

*40 Years of Advocacy for Justice & Education for Transformation*



**2023 End of Year Report:  
Activity Highlights and  
Updates**



*"It is you O Lord who  
have accomplished  
all we have done."  
(Isaiah 26:12)*

# Our Mission

*The Africa Faith and 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.*

## Staff & Volunteers

**Steven Nabieu Rogers, PhD**

Executive Director

**Eucharía Madueke, SNDdeN**

Women Empowerment Project Coordinator

**Ntama Bahati**

Policy Analyst

**Lydia Andrews**

Communications & Operations Manager

**Jean Marie**

**Mvumbi, CICM**

Accountant Volunteer and Board Member

**Kelly Maltagliati**

Office Manager (IVC Volunteer)

**David Mahoney, CFX**

Editorial Consultant

**Aniedi Okure, OP**

Women Empowerment Project Consultant

**Patrick Egwu**

AFJN Senior Fellow

**Rev. Barwende Sane, SJ**

AFJN Senior Fellow

## A Note from Our Executive Director



2023 marked forty years of promoting United States (US) policies toward Africa and building capacity in Africa through advocacy and transformative education for and with the people of Africa. Since AFJN was formed in 1983, the US-Africa Relations landscape has changed. Africa continues to shape its own destiny and the US may further its national interests while serving the global common good.

As we reflect on our past, listen to highlights from the field, and assess the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, we celebrate the triumph of the human spirit. From the Dioceses of Bafoussam in Cameroon to the Karamoja region in North East Uganda, human stories of resilience and courage abound in the midst of human suffering and injustice. The lived experiences of far too many Africans show that there is more work to be done and a great deal is at stake.

Let us take this opportunity to seriously think about how, together, we can make a positive difference including AFJN's role in supporting US policies that promote peace and just governance, how to address the various challenges and opportunities facing US-Africa relations in the future, and let us propose priorities for engagement in support of Africans. The Board approved the updated Strategic Plan.

Join AFJN as we celebrate the strength that comes from faith, unity and integrity and recommit ourselves to the mission. It is our sincere hope, that we rededicate to God, who is at the heart of everything, the labors of AFJN, and reenergize ourselves to making a positive difference for and with Africa!

Steven Nabieu Rogers, PhD

## Grants

Conrad N. Hilton Foundation  
 Dominican Sisters of Peace, Shalom Fund  
 Missionaries of Africa  
 Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ  
 Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Base  
 Communities

Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Congregational  
 Mission Office  
 Society of the Holy Child Jesus, WOTA Fund  
 The Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities  
 (from 2022)

## Member Organizations

<p>Adorers of the Blood of Christ                  Archdiocese of Cincinnati                  Mission Office*</p> <p>Comboni Missionaries                  Congregation of Holy                  Cross Sisters</p> <p>Congregation of the Holy                  Spirit</p> <p>Dominican Sisters of Peace                  Dominican Sisters of                  Sinsinawa</p> <p>Good Shepherd Parish                  (Wayland, MA)^</p> <p>Holy Cross Fathers                  Knights of Saint John*</p> <p>Marianist Province of                  the United States</p> <p>Maryknoll Society                  Medical Mission Sisters                  Missionary Oblates of                  Mary Immaculate</p> <p>Missionary Sisters of Our                  Lady of Africa</p>	<p>Missionary Sisters Servants                  of the Holy Spirit                  Missionhurst</p> <p>Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ                  Priests of the Sacred Heart*                  Religious of the Sacred                  Heart of Mary</p> <p>School Sisters of Notre Dame:                  Central Pacific Province</p> <p>Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati*                  Sisters of Charity of                  Leavenworth</p> <p>Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus                  Sisters of the Holy Names                  of Jesus and Mary</p> <p>Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur                  Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace^</p> <p>Sisters Servants of the                  Immaculate Heart of Mary                  Society of the Divine Word                  Society of Missionaries of Africa                  Xaverian Brothers                  Xaverian Missionaries</p>
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\*Supporting or Diocesan Member Organizations; ^ New Members

## Thanks for Your Service

*On behalf of our partners on the continent, AFJN thanks Sr. Florence Deacon, OSF (Board Chair and Board Member) for her years of service to AFJN. AFJN also thanks Board's 40th Anniversary and Development Committees (especially Chairs: Ms. Jemima Andan and Sr. Margaret Doyle)*

