



2025 End of Year Report: Activity Highlights & Updates



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

A Note from Our Executive Director



Dear Friends,

As we enter 2026, we reflect with gratitude on a year of meaningful progress at Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN). In 2025, our work remained grounded in Catholic Social Teaching and in our mission to promote just United States (US)-Africa relations while accompanying African communities in their pursuit of justice, peace, and dignity.

We focused not only on urgent needs, but on tackling the structures that keep our people in poverty — unjust systems, harmful social norms, weak governance, and inequitable global policies. Our efforts centered on empowerment, accountability, and lasting transformation.

In Ghana, our Women’s Empowerment initiative showed what true transformation looks like. Young women who once endured early marriage and domestic servitude are now training as electricians in a traditionally male-dominated field. What began as prevention and rehabilitation has become opportunity and leadership. As they gain skills and income, they are reshaping expectations within their families and communities. This is more than economic progress; it is cultural change that opens doors for the next generation of girls.

In regions affected by fragile institutions and resource exploitation, we promoted transparency and community accountability. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), we supported peacebuilding rooted in justice and reconciliation, including creative initiatives such as music to foster unity.

In the US, AFJN continued bridging African realities and US policy debates. While supporting peace efforts aimed at stability in places such as the DRC, we raised concerns about limited civil society engagement and expressed hope that critical minerals would not be the sole incentive driving such initiatives. Through sustained advocacy with Congress, we worked to reduce the proposed remittance tax to help protect vital financial lifelines for African diaspora families.

None of this work would be possible without our partners — religious congregations, grassroots leaders, and allies committed to justice. As we move forward, we remain dedicated to strengthening governance; expanding women’s empowerment; advancing peacebuilding; and advocating for policies that uphold dignity and equity.

The stories of young women — once silenced, now skilled and confident — remind us that justice transforms lives, shifts systems, and enlightens communities.

May the Peace of the Lord be with you during this Lent.

Our Vision

We envision a world where African nations and peoples are empowered to be agents of their own destiny.

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.

Principles:

Strengthened, Justice-Forward, and Grounded in Accountability

Dignity of the Human Person:

Promoting the dignity and well-being of individuals, especially the vulnerable and marginalized.

Empowerment and Advocacy:

Empowering individuals and communities to advocate for their rights and promote positive change.

Justice and Peace:

Advocating for justice and peace in all aspects of life, particularly in governance and institutional practices.

Accountability and Transparency:

Promoting transparency and accountability in governance, institutional practices, and development initiative.

Solidarity and Community:

Emphasizing the importance of the common good, community, and solidarity with those affected by injustice.

Subsidiarity and Shared Leadership:

Engaging those affected in the decision making processes.

WHO WE ARE

Board of Directors, Executive Committee

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Maura Browne, SNDdeN - Vice Chair

Jemima Andan - Treasurer

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Uju Okeahialam, CSSp

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Women Empowerment Project
Coordinator

Steven Worth
Strategic Advisor and IVC
Volunteer

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Editorial Consultant

Lydia Andrews
Communications and
Operations Manager

Aniedi Okure, OP
Women Empowerment Project
Consultant

Jean Marie Mvumbi, CICM
Accountant Volunteer and
Board Member

Patrick Egwu
AFJN Senior Fellow

In Memoriam: +Mr. Don McCrabb (Former Board Member); and +Sr. Mary Lilly Dirciru MSMMC, AFJN Women Empowerment Project Coordinator, Uganda

Thank You for Your Service: George Kintiba, SVD Board Member

Africa Faith and Justice Network Award Recipients

Recipients of this Award are persons of faith, collaboration and instruments of education and advocacy on behalf of justice for Africa.

Sr. Maura Browne, SNDdeN (2023)

**Transformation Research Centre
of Lesotho (2013)**

Emira Woods (2012)

Fr. Peter Henriot, SJ (2010)

Jennifer Davis (2009)

Catholic Relief Services (2008)

**Archbishop John Baptist Odama
(2006)**

**Rt. Rev. Bishop Kevin Dowling,
CSsR (2005)**

Community of Sant' Egidio (2004)

**Adorers of the Blood of Christ
(2003)**

**Congresswoman Maxine Waters
(2002)**

William Headley, CSSp (2000)

Rocco Puopolo, SX (1999)

Member Organizations

Adorers of the Blood of Christ
Archdiocese of Cincinnati Mission Office
Comboni Missionaries
Congregation of Holy Cross Sisters
Congregation of the Holy Spirit
Congregation of the Immaculate
Heart of Mary
Congregation of the Sisters of
St. Joseph of Peace
Dominican Sisters of Peace
Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa
Holy Cross Fathers
Knights of Saint John
Marianist Province of the United States
Maryknoll Society
Medical Mission Sisters
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa
Missionary Sisters Servants of the
Holy Spirit

