

Highlights of 2019 End of Year Activities



**Promoting a Culture of Transparency,
Accountability and the Common Good**



*"It is you O Lord who have accomplished the works of our hands."
Isaiah 26:12*

Preamble

The year 2019 was particularly exciting for the Africa Faith & Justice Network (AFJN) ministry engagements. The coalition networks we have built in the past five years are taking up initiatives to address the structures of injustice in their communities. Those who previously were reluctant or even afraid to speak out in public on issues of justice now eager do so. Beneficiaries of our training workshop are reaching out to motivate others to take a stand on issues that affect their community.

Our general focus is on creating awareness through social analysis of issues that impinge on people's lives, using the Gospel and Catholic Social Teaching to show how promoting justice is an integral part of our Christian calling. We train our partners on advocacy skills and accompany them in their practical advocacy engagements with law makers, law enforcement agencies, faith and community leaders.

These are geared towards empowering the networks to take ownership and “do it themselves”. This approach is changing minds and mindsets, and engendering a new understanding in the communities we serve.

We believe strongly, especially based on practical results we have seen, that for our ministry to be wholesome, long-lasting, and not perpetuate a culture of dependency, we must accompany our ministry of charity to God's children with the ministry of justice. Pope Benedict XVI emphasized this in his Post Apostolic Exhortations *Africae Munus*. Referencing Matthew 5:19-20, he stressed that we should not “disembody” charity from justice because “A charity which fails to respect justice and the rights of all is false” (*Africae Munus* §18).

Coalition networks in Ghana, Uganda, Nigeria, Tanzania, Cameroon and Liberia are employing the analytical tools acquired in the training sessions to examine issues in their communities that prevent them from achieving the fullness of life. They are using their advocacy skills to work towards changing these unjust structures.

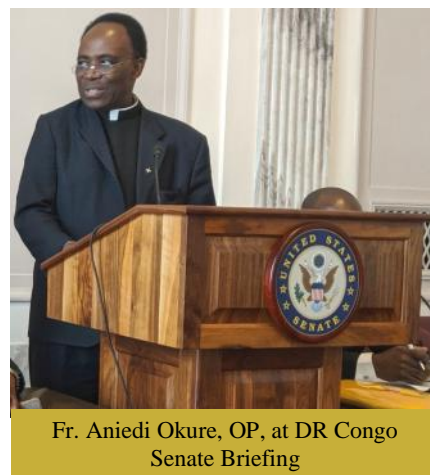
Some of these issues have corporate and international connections but the networks are chipping at them little by little. Success in one “little” undertaking empowers them to aim higher. It is heartwarming to see the delight in the faces of people in Iringa District of Tanzania after they succeeded to regain access to their stream previously confiscated by an agribusiness company to irrigate a commercial farm.

These are made possible because of your sustained support. Thank you for your generosity and commitment to alleviate the sufferings of our disadvantaged sisters and brother. We extend to you the gratitude of those who have directly benefited from your generosity.

With your continued support, we look forward with confidence to achieving even more, in partnership with our sisters and brothers in Africa.

The following pages highlight the many life changing activities we and our coalition networks have undertaken in 2019.

Aniedi Okure, OP
Executive Director



Fr. Aniedi Okure, OP, at DR Congo
Senate Briefing



Our Mission Statement

The Africa Faith & Justice Network, inspired by the Gospel and informed by Catholic Social Teaching, seeks to educate and advocate for just relations with Africa and to work in partnership with African peoples as they engage in the struggle for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.

Activities in the United States

Our engagement with US government focused on advocacy for policies which impacts Africa and Africans anywhere they are located.

Protection of the Rights of African Immigrants



Ntama Bahati, AFJN Policy Analyst , Advocacy visit at Office of Rep. Grace Napolitano

"Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that, some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured."
Hebrews 13:1-3

The crisis at the US-Mexico border reveals that migrants are not only from Latin America, but from Africa, escaping wars, political instability, limited economic opportunities and much more. Many are in detention or in prison and others have been deported.