## Board of Directors

### Executive Committee

**Nkechi Iwuoha, PHJC** - Chair  
 Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ  
**Maura Browne, SNDdeN** - Vice Chair  
 Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur  
**Bill Christy, CSSp** - Secretary  
 Spiritan Missionaries  
**Jemima Andan** - Treasurer

### Board Members

**Charles Brown, SCJ** (Congregation  
 of the Priests of the Sacred Heart)  
**Barthelemy Bazemo, MAfr**  
 (Missionaries of Africa)  
**Margaret Doyle, SHCJ**  
 (Society of the Holy Child Jesus)  
**Ruffino Ezama, MCCJ** (Comboni  
 Missionaries)  
**George Kintiba, SVD**  
 (Divine Word Missionaries)  
**Fr. Ebuka Mbanude**  
 (Archdiocese of Washington)  
**Jean-Marie Mvumbi, CICM**  
 (Congregation of the Immaculate  
 Heart of Mary)  
**Arleen N. Peterson**  
**Faustine Wabwire**

In Memoriam: **Al Gbi Toe, Sr.**  
 AFJN Board Member and  
 Former Treasurer

# Celebrating 40 Years of AFJN



Visit  
[afjn.org/celebrate-40](http://afjn.org/celebrate-40)



## Washington, DC October 14, 2023

AFJN held the “Celebrating 40 Years of Advocacy, Capacity Building and Transformative Education for and with Africa Conference” to honor the years of US - Africa relations. The conference included an opening ritual with African prayers, a panel featuring past and current AFJN leaders reflecting on AFJN over the years, a panel on US - Africa policy with a variety of perspectives including the US government and African diaspora, and a panel highlighting work in the field with partners and leaders in Africa. We offered thanks to God through the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist with singing and dancing to African Liturgical music. Sponsors and guests were treated to an Africa-themed menu during the Celebration Banquet and Award Ceremony honoring Sr. Maura Browne, SNDdeN, with the 2023 Faith and Justice Award. Following the award presentation Dr. Alie Kabba gave the keynote address “Africa and US Foreign Policy: Priorities, Challenges and Opportunities in a Multipolar World”. In traditional African fashion, after the formal aspects of the 40th Anniversary concluded, many guests and sponsors participated in dancing the night away thanks to a great set by the DJ.



*AFJN's highest honor to be "publicly given to a person or persons who prophetically embody characteristics of faith, collaboration, and being an instrument of dedication and advocacy on behalf of justice for Africa."*

## 2023 Faith and Justice Awardee Sr. Maura Browne, SNDdeN

AFJN honors Sr. Maura Browne, SNDdeN, for her lifelong promotion of social justice among the congregations of women religious and passionately advocating for justice for Africa. An integral part of AFJN since its founding, Sr. Maura served as Associate Director, Executive Director (the first and only woman), Interim Director, and Vice-Chair of AFJN's Board of Directors. She has traveled to 15 African countries during the course of her career. AFJN could not reflect on these 40 years without acknowledging Sr. Maura, a woman who has been not only an AFJN pioneer, but also a strong ally and advocate.



**Sr. Maura is "the thread" keeping "AFJN on track with its changing mission" having "mentor[ed] and coach[ed] [...] in the ways of advocacy, justice and peace work."**

**Fr. Rocco Puopolo, SX, Former AFJN Exe. Director**



# US - Africa Policy

## United States of America (USA)

### Educating Youth on Advocacy

AFJN participated in several events with young adults including: exhibiting at the Young African Leaders Initiative Mandela Washington Fellowship Summit Exhibition; presenting at Georgetown University's Model of the United Nations Conference and Women of Faith Talk; and at Rosemont College.



### Civil Society and Diaspora Engagement

AFJN engaged the diaspora, civil society and faith-based organizations in webinars, book discussions, outreach events, and coalition meetings including: the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, Catholic Leaders Circle Convening, interfaith meeting on water access, and "Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2023: Swords into Plowshares" (leading the Africa track), among others. AFJN was a co-writer of an illicit financial flows fact sheet, staff appeared and were quoted in various media outlet including *Voice of America's Africa 54* and *Global Sisters Report*. Some of the main topics of 2023 were: peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), ending illicit financial flows, pre-and-post election peace in Sierra Leone, instability in the Great Lake Region; democratic backsliding in Niger and Gabon; the Africa funding gap; and Economic Community of West African States actions. AFJN was also one of a select group of organizations, chosen to participate in the Missionary Cooperation Plan for the Archdiocese of Chicago.



