



Women's Voice

NEWSLETTER



A Publication of Ajegunle Community Project (ACP)

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16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Ajegunle Community Project (ACP) marked the 2008 '16 days of activism against gender violence' with a call to eradicate all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination against women.

The Executive Director of the organization, Alhaja Roli Raliat Daniju in her speech at a seminar/rally held at Graziella Hotel, Olodi-Apapa on November 25 said Gender Based Violence is a universal abuse of women's human rights. To her, it is the violence directed against women, most of the time by their intimate partner or family member. It is any act that

results in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such act, like coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty; whether occurring in public or private life.

Alhaja Daniju added that with the Lagos State Government recently passing a bill on Gender Based Violence into law, "we now have a tool to work with, to prosecute the offender of gender based violence and discrimination in women and girl-child".

The 16 days of activism against gender violence is an international campaign to symbolically link

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Women's Street Rally to create awareness on Gender-based violence within the communities in Ajegunle, Ifelodun L.G.A.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the year 2009. Last year was very tasking but interesting for us at Ajegunle Community Project (ACP). In our efforts to continue with programmes to reduce social inequalities among women and the girl child, we faced a lot of challenges but for the support of our partners like the Police, Judiciary, donors, social welfare service, community leaders and other stakeholders. Commitment is our watchword and that is why we stand by what we believe in, and in doing our best the way we could.

Our activities for the last half of 2008 are presented in this edition of our newsletter. The issue of HIV/AIDS pandemic is something that should concern everybody because of the new trend especially as it relates to stigmatization and discrimination against the People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA).

We believe that women constitute a substantial portion of Nigeria's population, so, sidelining them would rob the country of a significant source of fresh ideas and inputs for governance. This poses a significant threat to genuine democracy. For these reasons, it is imperative for women to be economically empowered, politically aware and socially liberated; thus, the reasons for our projects on women political participation and micro credit scheme.

Our activities on Gender Based Violence and Discrimination (GBV&D) are not left in this edition; so also the legal cases on women and the youth project in schools.

While thanking you for your support over the years, we would appreciate more of your contribution to enrich subsequent newsletters. We wish you a very prosperous 2009.

ACP ANTI-VIOLENCE CLUBS

ACP LAUNCHES ANTI-VIOLENCE CLUBS IN TOLU COMPLEX SCHOOLS

Having achieved lots in Lagos education district by spreading the ACP Anti-violence club in all the schools under it, ACP saw the need to go beyond its present scope and take the crusade to other education districts in Lagos State. Hence, the need to establish ACP anti-violence club in schools under education district V.

In line with this, ACP organized a one-day workshop on gender-based violence and discrimination among youths at Unity Secondary School, Tolu Complex on October 29, 2008 to sensitize teachers/counselors and students on the purpose of the club.

One of the objectives of the project is to educate the Girl-Child on their rights, sensitize the audience on the nature and implication of abuse and discrimination on



A female student making her remarks during the Question and Answer Session.

Girl-Child.

The club also addressed the issue of the girl-child development, and at the same

time sought to reduce incidence of violence and discrimination that may impede her development.

Presently, ACP Anti-violence club has been taken up in the following schools:

- Adeolu Junior Secondary School, Tolu
- Alakoto Junior High School, Tolu
- Creek Senior High School, Tolu
- Creek Junior High School, Tolu
- Expressway Junior Secondary School, Tolu
- Tincan Island Junior High School, Tolu
- Tincan Island senior High School, Tolu
- Mokoya Junior High School, Tolu
- Newland Senior Secondary School, Tolu
- Ojoku Senior High School, Tolu
- Ojora Memorial Senior Secondary School, Tolu
- Ojora Memorial Junior Secondary School, Tolu
- Odiadi-Apapa Senior Secondary School, Tolu
- Odiadi-Apapa Junior Secondary School, Tolu
- Oluwa Memorial Senior Secondary School, Tolu
- Oshodi Senior Secondary School, Tolu
- Oshodi Junior Secondary School, Tolu
- Reservation Senior Secondary School, Tolu
- Reservation Junior Secondary School, Tolu
- Unity Senior Secondary School, Tolu
- Unity Junior Secondary School, Tolu



Cross section of students during the Launch of the Anti-violence Clubs in Tolu Schools Complex



Group photograph at the end of the Youth programme

POSITIVE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

In Nigeria and other countries facing severe HIV/AIDS epidemics, an overwhelming majority of those who are infected and affected by HIV are already living in poverty. Further income loss can threaten the ability to meet basic needs such as food, education and access to healthcare. Because of this, understanding the impact of HIV infection and care giving on household income is essential to improving the health and welfare of people living with HIV/AIDS and their families.