Action Taken

Given the Trump administration proposed eliminating refugee resettlements for FY2020 AFJN joined partners in Washington to advocate for:

- ♦ A path to Citizenship, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and the Deferred Enforcement Departure (DED) cancelation for those affected including, South Sudan, Liberia, and Dreamers and called for the protection of Family Reunification under the law.
- ♦ The "Guaranteed Refugee Ceiling Enhancement Act (GRACE Act, H.R.2146 / S.1088), which would restore U.S. leadership on refugee resettlement and uphold US's commitment to provide safety for refugees fleeing persecution.

Democracy, Peace and Development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo



Hon. Lamber Mende, Hon. Jean Jacques Mamba (center R-L) after DR Congo Briefing in Senate 2019

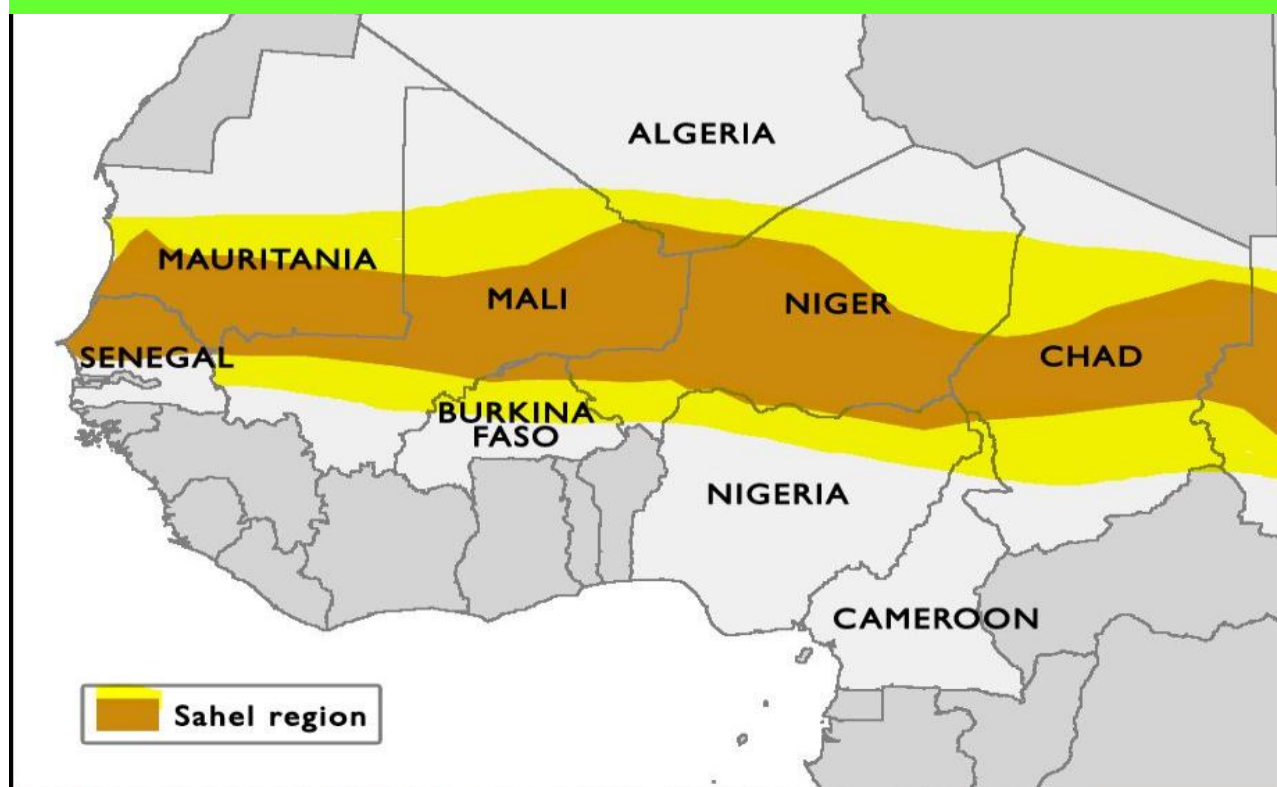
In 2019, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) had its first peaceful transfer of power from an elected president to another in its history. The transition presents opportunities for the DRC to :

- ♦ Move a step closer to its long overdue economic achievements and political stability
- ♦ Reestablish peace across DRC especially the eastern part which is home to more than 166 active rebel groups
- ♦ Reevaluate the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission (MONUSCO) deployed in the DRC for 20 years
- ♦ Address Ebola pandemic that has resurfaced for the 10th time, killing 2,185 people as of November 2019