Crisis in the Congo: Voices From The Frontlines  
Jacques Bahati Mar 14, 2023

Join the Africa Faith and Justice Network and Friends of the Congo for "Crisis in the Congo: Voices from the Frontlines" with Justine Masika and Pascal Mugiraneza, recently arrived in Washington, DC from Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). They will provide firsthand accounts of the atrocities, displacement and occupation being carried out by the Rwanda-backed M23 militia. They will also share policy prescriptions that U.S. policymakers can implement in order to contribute to peace and stability in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Tuesday, March 21, 2023**  
2:00 - 4:00 PM ET (US and Canada)

[Click here watch the event on YouTube](#)

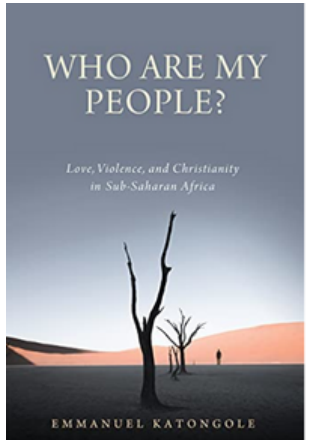
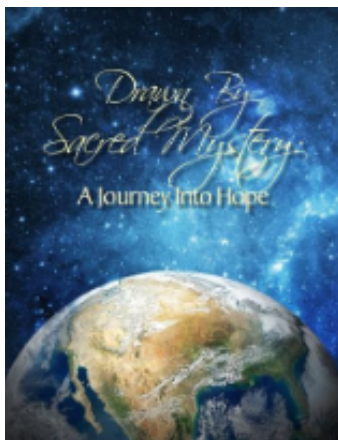
Event Sponsors:

Speakers:

Read "The Midterm report of the Group of Experts submitted in accordance with paragraph 9 of resolution 2641 (2022) S/2022/997"

Also read "Why The World should not Forget the War in the Democratic Republic of the Congo"

Readings: 1st Justine Masika Bihamba, Synergy of Women for Victims of Sexual Violence Pascal Mugiraneza Chinyepukuma, Africa Reunited





## Domestic Actions

AFJN engaged multiple members of Congress (Senator Chris Van Hollen, Representative Glen Ivey’s Chief of Staff), the Biden Administration (Vice President Kamala Harris, US Deputy Assistant Secretary Michael Heath, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Ms. Amy Holman, representatives from the US State Department, Assistant US Trade Representative Hamilton), and the military (352nd Civil Affairs Command at Fort Meade) and their staff.



## Issue Areas

**Peace in: Sierra Leone, Great Lake Region, Nigeria, Niger, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**  
**US-Kenya Trade and Investment Partnership Transparency**  
**Reauthorization of President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief**  
**Stopping forced expulsion of Indigenous Maasai (Tanzania)**  
**Funding Gap Projected to Undercut Sub-Saharan African Growth**  
**China’s rising influence**



## Global Actor Engagement

AFJN continues to be a voice to raise awareness globally through advocacy outreach, webinars, in-person meetings with leaders of foreign governments and their staffs, attendance at the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Civil Society Organization Spring Meeting side events in Washington, DC.



AFJN, as a UN Economic and Social Council Special Consultative organization, submitted key policy recommendations ahead of the UN’s Peacebuilding Commission’s Ministerial Meeting. The recommendations, which focused on UN peacekeeping in Africa, included: UN Security Council reform to include representatives from impacted regions; African priorities; improved accountability (noting military coups); and addressing the disproportionate impact of climate on African nations.



# Women Empowerment Project

## Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda

AFJN's Women Empowerment Project (WEP) has been assisting African Women religious, at the local, regional, and continental levels, in shaping a new vision of their role in society by building coalitions and working together to change the structures that keep people in poverty and deprive them of their dignity as God's children to bring about change. Since its inception, WEP has impacted 7 countries with over 3,000 sisters and 1,000 youth directly trained, and over 18 network of sisters created.