Missionhurst
Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ
Priests of the Sacred Heart
Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary
School Sisters of Notre Dame: Central Pacific
Province
Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati
Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth
Sisters of St. Francis of
Assisi (Dubuque, IA)
Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus
Sisters of the Holy Names of
Jesus and Mary
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
Sisters Servants of the Immaculate
Heart of Mary
Society of the Divine Word
Society of the Missionaries of Africa
Xaverian Brothers
Xaverian Missionaries

OUR FAITH

Living Out Our Catholic Faith Tradition

Faith

Our Catholic faith is the guiding spirit that inspires us in our mission with its rich teachings and traditions. It unites us with the past which helps form our future and in 2025 we held the inaugural **Annual Memorial Mass** honoring the legacy of those who came before us and who lived life in service to or who supported the vision and mission of AFJN. This was the first of an annual tradition of uniting with the founders and supporters to celebrate our faith in Jesus Christ. AFJN is grateful to the Missionaries of Africa with Celebrant Rev. Barthelemy Bazemo, MAfr, for hosting the Mass in their beautiful Chapel. AFJN also honored the life and legacy of our dear Pope Francis following his passing.

AFJN also participated in Maryknoll's **Way of the Cross for Peace & Justice** on Good Friday, an annual Maryknoll tradition where the faithful process through the streets of the nation's Capitol to key offices. Sr. Eucharia Madueke, SNDdeN, read one of the prayerful reflections and meditations on Christ's journey in light of the sufferings and injustices of today.



AFJN with Jubilee USA Network and Caritas Internationalis participated in **The Jubilee Year of Hope's** campaigns for debt justice and financial architecture reform including: coalition letters including the "Jubilee 2025" petition to the G20 Finance Ministers, G7, United Nations (UN), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB), and the Trump Administration; submission of AFJN's Relay for Hope - Jubilee 2025 **Turn Debt into Hope** YouTube video; and the "Proclaim Jubilee! Together We Can **End Global Debt**" prayer service outside the IMF and WB Meetings.

Service

As Catholics we are called to serve our brothers and sisters, especially those in need. 2025 marked the inaugural year of AFJN's Day of Service by giving back to the local DC community, ensuring food security, by volunteering at Catholic Charities Share Food Network. AFJN staff and interns prepared pallets of food for local churches and parishes for distribution to individuals in need.

Community

As part of the Catholic community of faith, AFJN actively engaged throughout the year in the Catholic Task Force on Africa (CTFA)'s monthly meetings. These gatherings brought together a range of Catholic organizations to share updates from across the African continent, discuss domestic and international policies affecting US–Africa relations, and collaborate on broader Catholic initiatives. AFJN staff were invited to contribute to conferences and panel discussions, including the National Black Sisters' Conference and a Zoom panel on "Gender-Based Violence in Africa" hosted by the Dominicans. AFJN continued its exhibition at the Leadership Conference of Women Religious connecting with several member organization representatives. Staff also participated in the Advocacy Network for Africa's retreat, further strengthening relationships within the broader advocacy community.



HOW WE SUPPORT US-AFRICA POLICIES

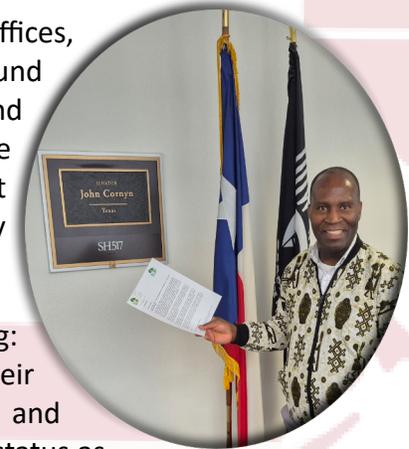
Issues AFJN Addressed in 2025

| Issue Areas | Participants/ Networks | Activities |
|--|--|---|
| Equality and Non-Discrimination | UN | Presentation “Voices of People of Africa and African Descent: Addressing Present Challenges to Equality and Non-Discrimination” UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent |
| Health | UN, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) | Joint statement “Ensuring the Primacy of the Right to Health, Prevention, and Conflict-of-Interest Safeguards and the 4th UN High-Level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases” |
| Technology | UN, CSOs | Endorsing statement on Women and AI to the UN on the International Women’s Day, supported the CloudOps 2025 in Lagos Nigeria, articles, press release |
| Taxes | US Senate Committee on Finance and US Senators, Free and Fair Filing Coalition, Congress, the Administration | Letter opposing Big Beautiful Act excise tax, coalition participation and letter to extend and make permanent the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Direct File program |
| Debt and Financial Architecture Reform | Jubilee USA, Caritas Internationalis, IMF, WB | Social media campaigns, video, prayer on the Hill, petition, Jubilee Year of Hope, Turn Debt into Hope Campaign, Relay for Hope |



AFJN Policy Engagement - Serving as a Voice for the Marginalized

AFJN actively engaged key members of the US Government offices, and global organizations during meetings in the US around policy areas that impacted Africans, the African diaspora, and marginalized communities. By serving as a liaison between these communities and key stakeholders, AFJN was able to highlight issue areas and educate key policy makers on how certain policy positions impact these vulnerable communities.