Policy Action Taken:

- ♦ Called for Electoral reforms in the DRC before the next election to ensure it continues to improve and protect the gains made in its democratic process so far.
- ♦ Expressed support President Tshisekedi's plan to make the respect of Human Rights in the DRC a reality
- ♦ Advocated for sustained efforts in responding to the Ebola outbreak including strengthening DRC's health systems to ensure readiness to respond to this and future outbreak and monitor closely adverse effects of the new Ebola drugs REGN-EB3 and mAb114 in clinical trial.
- ♦ Called on the UN office in New York to evaluate the MONUSCO's mission in the DRC to enable the new government put in place a peace strategy that includes regional cooperation in the fight against the more than 166 armed groups in the East.
- ♦ The UN's Investigations Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services acted (Case No. 0689/19) by asking MONUSCO to perform an audit and investigate alleged corruption and mismanagement

Peace and Economic Development in West Africa



Terrorist attacks have intensified in West Africa's Sahel region especially in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger and has triggered mass migrations to other African countries and Europe. Analysts have pointed to diverse causes; the inflow of arms from Libya and the Middle East, the links to other terrorists cells, and the policies of France in the region. Italian Deputy Prime Minister Luigi Di Maio accused France of creating poverty in French former colonies in Africa and causing mass migration to Europe. Some analysts echo similar sentiments, noting that the pervasive involvement of France and the linkage of the CFA (Communauté Financière Africaine) to the French treasury have maintained economic dependency on France for a very long time and hinder economic development in these countries. Regardless, the crises in the Sahel region are cause for concern.

Action Taken

- ♦ Urged the US to be a force of good in the conflict in West Africa during a November 21, 2019 White House meeting. Our recommendations reflected those of the Bishops' Conferences of Burkina-Niger, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana formulated during a meeting in Ouagadougou from 12 - 13 November 2019. They include an end to the looting of natural resources through inequitable agreements that undermine the development of States and the sale of weapons that fuel conflicts.
- ♦ Called for an end to the more than half a century old Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA) currency in favor of a new financial system which would end the colonial era financial policy and hopefully bring prosperity and as a consequence reduce waves of economic migrations to Europe. We were pleased when we heard that this year leaders of the concerned countries adopted a single currency called ECO.

Peace in Cameroon

At age 86, and in power for 37 years, President Paul Biya, was declared “winner” of 2018 election amid crisis in the Anglophone area where citizens are fighting to create a separate country, as a solution to the neglect, discrimination, mismanagement, and mistreatment by the French speaking led government.

Our Advocacy

- ◆ Urged the US to redouble its efforts in support to the dialogue between Anglophone Cameroon and the current regime.
- ◆ Urged the Cameroonian government to free the political space across the country to give peace a chance.

Other Outreach in the USA for Greater Impact



ADNA Delegation at after meeting with South African Embassy Officials

South African Embassy

- ◆ In response to attacks of foreign nationals, mostly Africans in South Africa, in the footsteps of those who fought to end the Apartheid system, we mobilized our coalition partners from Advocacy Network for Africa (ADNA) to call for an end to that evil.
- ◆ This effort culminated in an October 3rd meeting with South African Embassy officials for a dialogue on how to promote pan-African collaboration and put an end to the kinds of criminal attacks of non South Africans

Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD) 2019

- ◆ AFJN coordinated, as usual, the Africa Track at the EAD conference 2019. In addition, we showcased AFJN's Women Empowerment Project concrete results in different African countries where we are working in partnership with Catholic women religious and other civil society organizations.
- ◆ We collaborated with Jubilee USA on workshop to highlight the impact of loans on developing countries.