**3,000+ SISTER  
OUTREACH**



**1,000+ YOUTH  
TRAINED**



**18+ SISTERS  
NETWORKS**

In 2023, the WEP focused on further developing the networks to actively campaign against domestic servitude; and early and child marriage in Ghana and Nigeria and tackling the root cause of unsafe child migration and trafficking in Northern Uganda. WEP partnered with: organizations and government ministries like the: Ugandan Police; Nigerian National Agency on Trafficking in Persons; Islamic Imams (Tamale, Ghana); the Association of Female Lawyers; and Yendi Council of Chiefs. These events also provided a platform for local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to share their expertise and advocate, with WEP, during stakeholder visits and community outreach. In many of these engagements, there was a general lack of awareness of the rights of the child and national laws protecting these children.

Empowered Catholic sisters, youth, communities, and stakeholders are working together To end these practices by using their learned skills like: social analysis; advocacy and sensitization training and outreach; networking; core group building; and media campaigns.



Funded through grants from: Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Dominican Sisters of Peace Shalom Fund, Society of the Holy Child Jesus WOTA Fund, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur Base Communities Fund, and organizational and individual members.





## Leaders in Ending Human Trafficking Advocacy

The advocacy education and training received by sisters from the WEP project has enabled the sisters to be a strong voice in ending human trafficking. AFJN, with the Dominicans and Talitha Kum, invited sisters to share their experiences during the “Tackling Human Trafficking in Africa: Catholic Sisters Share Successful Advocacy Strategies” webinar. The sisters used this platform as a way to share their activities to end human trafficking in their respective countries, discussing successes and how to adapt to challenges. Each sister (among others) are leading efforts to change these structures from the grassroots.

## Tackling Human Trafficking in Africa Catholic Sisters Share Successful Advocacy Strategies



This virtual event features four Catholic sisters, trained in the Africa Faith and Justice Network's Women Empowerment Project advocacy workshops, who are utilizing their advocacy skills to end human trafficking in their communities.

### SPEAKERS



**SR. MARY LILLY DRICIRU, MSMMC - UGANDA**  
Director of Communication, The Secretariat of the Association of Religious in Uganda



**SR. MARY ROSE BARNABAS KISANGA, LSOSF - TANZANIA**  
Vocation Animator and Child Protection Officer  
Little Sisters of Saint Francis Tanzania



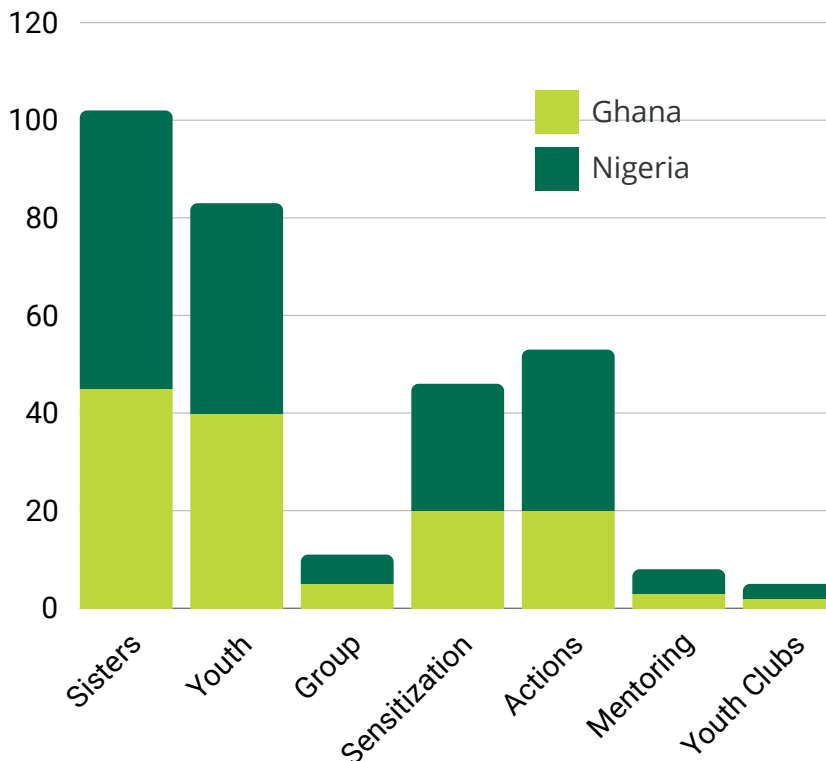
**SR. JULIET IFEDIBA, OLA - NIGERIA**  
Human Rights Lawyer and Peace Activist



