

ADVOCACY VISIT TO LAWYERS ALERT BY RIGHT TO LIFE INITIATIVE

Introduction:

Right to Life Initiative, a Key and Affected Population (KAP) focused organization paid an advocacy visit to Lawyers Alert on the 20th of January, 2020 to discuss issues of mutual interest and strengthening of ties between the two organizations.



Proceedings:

The meeting started at 1:10pm with a welcome address by Mr. Victor Eboh Esq. of Lawyers Alert. In his speech, he welcomed the team from Rights to Life Initiative and introduced Lawyers Alert. In his introduction, he briefly described Lawyers Alert's focal/thematic areas including her ongoing interventions. He also thanked the group for finding LA worthy to Partner and collaborate with. Afterwards, he gave room for parties to introduce themselves; starting with LA staff and then the RLI Team. The visiting team comprised the Executive Director, Usange James Terna, Igoche Samson Jack - M&E Officer, Anzua Maxwell Matthew - Support and Paul Tarkaa Rack - Gender officer.

After Mr. Victor's address, the Executive Director of Right to Life took the floor. He gave a brief history of the organization; he stated that RLI was formed in December, 2019. He also expressed his joy stating that they had tried a number of times to reach

out to Lawyers Alert and finally this is the time. They mentioned that as a start up, they would need LA's support in all areas.



In his opening remarks, Mr. Lazarus M Ahangba welcomed the group to Lawyers Alert and commended them for being a focused organization. He also charged them to be dogged and resolute as emerging organizations especially Non Profits face a plethora of challenges in their early days. He commended their needle point approach to work considering the fact that most start up organizations always make the mistake of being involved in everything from start from climate change to Education.



Mr. Lazarus M Ahangba went ahead to tell the guests more about Lawyers Alert with focus on its vision, mission, staffing, concentration on human Rights. He further told them that we are willing to partner with them on human rights issues especially in getting access to justice. (Pro bono services).

He also mentioned that we work in SRHR, GBV areas etc. he further explained that Lawyers Alert offers pro bono services only in human rights violations situations. He reiterated this position by defining the line between human rights issues and personal issues.



On capacity building, he mentioned that Lawyers Alert have instituted capacity building sessions on Friday (in-house and external). He also invited them to join our Face book live streaming sessions. He also explained that apart from human rights issues, LA monitors and documents human right violation. For criminal cases, he mentioned that since such matters are handled by the police we only watch brief. He also said that on matters where we can intervene directly, we do it speedily he used Mr. X case as an example. He also encouraged them to report violations and cases to us.

Mr. Lazarus M Ahangba intimated them about the difficulty of new organizations surviving in the Nigerian clime. Making an example that 1 out of 10 new organizations make it in 10 years. He said that small NGOs have issues striving because they incur the same cost as subsisting NGOs. He further advised them to stay focused, build an identity for themselves especially online, he used Face book as an example of a

platform they can leverage on. He also encouraged them to build strong partnerships, build their capacities and learn how to write proposals. He expressed his desire to see them succeed which was his reason for advising them. Mr. Jack asked if the confidentiality of clients can be secured in a court case and Mr. Lazarus responded in the affirmative using Mr. X case as an example. His response was resonated by S.P Ozobulu Esq and Victor Eboh Esq. who further reassured them that where the confidentiality of a client is necessary it will be done.

Mr. Lazarus M Ahangba further informed them of our prison work and our petty offences project. He asked them to report cases of petty offences and to also report cases of indigent people behind bars. Furthermore, he explained to them that not only do we monitor and document but we also have an evidence based tool that analyzes and groups data. After talking about Ladock T. Mr. Jack raised the issue of members of their community being afraid of lawyers and that some others would want to know if they need proof before they can approach Lawyers Alert. His question was, what should he do in any of the above circumstances?

Barr. Victor responded by letting him know that the gender focal person in every organization is supposed to serve as a paralegal.

This gender focal person is to create an atmosphere/be a first respondent that will help the victim trust him/her. The gender focal person gives the first aid treatment to cases before transferring them to the lawyer. Barr. Victor advised that when they have a large number of people for training, they can call Lawyers Alert to carry out a capacity building on human rights issues e.g., what to do when police violates their rights.

Matthew mentioned that the community is suffering a lot. He also mentioned that some churches also make it difficult for members of the community to worship giving an example with N.K.S.T. he shared his personal experience and how it affected him. He said his experience has moved him to join the organization so that he can help others.

Mr. Lazarus M Ahangba said, he can feel his pain and attributed the situation to the kind of society we live in. he also spoke about human right as un-alienated rights of human beings. He further explained who a paralegal is using a community health extension worker as an example, he also stated that paralegal stands in until a

substantive lawyer steps in. He further told them that he is a paralegal and that he has worked as a paralegal for a long time.

He further told them to put themselves together and make arrangements for Victor to come and give them capacity building.

The EP appreciated Lawyers Alert for their time and gave Mr. Lazarus M Ahangba a letter to sign for documentation purposes.

The meeting came to a close at 2:15pm with a group photograph.

