing on addressing reproductive justice issues using Abuja and Lagos as pilot states.

[https://youtu.be/J3ZTGNV\\_z4k](https://youtu.be/J3ZTGNV_z4k)

<https://fb.watch/koKstqwsSL/?mibextid=Nif5oz>



*Pix 101: Participants at the meeting and members of the Legal Support Network.*



*Pix 102: Executive Secretary of the NHRC, Dr. Tony Ojukwu, right, supporting the reproductive justice project and the media reporting the same.*

LA Nigeria organized a training session on Litigating Reproductive Rights & Justice for Lawyers in Nigeria. The training aimed to empower lawyers with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively litigate Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) cases and offer pro bono legal assistance to women and healthcare providers. The overarching goal of the two-day training was to create a secure and supportive environment where women and healthcare workers can freely provide and access reproductive services without fear of legal repercussions. The capacity of lawyers was enhanced and the outcome is a well-equipped team of lawyers providing free legal support, thereby fostering a safe environment for women and healthcare workers to seek and deliver reproductive services.

A brainstorming meeting was also held with Lawyers to assess a Draft Originating Process for Strategic Impact Litigation (SIL) on Reproductive Justice in Nigeria.





*Pix 103: Training of Lawyers on Litigating Reproductive Rights & Justice in Nigeria.*



*Pix 104: Advocacy Visit to the Brigade Commander, 401 Special Force Brigade, in Makurdi, Benue State.*



*Pix 105: Advocacy Visit to the State Commandant of the NSCDC in Makurdi, Benue State.*



*Pix 106: Participants at the Workshop.*

## **ELECTIONS, DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE**

The vision of LA Nigeria is a world where marginalized populations participate in governance, the government is open and accountable to citizens, and resources are used judiciously and equitably for all. The interventions carried out in 2023 aligned with these overall goals and objectives.

As part of this mission, representatives participated in a one-day training session on Election Observation, facilitated by the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) with support from USAID and Palladium. The training equipped participants with essential skills to support citizen engagement in preparation for the 2023 General Election. LA Nigeria played an active role in election observation activities in Makurdi, Tarka, and Katsina-Ala Local Government Areas of Benue State.



*Pix 107: Training session on Election Observation.*

LA Nigeria engaged in a forum with Non-State Actors on Election Security in Nigeria, organized by the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Center (CISLAC). The purpose of the meeting was to gather insights from key stakeholders regarding lessons learned from the 2023 elections. Drawing from our extensive experience

in election monitoring and advocacy for good governance, LA Nigeria contributed valuable perspectives on strategies to enhance electoral processes and outcomes.



*Pix 108: Non-State Actors Forum on Election Security in Nigeria.*

Representing the Open Government Partnership (OGP), LA Nigeria participated in a town hall meeting convened by the Benue State Government to facilitate discussions on the formulation of the Benue State 2024 budget. The primary objective of the meeting was to enhance openness, transparency, and citizen engagement in the budgetary process and decision-making. During the discussions, emphasis was placed on leveraging strengths such as agriculture to boost the state's revenue generation capacity. It was highlighted that increased internally generated revenue could lead to greater funding allocations for addressing developmental challenges within the state.



*Pix 109: OGP Town Hall Meeting in Benue State.*

LA Nigeria, in collaboration with BENGONET, embarked on a crucial and impactful initiative to promote citizen voices in governance in Benue State. The project titled, “Mainstreaming Citizens Voices for Accountability” is implemented in Benue State in collaboration with BENGONET, with support



from Situation Room. The focus is on citizens holding the government accountable to its commitments on key issues such as the resettlement of IDPs, VAPPL review, SARC operationalization, and advocating for Benue's OGP Membership. The inclusivity of the meeting, with representation from women, youths, faith-based groups, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) under BENGONET, is commendable. It ensures that a broad spectrum of perspectives and needs are considered in the planning and implementation of the project.



*Pix 110: Project Start-up Meeting held in Benue State.*

LA's intervention in this thematic area in year 2023 was also through literacy sessions, which touched on issue-based voting, discussed as a topic on our weekly Thursdays' Facebook live streaming series.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTHENING AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

In 2023, Lawyers Alert continued in its approach to Staff Capacity building via facilitating weekly capacity-building sessions on various fields or areas of development for members of staff. This approach led to over 40 capacity-building sessions held for the staff of LA Nigeria. Staff also participated in training organized by various partners.

Staff also participated in a 3-day training session facilitated by SCALE, in collaboration with USAID and Palladium. The primary focus of the training was to enhance the capacity of SCALE partners in various key areas. These included: Data Visualization, Advocacy Campaign Management, strengthening partners' abilities to plan and execute advocacy campaigns with precision, Report Writing, and Storytelling. The training aimed to empower partners with the tools and knowledge necessary to advance their respective missions and objectives successfully.



*Pix 111: Staff at the Data Visualization and reporting training organized by SCALE.*

Lawyers Alert participated in a training session organized by Partnership for Amplified Voices and supported by the World Bank. The focus was on harnessing fiscal data for advocacy purposes and engaging with the energy sector. The training aimed to equip Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) with the necessary skills and insights to effectively analyze government fiscal data and leverage it for advocacy and engagement initiatives. The overarching goal was to broaden the scope of analysis and advocacy skills among a wider spectrum of CSOs, including the development of infographics.



*Pix 112: LA Nigeria Staff at the Fiscal Data for Advocacy Training in Abuja, Nigeria, organized by Partnership by Amplified Voices.*

A three-day capacity-building workshop facilitated by SCALE witnessed the participation of Lawyers Alert. The workshop aimed to enhance the organization's ability to conduct strategic planning and develop annual operational plans that can withstand rigorous scientific evaluation.