Democratic Republic of Congo Diaspora



Fr. Barthelemy Bazemo, Hon. Lambert Mende, Hon. Jean Jacques Mamba and Fr. Aniedi Okure at a Briefing on DR Congo / The Catholic University of America

- ◆ On October 26, 2019 in collaboration with the Institute for Policy Research at The Catholic University of America, we held an event under the theme “Diaspora Engagement with DRC Officials” at the Pryzbyla Conference Center of the University. Guest speakers were members of the DRC’s parliament, Hon. Lambert Mende Omalanga and Hon. Jean Jacques Mamba.
- ◆ The discussion resulted in policy proposals regarding the need to:
 - ◆ Urgently address the threat to urban life and the environment in general, and the scourge of plastic bags in particular
 - ◆ Respect for Human Rights in order for the Congolese and their country to be respected in the community of nations
 - ◆ Tackle Electoral Reforms which are needed to build strong institutions that are crucial to fighting against corruption, provide a strong economy, bring about peace, and secure the nation’s borders

Activities in Africa

Good Governance and Self Reliance, Land Grabbing Awareness and Prevention, Women Empowerment Programs for Social Transformation

We continue to deliver positive results on our Africa program. The agenda in all our programs is set by our local partners and our input on advocacy strategies and social analysis rooted in Catholic Social Teaching have been the engine of change wherever we have been.

Women Empowerment Program

Women Empowerment Program- Nigeria



Forum on human trafficking with officials of Ovia North Local Government Area of Edo State

Human Trafficking in Nigeria has domestic and international networks. Our advocacy on human trafficking in Enugu State, which is noted for the selling babies, has raised greater awareness to generate decisive action to tackle this vice. Although the state adopted the Child's Right Act, it was not implemented. In Edo State, AFJN activities triggered the introduction and passage of the anti-trafficking law; the only state in Nigeria with such regulation. Edo State is believed to be the hub of the international traffic of persons particularly to Europe. We continue to create awareness in local communities, mobilize the people to implement the law as the grassroots, and recruit foot soldiers to fight human trafficking.

Action Taken in Enugu State



Advocacy visit to the Minister of Gender (middle) in Enugu State against child trafficking and violence against women

- ♦ From January 27 to February 1, 2019 we organized a training workshop for leaders on social analysis, Catholic Social Teachings, national and state law on violence against

women and children and advocacy strategies. Fifty Catholic sisters from various congregations and across Nigeria, representatives of Catholic Women Organization (CWO) and Young Catholic Women Association (YCWA) from Enugu Diocese, including six invited lawyers and a religious priest attended the training program.

- ♦ To apply the skills acquired in the training, participants paid advocacy visits to various arms of the state government – the State Governor, the Commissioner for Gender and Women Affairs, the Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, and the State Police Commissioner to ask that they collectively address human trafficking within the state.

Outcome in Enugu State

- ♦ The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) officials have taken to the street, local communities and markets educating people about the evil of trafficking in person and the likes.
- ♦ Enugu State government has established 13 courts to tackle issues of violence against women and children. This was one of the “asks” we included in our advocacy letter to the governor.

Action Taken Edo State



Forum with Market Women Association and other stakeholders in Oredo Local Government Area

From 3-8 November, 2019, AFJN mobilized Catholic sisters again to engage Edo State's authorities and other stakeholders: the Governor, Attorney General, Minister of Justice, the Police, the Immigration, Custom, market women association, the youth, leaders of different groups in the Church such as the Knights, Catholic Women Organization, National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) and two local governments (Oredo and Ovia North) with high rate of human trafficking in the state. November 4, 2019 focused on leadership and advocacy training for 20 sisters from 12 religious communities. In the following three days we met with the stakeholders in Edo State to educate and create awareness.

Outcome in Edo State



Some participants at the Stakeholders forum on human trafficking in Edo State

- ◆ Prof. Yinka Omoregbe, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice of Edo State promised enforcement regardless of who is involved she informed participants that 20 cases of human trafficking in the state are under prosecution
- ◆ She also promised that the law will be summarized to facilitate easier understanding and will be made available to the public including school children at no cost
- ◆ Two local government chairpersons mobilized their staff to avail themselves of issues surrounding human trafficking

Women Empowerment Program- Uganda



Kampala forum on human trafficking with government agencies, faith leaders, youth groups, law enforcement, local and traditional leaders in Uganda

AFJN in collaboration with Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU) did a follow up on its November 2018 advocacy activities on international and domestic human trafficking and

exploitation of young Ugandans facilitated by the Uganda's Labor Law. Our advocacy is focused on Unchecked Labor Export Policy. We called on the government to take a very hard look at the legal export of labor abroad that in many cases has turned into a lucrative and legalized human trafficking scheme. Young Ugandans recruited to work in the Middle East are sexually exploited and others are killed and some of the remains have been found missing internal organs.