**SR. KAYULA LESA, RSC - ZAMBIA**  
Director, Talitha Kum Zambia



**FR. ANIEDI OKURE, OP - ROME (MODERATOR)**  
General Promoter of Justice and Peace  
Dominican Order



## Ghana and Nigeria 2023

**Legend:** Sisters, Youth, and Group are all part of the core group of trained community advocates; **Sensitization** lists the number of programs held in communities, schools, religious and civil institutions where different stakeholders were brought together to learn about the issues; **Actions** include radio programs, town hall meetings, meetings with traditional and religious leaders, and government ministries and offices; **Mentoring** lists the number of communities that were mentored in practical advocacy for child protection policy; **Youth Clubs** lists the number of new youth clubs created.



## Ghana - WEP

In Ghana young women, subject to forced and child marriage, are eager to go back to school. The communities benefiting from AFJN's sensitization are coming together to support these married children's educational dreams. Sensitization of the community and victim is an effective way of mitigating these practices.



### Crossing the Religious Divide - Outreach to the College of Imams

The WEP met with the College of Imams Central Mosque, in Tamale Ghana, as part of the sisters and stakeholders advocacy training and outreach for the Ending Early and Child Marriage advocacy campaign. The College of Imams invited the group to hold their advocacy visit in the Mosque where the Imams decided to use their various Mosques to educate their communities against early and child marriage. Like the sisters and other stakeholders, now the Imams in Tamale are working to end this practice. In addition to the Imams, sisters also reach out to the Paramount Chief in Ayendi who accepted the message and said he would be an Ambassador to end early and child marriage.



### Community Commits to Honor Girls Right to Education

In Boukurugu, following the WEP community engagement of ending early marriage and the rights of the child, the community committed to assist girls as they return to school to finish their education. Attending school is a big challenge for these girls (wives and mothers) lacking local schools. The community is offering to assist these children-mothers with their daily tasks to free-up time for them to travel to school and study. These determined girls are examples to their peers in and around the community by choosing education as a means to achieve a better life. These 'girl ambassadors' also advocate for girls and women empowerment through education. Eight beneficiaries (six girls and two boys) were sponsored, presented with bicycles to shorten the travel time to and from school, to serve as lead ambassadors and role models in the communities.



# Nigeria - WEP

## Youth Inter-Religious Mobilization

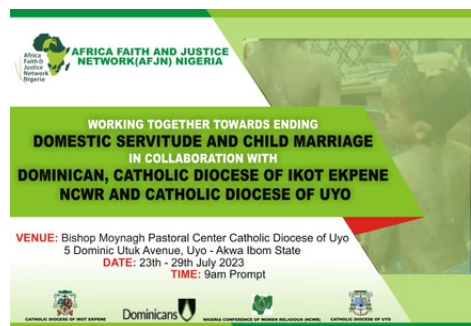
In Jos, 120 youth (60 Christian, 60 Muslim) participated in WEP's awareness campaign on ending early and child marriage; and domestic servitude. This campaign provided a safe platform for victims to speak about and share the realities and abuse they face. After hearing these stories and learning more about these issues, the youth produced a documentary in order to break the silence and raise awareness of what is going on in their communities.



"AFJN Nigeria is an evolving advocacy movement, wiping away tears and calling the government and the citizens' attention to their collective responsibility."  
Sr. Bernadette E. Okure, SHCJ National Coord. of AFJN Nigeria

## Protecting Child Domestic Servants

Akwa Ibom State is known for providing domestic servants across Nigeria. Sisters sensitized 10 local communities on domestic servitude and early marriage. Two radio stations reached out to WEP to partner with the group to spread awareness. This was the first time many of the locals came together to discuss domestic servitude as a community and they learned about the abuses that go along with the practice and how children are deprived of their rights (education, leisure, security, safety, food, shelter, etc.). They also learned about existing national protective laws and government resources available to them. Many, surprised that they were unknowingly breaking the law, expressed remorse. The community was appreciative of the information shared and committed to be more vigilant about the safety of their girls. News of the outreach spread and many other local communities are asking for similar programs so they can be educated as well.