*Pix 113: LA Nigeria Staff at the training.*



Three members of LA Nigeria's Board participated in a 3-day Board Governance Training organized by the Centre for Leadership, Strategy & Development (Centre LSD) in collaboration with Palladium SCALE, with support from USAID.



*Pix 114: From L – R Rommy Mom, President; Prof. Magdalene Dura - Board Chair; and Mrs. Rosemary Hua, Board Member, at the training.*

Palladium Nigeria, under the SCALE project, conducted a 2-day annual organizational assessment and compliance meeting with LA Nigeria as the implementing partner at the organization's headquarters in Makurdi. The primary objective was to enhance project implementation by evaluating the organization's structure and compliance with standard operating procedures.



*Pix 115: Organizational Assessment and Compliance Meeting.*

In furtherance of capacity building efforts, staff attended a three-day SMART advocacy training organized by USAID - US Agency for International



Development Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria and Stop TB Partnership on the need for CSOs to have the skills and knowledge to conduct strategic advocacy for policy change and increased resources for implementation of TB Intervention in Nigeria.



*Pix 116: SMART Advocacy Training.*

LA Nigeria participated in a 5-day capacity-building program on Resource Mobilization and Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) in Abuja, Nigeria, organized by Caritas Nigeria.



*Pix 117: Solumtochukwu Ozobulu at the training.*

LA Nigeria represented by the Directors Finance, Yemi Agoro and HQ, Laz Ahangba, attended a "2-Day Capacity Building Workshop on Countering Terrorism and Financing Abuse in the NPO Sector" by Spaces for Change,

Global Center on Cooperative Security and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) with the theme "Collaborating to Fight Financing of Terrorism."



*Pix 118: Olayemi Agoro and Lazarus Ahangba at the training.*

Our partner, the SCALE Palladium Team, met with LA Nigeria at the headquarters in Makurdi for a 2-day impactful session on Institutional Strengthening, Monitoring, and Coaching. We are collaboratively working to strengthen the implementation strategies to ensure the desired outputs.



*Pix 119: The Institutional Strengthening, Monitoring, and Coaching.*



*Pix 120: Some pictures from one of LA's weekly review meetings.*

## **LA NIGERIA ANNUAL RETREAT 2023**

From June 25 to 28 2023, Lawyers Alert Nigeria held its annual retreat in Keffi, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The primary focus of the retreat was to reflect on the organization's performance over the past two years, 2022 and 2023, in relation

to its Annual Plan. This reflection included tracking processes and results achieved, gathering valuable feedback from target beneficiaries, and fostering team cohesion through various team-building activities.

The retreat also placed a strong emphasis on reinforcing Lawyers Alert's core work values, ethics, and productivity. These sessions aimed to ensure that all team members are aligned with the organization's mission and are equipped to uphold its standards in their daily operations.

In addition to these focal points, the retreat provided an opportunity for staff and management to distill key learnings from the past year, identify and celebrate unintended successes, and develop a clearer, more strategic approach for achieving all planned actions for 2024. This strategic planning is crucial for enhancing the organization's capacity to serve poor and vulnerable individuals in society more effectively.

To enrich the strategic planning process, partners and beneficiaries were also invited to the retreat. Their presence was invaluable as they reviewed the developed strategy and provided input based on their experiences and insights. This collaborative approach ensured that the strategy for the upcoming year is comprehensive, inclusive, and well-informed by the needs and perspectives of those Lawyers Alert aims to serve.

By the end of the retreat, Lawyers Alert had not only reviewed its past performance but had also laid a strong foundation for future success. The clear strategy developed during the retreat positions the organization to better meet its objectives and deliver impactful services in the year 2024.












*Pix 129: Picture from a session and work-out at the 2023 Annual Retreat*

## LAWYERS ALERT STAFF IN PICTURES



		
Dr. DURA, Magdalene Chair, Governing Board	MOM. Rommy President	SULE, Nanahauwa North-West Program Lead
		
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AHANGBA, Lazarus Director, Programs HQ	IDRIS, Saadatu HR Manager	EBOH, Victor Snr Legal/Reproductive Rights Advisor
		
OZOBULU, S. Precious Snr. Legal Officer	OKESOLA, Peace Legal Advisor	SOR, Isese M&E Advisor
		
TYOWUA, Grace Snr. Media Officer	TORKUMA, Elvis Snr. Program Officer	MASE, Blessing Senior Finance Officer
		
GABRIEL, Prosper Senior IT Officer	ALEKE, Ifechi Legal Officer	MTAKAAN, Linus Admin/Finance Officer
		

		
JOSHUA, Ayomide Project Assistant	IBRAHIM, Mom Project Assistant	ADASU, Jennifer Media Intern
		
UHEMBE, Francisca Front Desk Manager	MBAKAAN, Silas Office Assistant	MONDAY, Patience Office Assistant

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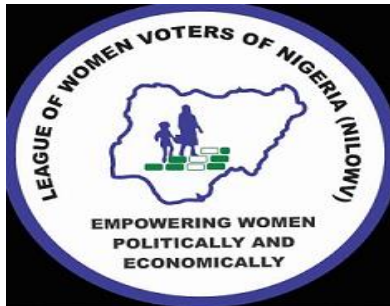


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## SELECTED ARTICLES/ PRESS RELEASES

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[https://youtu.be/J3ZTGNV\\_z4k](https://youtu.be/J3ZTGNV_z4k)

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