Many radios and televisions in Uganda are advertising jobs abroad to entice young people, particularly girls. The Catholic radio station "Radio Jubilee" is one of the media houses that have aired jobs abroad advertisement promising that money will be put on the account of those who will be recruited.

Also, in the Capital city of Kampala, we deplored the presence of girls who are bought from the rural areas and used to beg for money for their masters on the streets.

Action Taken

- ◆ In May 2019, we brought together 107 stakeholders including representatives of various government ministries, the Ugandan Parliament, local governments, youth groups, religious leaders, Civil Society Groups and members of the press - 10 media outlets.
- ◆ From September 22-26, 2019, AFJN facilitated a workshop and practical advocacy training for over fifty religious sisters from ten different religious communities, 10 brothers and 3 diocesan priests in Virika Hill Fort Portal Diocese in the Eastern Uganda.
- ◆ During the gathering, two young women who survived Human Trafficking atrocity and recently returned to Uganda shared their horrible stories. They talked about how they were trapped inside homes, stripped off their names and being called "Kafala," (Arabic word "servant"), overworked, robbed of their religious identity, subjected to abuse of all types, and even got sexually transmitted infections.

Advocacy visits

We visited eight government offices in the Fort Portal District and called on government officials to works together to:

- ◆ End human trafficking and other forms of abuse of women and children
- ◆ Close down companies that recruit young people for jobs overseas given that traffickers use these companies to recruit girls for labor and sexual exploitation
- ◆ Legislate against company using public radios and TV to advertise false lucrative jobs overseas
- ◆ Provide basic government assistance to victims of human trafficking.

Outcome



Coalition Leaders' Advocacy Visit to the Lord Mayor of Kampala, Rt. Hon. Lukwago Erias (2nd Left Front)

- ◆ In May 2019, the Mayor of Kampala passed a law aimed at curbing commercial and sexual exploitation of girls, ages 7-17 years.
- ◆ Two youth participants who had started the process of being recruited to work abroad declared publicly that they are discontinuing the process. These two young men are now working with the sisters to sensitize various youth groups.
- ◆ In November 2019, the Kampala police partnered with the sisters and the John Paul II Justice and Peace Office to rescue 6 victims of human trafficking. Currently the traffickers of these girls are in jail.
- ◆ Government ministers are now proactive on issues of trafficking. For instance, in August 2019, the government insisted on bringing back five young Ugandan who died in the Middle East to investigate the cause of their death. On examination of the corpses, they discovered that their organs were missing and announced to the public that the deceased were victims of organ trafficking.
- ◆ In October 2019, the Ugandan aviation police and immigration officers intercepted and rescued 12 girls that were being trafficked to Saudi Arabia.
- ◆ In December 2019, the national police assisted the sisters in rescuing 6 victims in Kampala.
- ◆ In Fort Portal, government officials welcomed the visit with great enthusiasm that one of

them termed the visit as “a baptism of blessings”

- ♦ The sisters are going village to village holding awareness workshop on trafficking and other forms of abuse of women and children in local communities, schools, associations such as Parents Teachers Associations (PTA), and youths, reaching more than 45 thousand people.
- ♦ Sisters are taking their advocacy to Media Houses including a Catholic radio station “Radio Jubilee”. The sisters visited a director of a radio station asking that he stops airing “false advertisement” that lure the youth to traffickers. At first he told them that he cannot



A Sister presents the “Ask” at the Advocacy Visit to the Resident District Commissioner in Fort Portal



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Improve infrastructure to curb labor export – Kadaga



Sisters in Uganda advocate for an end to Human Trafficking at the Ugandan Parliament. Above, sisters with The Speaker of Parliament, The Hon. Rebecca A. Kadaga, MP (8th from Left)

stop broadcasting because he had signed a contract with recruiting companies but later told the sisters that he will collaborate to end the advertisement.

- ♦ The sisters’ networks are gradually being recognized as change agents and are being invited to give input to government agencies.