There is also the need for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) to make informed decisions concerning the state of their health through positive living. Positive living means maintaining a high quality and productive life in spite of HIV infection.

As part of its awareness programme on stigmatization against people living with HIV/AIDS, the Ajegunle Community Project -with the support of the Global Fund for Women- organized a one-day programme at its office-conference hall on Tuesday 23rd September 2008.

Titled "One day programme for women living with HIV/AIDS on positive living and income generation activities", the workshop witnessed large attendance of

people living with HIV/AIDS who went away with knowledge on how to live a positive life.

Having identified the need for economic independency as a core issue for human survival, ACP donated mobile telephone sets with recharge cards to each of the participants.

The purpose of the gesture according

to ACP's Executive Director, Alhaja Ro'i Rakiat Daniju, was to encourage economic independence of people living with HIV/AIDS.

The mobile phone Alhaja Daniju said should be used for commercial purpose, thereby the beneficiaries would be earning income and live healthy lives.

The speaker at the event, Dr. (Mrs.) Regina Akpan said that, the most serious killer is in the mind. She

stressed that immediately healthy people are diagnosed of HIV/AIDS and confirmed positive, they would have nervous breakdown, which would eventually lead to death.

She advised that people living with the HIV/AIDS virus should learn to be happy and be positive about life; they should speak positive words and take positive actions.

Some of the participants/beneficiaries at the event expressed gratitude to Ajegunle Community Project (ACP) for the good gesture.

According to them, the mobile phones would go a long way to make people living with HIV/AIDS self-reliant. They thanked the organization for its love towards ensuring a better society.

Meanwhile, in order to put a stop to the stigmatization and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS for them to live positively, ACP also organized a one-day programme at Amuwo-Odein Local Government, Lagos on Tuesday, October 7, 2008 titled: "Human Rights Advocacy on HIV/AIDS" and supported by Global

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Alhaja Ro'i Rakiat Daniju the Executive Director of the Ajegunle Community project delivering her welcome address.



Mrs. Olushola Akal the head of programme of ACP (standing in the middle) presenting gift items to one of the participant at the end of the workshop.

TIPS

FOR PLWHA:

Learn ways to stay healthy

- Avoid re-infection.
- While you continue working, make out time for plenty of rest.
- Avoid being alone, talk to loved ones. You can also talk to some one living with HIV because this can help in reducing stress and worry.
- Eliminating stress through different techniques like watching comic films, listening to interesting stories that will make you laugh etc.
- Socialize with friends and family.
- Practicing proper personal and general hygiene.
- Disclose HIV status to significant persons.
- Use preventive (prophylaxis) drugs for opportunistic infections.
- Seek medical attention early to minimize health problems.
- If you are on medication adhere to treatment regimens.
- Seek counseling and support as necessary.
- Develop spiritual strength, join religious group and read documents like the Bible, Koran etc. that will lift you spiritually. The nearer you are to your creator the more you renew your strength and courage to accept His will.
- Get involved in HIV/AIDS prevention and care activities in the community.
- Plan for the future with loved ones.
- Avoid alcohol and cigarettes.
- Avoid exposure to other infections such as TB, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and get prompt appropriate treatment if exposed.
- Avoid using unprescribed drugs because these can weaken the immune system.
- Moderate exercise can improve your appetite and can strengthen your muscles. It can also reduce stress and increase your energy; you may get exercise from your daily work like walking and dancing.
- Learn about HIV/AIDS.
- Stay relaxed. You can do that by meditating, reading or spending your leisure time on positive thoughts and remain calm with relaxing activities.

ACP HOLDS WORKSHOP ON WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

In continued efforts to fight inequalities against women, Ajegunle Community Project (ACP) conducted Focus Group Sessions in 2006. This was one of the many programmes on the course of women emancipation, which covers thematic areas like gender-based violence, skills acquisition, democracy and good governance etc.

The outcome of the Focus Group Session was the identification of the issues facing women development, which were categorized into four areas namely: Education, Political, Family life, Health and Economic.

On politics for instance, it was discovered that most women lack understanding of the basic rights to aspire to leadership positions in government and other public service functions.

It is on this note that Ajegunle Community Project (ACP) took it upon itself the need to create awareness and sensitize the society on women participation in governance for rapid development of our

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Mrs Joan Mbagou delivering her paper on Conflict management at the workshop

OUR EVENT-MARKING DAYS

International Women Day	- March 8
Children's Day	- May 27
International Child Abuse Day	- November 19
16-day Activism on GBV	- Nov. 25 - Dec. 15
World AIDS Day	-- December 1
International Human Rights Day	- December 10

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM...

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violence against women and human rights, and to emphasize that such violence is a violation of human rights. The 16-day period usually begins on November 25th and ends on December 10th.