# Uganda - WEP

## Children Rescued and Perpetrators Arrested



The Ugandan metropolitan police together, with WEP local partners, have rescued and returned over 60 children to their homes since the WEP awareness and advocacy training in the Karamojong region in northern Uganda. Thirty Karamojong perpetrators were arrested. The training attracted 126 participants from 12 Karamojong communities and engaged over 600 community members. The training focused on reducing the number of children unknowingly sold into slavery and increasing awareness about the rights of the child by building community advocacy groups.



WEP held a stakeholders meeting showing how children in these communities are vulnerable to predators who recruit them for economic gains. For many of these parents, migration is seen as the only viable ticket out of their poverty without considering the potential harmful risk to the child. After WEP engagement with the government and local communities, one chief (in the Akriket Shrine - where elders meet) decided to welcome the children back and punish the perpetrators.



WEP engaged the community in Kampala who often use these children as beggars. These communities are now more aware of unsafe child migration and the abuses the children endure when sent to Kampala. They have therefore urged the government to provide assistance and create local schools to educate their children and break the cycle of poverty. WEP met with the Karamojong members of Parliament and 7 other government offices where they delivered advocacy letters, and expanded the existing network of sisters to include the Pope John Paul II Justice and Peace Center, the Women and Equal Opportunity Desk, and the Comboni Sisters in Uganda.



# Just Governance Project (JGP)

## Liberia, Cameroon, Ghana



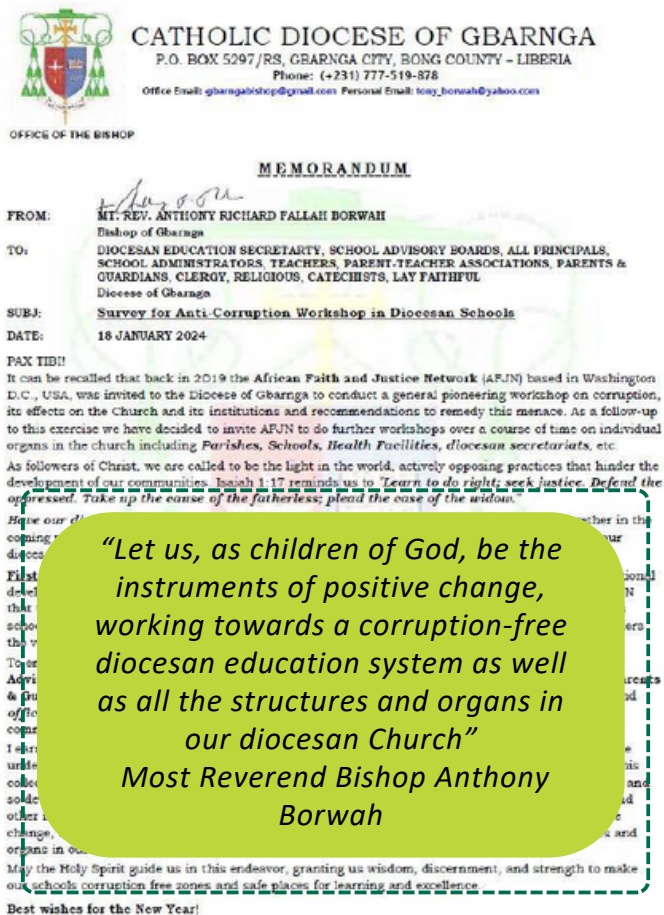
AFJN's Just Governance Project continued to make great strides in raising awareness and empowering civil societies to challenge oppressive structures that keep African citizens in poverty. In 2023, AFJN partnered with the Gbarnga Diocese to gather research and prepare workshops tackling corruption in the Diocesan school system and to serve as a model for corrupt-free schools across Liberia. In Cameroon, AFJN partnered with the Justice and Peace Commission of the Diocese of Bafoussam to effectively tackle the issue of undocumented Cameroonian children in the Kouuptamou and Foubot Municipalities of Western Cameroon. In Ghana, AFJN expanded its reach to 18 communities and utilized town halls and local radio platforms to disseminate information on land grabbing awareness and prevention.



## Liberia - JGP

### Setting the Groundwork to Fight Corruption

In Liberia, AFJN has prepared the path to equip clergy, religious, and diocesan offices with the tools for conducting effective social analysis and campaigns by partnering with the Diocese of Gbarnga's Justice and Peace Commission. The Most Reverend Anthony Fallah Borwah, Bishop of Gbarnga, approved AFJN's request to commission a study to look at corruption in the diocesan school system and for AFJN to replicate the anti-corruption campaign that targets diocesan structures including: schools, parishes, hospital and other church-run institutions. Findings of the study should be available in 2024.