African Church Together (ACT) Against Corruption Project -Ghana



Group discussion on Land Grabbing by community representatives in Bator Traditional Area , Volta Region in Ghana

Africa is undergoing a new form of colonization – agro-colonialism, also known as land grabbing. This new scramble for Africa is more dangerous than the partitioning and colonization of Africa which followed the Berlin conference of 1885. Today, farmlands and minerals are the biggest attraction in Africa and new players have emerged. Land scarcity in many corners of the world, desertification, the increased world population, the current and predicted rising costs of food and the growing demand for biofuel and mineral resources have enticed multinational corporations and sovereign nations to engage in irresponsible land deals which have become a new form colonization in developing countries, particularly countries in Africa.

Our project is to empower traditional and civic leaders and local communities in Ghana's Volta region to work to address the issue of large scale land acquisition (land grabbing) and dislocation of families by multinationals, to prevent environmental pollution by commercial farmers including byproducts associated with genetically modified plants, and to secure natural seed and food sovereignty for the community.

Action Taken

- ♦ From May 13-16, we conducted land grab awareness and prevention in Volta Region of Ghana for opinion leaders, chiefs, landowners and elders in Bator, Adidome and Agoverme/ Dorfor and for the youth at Volo Senior High and Adidome Senior High. We went on radio shows in local languages to reach more people and for more impact.
- ♦ To people who regret leasing and cannot reverse their decision, we encouraged them to seek amicable or legal remedy citing lack of Free Prior Informed Consent. In international law it is called "development aggression" and is also a violation of human rights according to the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Outcome

- ♦ Beneficiaries of the training promise to promote responsible investment and to encourage landowners to pursue shareholder status with the company leasing their land
- ♦ Affirmed to implement lease agreements prohibitions that prohibits companies from burying anything on the land, to protect their land from becoming toxic dumping ground and prevent water sources from pollution
- ♦ Undertook to promote seed sovereignty to continue to ensure that land remain a communal property
- ♦ Participants were enlightened on the ever growing toxic waste dumping in Africa, and the obvious devastating impact of long term leasing on next generations.
- ♦ With knowledge of the Free Prior Informed Consent concept, many pledged not lease or do so only when they know the deal is fair.

African Church Together (ACT) Against Corruption - Cameroon and Liberia



Diocese of Bafoussam Auxiliary Bishop, Most Rev. Emmanuel DASSI YOUFANG with Diocesan Social Services Leaders, AFJN Team, Protestant and Muslim Leaders Launch Anticorruption Efforts

"Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe makes people blind to what is right and ruins the cause of those who are innocent." (Exodus 23:8)

For several years citizens of Liberia and Cameroon have ranked their countries with high levels of corruption. However, whenever corruption is evoked, the attention and the blame are generally assigned to government officials. A careful examination reveals that while corruption is overtly manifested in the political arena, it is pervasive and entrenched in most aspects of social and economic, educational and health care delivery of the country. To eradicate corruption, everyone must then take responsibility and be held accountable for their part in perpetuating this evil. Regardless of the level, corruption is simply an abuse of power, no matter the level of one's authority or the reasons for doing it.

Action Taken in Cameroon

- ♦ In partnership with the Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Diocese of Bafoussam, we commissioned a research on the manifestation of corruption in the society. The study revealed elements of corruption in schools, hospitals, and institutions run by the diocese.
- ♦ In June 2019, we launched our first pilot project under our African Churches Together (ACT) to Fight Corruption in all the institutions of the diocese. Participants included teachers, nurses, school principals, hospital administrators, justice and peace coordinators, pastoral care coordinators, priests and nuns, members of other Christian communities and two Muslim Imams. The auxiliary Bishop, Most Rev. Emmanuel DASSI YOUFANG who is in charge of the Justice and Peace Commission was also present.
- ♦ A master document which includes participants' recommendations in view of implementing a code of conduct across the diocese was submitted to the auxiliary Bishop, Most Rev. Emmanuel DASSI YOUFANG who is in charge of the Justice and Peace Commission for promulgation.
- ♦ Outside of church run institutions, our activities focus on addressing the massive and multilayer corruption scheme linked to obtaining birth certificates. Thousands are fraudulently deprived of their birth certificates. Without this document, Cameroonians cannot establish citizenship, go further in their education, get a passport, and much more.