Usually celebrating it every year, Ajegunle Community Project has been using the campaign as a strategy to call for the elimination of all forms of violence against women by raising awareness about gender based violence as a human rights issue at the local, state and national level; strengthening local work around



Group photograph of the participants at the 16 Days Activities against Gender Base violence at the end of the Seminar.

violence against women; establishing clear links between local and international work to end violence against women and creating tools to pressure the government to implement promises made to eliminate violence against women.

POSITIVE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

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Fund for Women, the programme was a follow up of the 2008 ACP's HIV/AIDS project held in Ajeromi Ifelodun Local Government of Lagos State.

The purpose of the programme was to equip the participants with information

on overview of HIV/AIDS and ethical and human rights, with regards to the scourge.

Mrs. Ronke Afolabi and other speakers presented papers on prevention and control of HIV/AIDS; conflict resolution in the context of addressing stigmatization and discrimination of

HIV infected and affected women.

In her presentation, Afolabi highlighted three ways to control the spread of HIV/AIDS as: Know your status, negotiate safer sex; and correct use of condom.

Mrs. Afolabi commended ACP on its laudable projects especially on the plight of people living with HIV/AIDS.

She said further that ACP intervention programmes have helped to create greater awareness on discrimination and stigmatization against people living with HIV/AIDS.

Participants at the workshop, which comprised people living with HIV/AIDS, market women, community leaders, local government representatives, youths and civil society groups etc. also made calls to the people to extend their hands of love and relationship to people living with HIV/AIDS.



Ahaja Roti Balina Danjifu poses for a group photograph with the participants at the end of the economic empowerment programme.

What is ACP micro-credit?

ACP Micro credit simply is about providing small amounts of money to grassroots women to enable them start and expand their business opportunities, increase income and consequently improve their living conditions and well-being over time.

It is a product of new thinking in poverty alleviation programme which established that the grassroots women will become less idle and that majority of them will rise above poverty level until they have access to bigger credits, information and capacity building. This helps in solving their problem of being exposed to violence as a result of poverty.

Why is ACP implementing the scheme?

Ajegunle Community Project being aware of the limitations of the poor to access financial institutions for loan, has launched the scheme to among others:

1. Inculcate the development of small-scale business and saving habits amongst the participating members.
2. Improve the economic status of the rural women by making funds available for business start up and expansion.
3. Contribute to the economic development of rural communities through lending without collateral.

Who is the scheme for?

The scheme is restricted to grassroots women who are engaged in economic regenerative business such as farming, fishing, trading etc, who have expressed the greatest need for and have demonstrated capability to utilize micro credit funds.

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How to benefit

- Register with ACP Micro Credit Association.
- Attend bi-monthly meeting of the association
- Be engaged in income generating activity/trading.
- Save up to N2, 000 into the association account.
- Apply for the loan.

What are the repayment terms?

Repayment terms vary, depending on the amount of loan obtained. In general however, loan is repaid bi-monthly through the association.

Can a member benefit more than once?

Yes. A member that fully repays her loan on time is eligible for a repeat loan of higher value. And performing members would continue to have access to micro credit funds.

Is there a ceiling to the amount that a member can get?

For the first loan, yes. Subsequent loans would then be incremental based on satisfactory performance of a member.

communities.

Moreover, in realization of the set objectives, Ajegunle Community Project on July 9, 2008 organized a one-day workshop for aspirants for the positions of local government chairman and councilors; political parties leaders, market women, women leaders, community leaders and civil society groups.

The workshop with the theme "Civic Education Towards Good Governance" was sponsored by AFRICA WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT FUND (AWDF) and held at Amuwo Odofin Local Government Secretariat, Lagos. The workshop witnessed a large number of participants including the aspirants in chairmanship and councillorship positions for the 2008 local government election.

Expressing their views, participants at the workshop identified finance, Godfatherism, returning syndroms, lack of unity as some of the factors hindering women participation in politics.

The workshop was the second part of the project earlier organized at Ajeromi Ifelodun Local Government of Lagos State.



Group Photograph of the participants at the end of the workshop.

LEGAL CASES

an Auntly on the promise that she would be provided a job in Lagos to work as a Canteen Assistant. On getting to Lagos, she was taken to an Island called, "Snake Island" under Apapa Local Government where she was introduced to a forceful commercial sex business. Whenever, she refuses any "customer" introduced to her, she would be beaten mercilessly. Meanwhile, all the money she made is under her master's custody,

took good care of her.. We later took her to the motor park and financed her transportation fare back to Calabar, her hometown.