Grants: Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities, Missionaries of Africa, Sisters of the Holy Cross, the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, organizational and individual members

# Cameroon - JGP



## Vital Records - Education, Processes, and Monitoring

Many citizens, including parents, lack awareness of the laws governing vital records. This renders many Cameroonian children stateless and in conflict with the law. AFJN established a Cameroon chapter in Baffousam, headed by Madam Massa Ferancide (the AFJN Coordinator) and comprised by members of justice and peace, priests, local leaders, etc. AFJN's local coordinator and team visited Fosset, Kouotamo, parishioners of Oyomabang, conducting educational talks on the importance of registering births at the civil registry office. In 2023, working with local partners, AFJN continued the work to educate local communities within the Bafoussam Diocese and the Government's Vital Records department to minimize corruption in the issuance of birth certificates.

By emphasizing stakeholder engagement and the importance of birth certificates, AFJN enabled more than 301 previously undocumented children (from 141 households) to register their births through the second mobile court in the Diocese of Bafoussam. AFJN also streamlined the process by: allowing fathers of children born out of wedlock to file the 'fatherhood recognition request' concurrently and with the court's approval of a consolidated application for parents registering more than one undocumented child. AFJN also monitored the procedure at the First Instance Court of Fombot to fight corruption and protect parents from abuse and extortion, by ensuring they were charged the correct amount when navigating the process independently.





## Awareness Raising Through Birth Certificate Distribution

AFJN strategically worked with Foubot City Hall in utilizing the distribution of the birth certificates (applications submitted during AFJN's 2022 mobile court event) as an awareness creation and educational opportunity by moving the ceremony to a nearby school complex and allowing students, parents, and teachers to participate - stressing the importance of possessing this vital document. AFJN held a similar event at the Kpouptamou City Hall, with the approval of the local school superintendent.

AFJN's efforts are widely recognized and valued by the local courts and AFJN is viewed as a credible partner with the First Instance Court in Foubot and plans on continuing the partnership.



## Strategic Monitoring Committee

In partnership with the Mayor of the Commune of Foubot, AFJN resurrected the Bafousam II municipality's Strategic Monitoring Committee in Foubot City, Rural Foubot, and Foubot Mangoum. This award-winning concept, the brainchild of AFJN-Cameroon's Coordinator Ms. Massa Ferrancide nine-years-ago, ensures that every child born within these jurisdictions obtains a birth certificate within 90 days of birth to minimize parents paying costly fees or bribes.



# Ghana - JGP



**1/3**  
Ghana's  
Arable Land  
is Foreign-  
Owned

AFJN conducted a comprehensive land grabbing awareness and prevention campaign, utilizing town halls, local assembly outreach, and media campaigns, to safeguard rural communities in Ghana's Volta Region from predatory multinational large-scale land acquisition. Through education and advocacy, JGP project continues to make great strides. Each of the 12 villages visited in 2023 had experienced unique sets of challenges such as: undocumented verbal agreements; deadly conflicts; community displacements; loss of small-farm livelihoods; food insecurity; and water pollution. During the campaign our team conducted awareness events and media campaigns that fostered community-led activities (featured in several prominent television and newspaper networks). What further complicates these issues are the region's two predominant land types: stool lands and family lands (each with a separate set of rules regarding leasing or selling land). Collective efforts are needed to safeguard Ghana's agricultural resources, protect local communities, minimize conflict, and promote responsible and equitable land use practices.

## Two Predominant Land Types in Ghana's Volta Region:

**Stool Lands:** may be unilaterally  
sold by the chief

**Family Lands:** must consult with the  
community

The absence of formal documentation in agreements makes communities vulnerable to land grabbers, as in the case of Kponkpo, where the community made two verbal land-lease agreements with foreign investors. Without documentation it is difficult to hold the investors accountable to honor their commitment as previously agreed, including, constructing a health center (2021 agreement) and financing the health center (2023 agreement) as there is nothing to support the community's claim. The JGP is helping the community and its youth to identify techniques used by land grabbers and prevention strategies so they can be less vulnerable in the future.