Birth certificate corruption involves hospital in some cases and government offices or both. They receive money from parents but pocket the money and issue fake certificates.

Outcome - Cameroon

- ♦ The diocese has tasked the Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) to lead the fight against corruption in any diocesan institution including schools, hospitals and parishes.
- ♦ Leaders of the diocesan school system have provided the JPC the list of all schools and contacts. The JPC staff is conducting town hall meetings with school leaders, teachers and schools' Parents Associations.
- ♦ The JPC staff continue to receive feedback and encouragement from many people for daring to lead on this important issue.
- ♦ Currently, we are assisting more than 2000 people with birth certificate challenges of whom 300 are students who need the document to seat for national examination. Once their rights are established, they can access all privileges and discharge their obligations as citizens in their country.

ACT Training Workshop in Liberia



Group Discussion on Promote Transparency and Accountability

As part of the ACT project, we held a four day workshop with the theme Cultivating Good Stewardship: Working Together to Promote Transparency and Accountability in our Communities. The workshops focused on ways to identify the many forms of corruption as manifested in families, schools, hospitals, and other basic institutions in the country.

Participants came from three counties covered by the Diocese of Gbarnga and included schools principals, hospital administrators, heads of justice and peace commissions, seminary staff, and heads of Catholic women and men organizations, catechists and community leaders. The bishop of the diocese, Most Rev. Anthony F. Borwah, currently President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Liberia participated and encouraged workshop participant to be forthcoming about what they see and thing should be done to stem corruption. He said "Do not be afraid to speak the truth, even if it about me." He noted

that the culture of fear and silence has contributed to the thriving of corruption. Participants came up with practical ways of tackling corruption and pledged in written commitment statement to abide with the project's goal.

Strategies for Action

- ◆ Conduct awareness sessions on corruptions within parishes and within communities beginning January 2020
- ◆ Decentralization of power in the Catholic school system of the diocese, and ensure that we give financial accountability of the schools every academic year, beginning July 2020
- ◆ Family - Each parish to create family life awareness team, train them in family matters and empower them to engage our parishioners.
- ◆ Schools - Develop a curriculum grounded in local context, history and our encounter with the outside world to reflect elements of transparency and accountability
- ◆ Participants in the workshop on Cultivating Good Stewardship: A Project to Promote Transparency & Accountability in Our Communities to spearhead creating awareness in parishes and local communities.
- ◆ Participants to present report of workshop to their parishes, schools within their communities. Pastor to convene the meetings
- ◆ YOUTH - Educate, train and empower the youth to mentor their peers on Cultivating Good Stewardship: A Project to Promote Transparency & Accountability in Our Communities

AFJN in the News - A Snapshot



AFJN has gone far and wide across the globe. The featuring of AFJN's work on Television, Radio, print and online allows us to have greater impact. The following media platforms have covered our work in French and English and local languages depending on our targeted audience.

Al Jazeera English , Voice of America (VOA) , The National Point Daily—Nigeria, CHANNELS TV, East African TV, and Independent Television (EATC & ITV) , The National Point Dail, The

Summit, News Agency Nigeria, Nigerianlocalnes.com, theencounter.com.ng, newsepressngr.com, African Independent TV, Fura Radio, Allafrika.com, News Vision, The Daily Monito, Africa-News, New Vision, Vox Ecclesia, Radio Batcham, DBS TV Channel, Radio Communautaire de Bafoussam, Nouvelle Expression (Print Media), Le Point (Print Media)

The social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp further amplified the message beyond Cameroon to other African countries, the United States and Europe.

AFJN website continues to draw traffic. Our YouTube channel has been visited by over 3,150 times.

Africa Project Grants Provided by

- ♦ *Conrad Hilton Foundation*
- ♦ *The Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities*
- ♦ *Shalom Fund by the Dominican Sisters 'of Peace*
- ♦ *Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur Base Community*

Postscript

AFJN and Just Governance Project

An analysis of the challenges facing Africa over the years reveals a major perennial problem. Seemingly economic in nature, the locus of the perennial problem that besets Africa is that of governance. An examination of issues related to the extractive industries, trade agreements, land grabs, capital flight, corporate tax evasions, human trafficking, mass migrations, the endemic conflicts and other things that deprive Africans of their dignity as God's children can be anchored on problem of governance, hence my thesis: "The economic and development problem of Africa is a problem of governance."