1. A girl of 16 years was brought to our office. She gave birth to a baby about a year plus, but she does not live together with the father of her child. The complaint was that the father of her child wants to collect the baby from her but refused because she fears the man would not be able to take care of the baby very well. Her own father has also sent her packing from the house. ACP called a meeting between the father of the child and the lady where we were able to give them reasons why the mother needs to continue nursing the child, besides, the baby is still a toddler.

A case of child trafficking was reported through our referral from Amukoko Police Station at Ajegunle. The Officer brought the lady named Mary, to our office. She narrated her story of how she was brought from Calabar to Lagos by an Auntly on the promise that she would be provided a job in Lagos to work as a Canteen Assistant. On getting to Lagos, she was taken to an Island called, "Snake Island" under Apapa Local Government where she was introduced to a forceful commercial sex business. Whenever she refuses any "customer" introduced to her, she would be beaten mercilessly. Meanwhile, all the money she made is under her master's custody. Mary escaped from the island and was brought by a Police officer to our office for "rehabilitation and sheltering". Mary was in our custody for four days during which we counseled, encouraged, and took good care of her. We later took her to the motor park and financed her transportation fare back to Calabar, her hometown.

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3. Mrs. X reported a case that her neighbour, a man of 28 years, defiled her 4 years old daughter. She said her daughter normally play in the neighbour's room most times. But this particular day Mrs. X was away and as usual her daughter went into the man's room to play. Mrs. X did not suspect or notice any thing until when her daughter want to urinate. The girl complained of severe pain and the mother noticed that her daughter could not bend down very well. When she took her to the hospital few days later, it was discovered that the girl has been defiled. After series of questioning the young girl narrated how their neighbour put his finger inside her "thing" and later put his thing inside her thing. We have reported the matter to the police and the case is already in court.
4. The earlier mentioned case of the Alani is still pending. The Probate Section is yet finished the administrative job on it.
5. The Rape case mentioned earlier in our January – June edition is still pending and our Legal Officer in charge is still handling the matter.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Women and children are often in great danger in the place where they should be safest; within their families. For many, 'home' is where they face regime of terror and violence at the hands of someone close to them; someone they should be able to trust.

Those victimized suffer physically and psychologically. They are unable to make their own decisions, voice their own opinions or protect themselves and their children for fear of further repercussions. Their human rights are denied and their lives are stolen from them by the ever-present threat of violence.

It may not be easy to identify domestic violence, especially at first. While some relationships are clearly abusive from the outset, domestic violence often starts subtly and gets worse over time.

For example, it may begin with occasional hurtful comments, jealousy or controlling behavior. As it gets worse, it becomes more frequent, severe or violent. As the cycle of abuse worsens, the woman's safety or the safety of her children may be in danger.

Look at it this way: your partner apologizes and says the hurtful behavior won't happen again. But you fear it will. At times you may start to doubt your own judgment, or wonder whether you're going crazy.

You may even feel like you've imagined the whole thing. But the emotional or physical pain you feel is real. If this sounds familiar, you may be the victim of domestic violence.

Also called domestic abuse, intimate partner violence or battering, domestic violence occurs between people in intimate relationships. It can take many forms, including emotional, sexual and physical abuse. Female or male partners sometimes abuse men, but domestic violence is most often directed toward women.

Unfortunately, domestic violence against women is common. It happens to teenage girls and women of all backgrounds. It is a fact that million of women suffer abuse from their husbands, ex-husbands, boyfriends or intimate partners every year.

And when the violation takes place within the home, as is very often the case, the abuse is effectively condoned by the tacit silence and the passivity displayed by the state and the law-enforcing machinery.

You may be a victim of domestic violence if you're in a relationship with someone who:

- Controls your finances, so you have to ask for money.
- Looks at you or acts in ways that scare you.
- Acts jealous or possessive, or accuses you of being unfaithful.
- Tries to control how you spend your time, who you see or talk to, where you go or what you wear.
- Wants you to get permission to make everyday decisions.

- Gets angry when drinking alcohol or using drugs etc.

Domestic violence is a health, legal, economic, educational, developmental and human rights problem. Therefore, strategies that cut across broad range areas should be designed while finding solutions to the problem.

Great efforts are being made by NGOs and civil society organizations like Ajeunle Community Project in the areas of advocacy and awareness raising, networking and community mobilization, and some intervention measures.

However, more energy should be geared towards legal reforms on violence against women, education for building a culture of non-violence, direct service provision to survivors and perpetrators and intervention to help survivors to rebuild their lives. Also, there should be early identification of 'at risk' families, groups and individuals.

Above all, four principles should guide all interventions attempting to address domestic violence. They are: Prevention, protection, early intervention and rebuilding the lives of survivors.

We appreciate your contribution to this discourse. Please send your comment/response to our office.



Drawing - Ope Tolwo