Traditional leaders also play a crucial role in preserving land for future generations. Amidst the growing number of foreign entities acquiring land and threatening food security, JGP met with the Sogakope community, leaders, youth and media (Sela Radio FM) emphasizing the need for responsible land-leasing practices, youth engagement, and government oversight to pass on the land responsibly to future generations. JGP recognized that in addition to educating stakeholders, the youth also have a pivotal role in changing the future.

## Tough Change in Leadership

In Adaklu, predatory land acquisition is intricately linked to a collaborative relationship between traditional authorities and local government officials according to local testimonies. JGP met with members of the Adaklu: Paramount Traditional Council and the Abuadi community and held a live-broadcast meeting on ADAMU Radio with the District Assembly to highlight the members' roles in facilitating land grabs, the long-term-adverse effects, and how to constructively protect Adaklu land for current and future generations. The Paramount Chief, not taking any accountability, abruptly ended the meeting passing all responsibility to the government of Ghana and the media instead of traditional authorities, like himself (many of whom benefit from these practices). A heightened focus on awareness outreach and preventive campaigns is imperative.

Conflicts arise when lease agreements are executed excluding key stakeholders, like in Tagadzi where the sitting chief was excluded from discussions. In the Kua Electoral Area locals are suffering because a native son unlawfully and single-handedly leased prime land to a foreign investor leaving the defeated community powerless and struggling to find income sources beyond farming. In Adutor, participants questioned unilateral land leasing and emphasized the need for consultation on land matters. The late chief's widow lost her land, having been excluded from consultation, when it was leased without her knowledge. AFJN emphasized the importance of open dialogue and collective efforts to preserve land for present and future generations. Community involvement, government due diligence, and policy reforms (like stricter oversight, mediated dialogues, and legal assessments to resolve conflicts and safeguard stakeholders' rights) are essential.





## Agribusiness Destroying Local Livelihoods

In Kanuwloe, six villages (about 1500 inhabitants) claim the Harry Agri Company's (an Indian sugarcane firm) use of agrochemicals has destroyed local farmland, disrupted biodiversity, caused pollution and contaminated the drinking water (causing skin and health issues). A local leased the land alleging unilateral ownership and claiming the communities were 'settlers' with no rights, thus displacing them (people who have lived on the land for nearly a century) and jeopardizing their livelihoods.



## Long Term Impact of Bad Agreements

JGP also revisited Gbagbavinu (2022 program) where they successfully utilized skills acquired from JGP awareness campaign to prevent a rogue investor from acquiring 'rice farming' land due to lack of informed consent. The town continues to feel the strain from their agreement with the Huawei Agriculture Development Center's (a Chinese company) pollution and flooding caused by the remnants of a retention pond (left-behind) after the company was evicted, according to the community. The community is using skills taught by the JGP to advocate so the next agreement will have measures in place so they and their children will benefit.





Commercial interests in land by foreign companies are generating conflicts between families and clans, and threatening productive local land-use practices like the deadly intra-community conflict that began in 2012 among the Afaude, Gbokpo, and Gbokopo communities. According to the communities the land had originally been leased to a Norwegian investor, then to Deepsin Implex Ltd., then to UNIGRAIN, and now is leased by SINOSTONE. This has strained the community cohesion; and exacerbated poverty and conflicts.



*Allegations of skin rashes after using contaminated water from River Volta*

In Aduto (Galotse and Larve communities) the community shared how Brazil Agribusiness Group left the community in a food desert (confiscating and burning rice remnants) because the contract had no provisions to share the agricultural product (rice) with the locals leaving the desperate community at a significant loss. Just land-lease practices and responsible investing might have prevented this.



## Hope for the Future

One of the few villages in the region that has not fallen prey to foreign land grabbers is Avedotoe where JGP took a proactive stance to defend their interests when approached by investors with legal representation unlike many local landowners (economically disadvantaged) and noting that follow-up is necessary to build resilience and foster responsible investments with prevention as the most effective strategy.





The Africa Faith and Justice Network is so grateful to our organizational and individual members, grantors, and donors for your prayers and financial support over these past 40 years. With God's grace, together we are working towards more just US - Africa relations.

Gold  
Transparency  
2023  
  
Candid.

*Audits available  
upon request.*



3025 4th Street NE, Floor 2, Washington, DC 20017  
202.817.3671 [www.afjn.org](http://www.afjn.org) | [afjn@afjn.org](mailto:afjn@afjn.org)