Africa: Impoverished By Wealth

Africa is perhaps the richest piece of land on earth, given its natural resources, rich fertile land, precious minerals and its bio-diversity. Yet majority of Africans live in abject poverty conditions. Why? Basically, it is the failure of government in the promotion of the common good, resource distribution, lack of transparency and accountability and independent judiciary system that works for all. Analysts who anchor the problem of poverty and development in Africa strictly on the economic sphere are missing something fundamental to the causes of poverty and underdevelopment. Numerous programs such as the structural adjustment programs (SAP), privatization, currency devaluations, and trade liberalization that have the economy as their primary focus have not only failed to alleviate the problems but have worsened the fortunes of many Africans, making them poorer today than they were before these programs were initiated.

Governance and the role of citizens

An essential component of good governance is the promotion of the common good and protection of its citizens. Leaders must seek the good of all their citizens in formulating policies and applying laws. Both laws and leaders must be transparent and accountable to enable robust civil society participation in the governing process. They must uphold the principles of subsidiarity, that is, governments must not arrogate to themselves the functions of a lower body. An over centralized federal government undermines the democratic principle.

True politics is a local affair

Former US Speaker of the House, Tip O'Neil aptly noted that "All politics is local." African governments have failed to understand this. Politics in modern Africa is centralized in the hands of a few, and the majority of citizens are alienated from the process of governance and from their governments who privatize the state and act with impunity. Leaders in countries with active citizenry are less likely to act with impunity.

Foreign Aid and Interference

Foreign aid on Africa impact on Africa is mostly negative. They have strong strings attached in favor of the donors. Corporations contracting foreign aid make hundreds of millions of dollars, dodge taxes, and expatriate the money abroad. Foreign aid facilitate corruption, entrench "strong men" and create dependency. In general the donors do not conduct feasibility study for the viability of the projects and local communities are not consulted in the transaction. Some donors work in cahoots with the political elite to siphon the money out of the country in various ways including inflations of contracts, phony projects and direct theft of funds.

Africa and the global market

Africa's participation in the global market is reduced mainly raw material exports (crude oil, minerals, and other primary products) whose value are tied to speculation by the stock markets, making Africa's economy unstable and subject to the "national interest" of international trading partners. African leaders continue to implement programs that serve the interest of these partners to the detriment of their citizens. A systemic change is needed to reverse this situation. This can be achieved by engaging citizens in shaping a future that promotes the common good, one that benefits them.

Just Governance Project - Rationale

An institution that is sustained over many generations with no major interruption takes on a life of its own and acquires a "sacred" status. The likelihood that it will persist regardless of the personnel or the challenges it faces becomes high. American political institutions continue to weather the economic and political storms regardless of their leaders.

African countries, especially those in the sub-Saharan region are not only a hodgepodge of ethnic communities merged together for colonial economic convenience; most lack a national spirit and have not had the chance to develop and sustain strong governance institutions across generations. The transformation and sustained development of African countries will be achieved by engaging peoples at the grassroots in their social, political and economic environment and enabling them to work for the common good.

Partnership With the Church

AFJN's just governance project in partnership with the church in Africa, aims to promote a sustained education at the grassroots that is grounded in the Gospel and Catholic Social Teaching to cultivate a culture of good citizenship, on rights and responsibilities in building a just society. The church with a vast network of committed personnel, tested institutions equipped to educate, conscientize and mobilize the public is vital to the success of this project.

Aniedi Okure, OP

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AFJN 2019 INTERNS

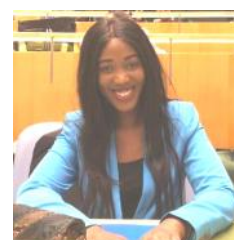
Program funded by Tim and Pam Alles



L-R: Magdalena Dutkowska, Jerry Canto, Maranata Zemedie, Adwoa Ohemeng, Philip Brooks



Ebony Tyson



Jeannette Kayitesi

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We thank each and every one for their support. Their list is not provided for privacy reasons.