In 2025 AFJN addressed the UN on several issues areas including: the equality and non-discrimination of Africans and their descendants; healthcare prevention and control; women; and technology particularly artificial intelligence. By utilizing AFJN's status as a member of the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), AFJN was able to highlight the realities of those in Africa and how decisions made by these global bodies impact real family lives and communities.

Global and domestic financial decisions have far reaching consequences which is why AFJN participated in the Jubilee Year of Hope campaigns for debt relief and financial architecture reform (see above) during the IMF and WB meetings in Washington, DC. AFJN also spoke on behalf of the African diaspora expressing the concern among the migrant communities and the harm caused by the excise tax that was part of the Big Beautiful Act. Many individuals who have immigrated to the US continue to support their families in their native countries. These taxes would cause an unnecessary burden on them and their families who are largely dependent on the funds sent abroad. For some this might be the sole source of income living in communities lacking economic opportunity. Finally, AFJN supported calls to make permanent the IRS Direct File program which helps low income families access software at no or low cost to insure they are compliant with US tax law. The US tax code is so complicated many native speakers need the assistance of professionals or professional software to correctly complete the form and failure to file correctly leads to huge penalties. Extending this program ensures that individuals and families will now have access to much-needed resources to remain in compliance with the law. These are just a few examples of how AFJN supports global and individual financial stability.



Issues AFJN Addressed in 2025

| Issue Areas | Participants/ Networks | Activities |
|--|--|--|
| Shifting International Politics and Development Landscapes | Embassy of South Africa, the Administration, Embassy of Burundi, Modern Foreign Assistance Network | Hosted the “Navigating the Future of US-Africa Relations: Opportunities and Challenges in a Shifting Landscape” event with South African Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool, attended an event on the future of US International assistance, issued a press statement of US sanctions on South Africa, and hosted Ambassador Jean Bosco Barege of the Republic of Burundi for an office briefing |
| Peacebuilding | US Congressional Offices, the Administration, Civil Society Participation | DRC-Rwanda Peace through Congressional briefings, Congressional hearings, briefings with key stakeholders, lawmakers and diplomats, coalition letters, articles, presentations, events, joint statements, press statements and press releases, and global peace with the Threads of Peace event at the White House Eclipse; conflict de-escalation through a press statement following President’s Trumps threat of military action in Nigeria |
| Responsible Minerals Trading and Tracing | Public-Private Alliance for Responsible Minerals Trade | Attending meetings, sending a letter to the leadership team calling for more accountability and transparency |



The Shifting Political and Development Landscape - African Solutions for African Problems

Significant changes in 2025 reshaped the global development and political landscape, particularly in US international relations. The dismantling of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) created widespread uncertainty and disruption, especially across Africa, signaling the end of the status quo. In response, AFJN hosted then–South African Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool for a panel discussion exploring what the future of development and

partnership might entail. AFJN also participated in a separate forum examining the future of international assistance in the wake of USAID’s closure and reached out to local African Embassies including hosting an office briefing for Ambassador Jean Bosco Barege of the Republic of Burundi. These discussions focused on identifying alternative sources of support, including partnerships with other nations, private sector actors, and new models of community-driven development. A central theme was the importance of self-determination and the need to pursue “African solutions for African problems,” including innovative approaches that may still be emerging.



Elusive Peace

Throughout 2025 AFJN remained committed to advocating for peace and an end to violence across Africa. 2025 marked AFJN’s first participation in the annual Threads of Peace at the White House Easter event, which uses fashion to highlight the urgent need for peace. AFJN also issued a press statement urging restraint after President Trump threatened military action in Nigeria, emphasizing that the conflict is complex and extends beyond religious tensions. In many regions, kidnappings persist as a lucrative enterprise amid economic instability and limited government intervention. AFJN continued its engagement in CTFA meetings, receiving updates on the crises in Sudan and South Sudan.



AFJN was also actively engaged in addressing the ongoing conflict between DRC and Rwanda, advocating for a peaceful resolution. Throughout the year, AFJN monitored developments surrounding the Peace Accord and issued letters, statements, and articles outlining the conditions necessary for a just and lasting peace. As in South Sudan and Nigeria, this conflict is deeply layered, with longstanding tensions that complicate reconciliation. Although representatives from both countries traveled to the US to symbolically sign the Peace Accord, concerns remain about its implementation, particularly given competing interests over resource-rich territories, including critical minerals.

Trading Minerals Responsibly

AFJN continues to be a strong advocate for raising awareness about the realities of the critical minerals trade. As a member of the Public-Private Alliance for Responsible Minerals Trade, AFJN challenged the group’s leadership to promote greater accountability among all members. Given that many participants are corporations directly involved in mineral sourcing, AFJN urged for greater responsibility in ensuring ethical practices within their own supply chains by verifying that minerals are legitimately sourced rather than through illicit or exploitative channels masked by weak tracing systems. By maintaining pressure on both industry actors and source points, AFJN seeks to strengthen accountability across global supply chains. Through this work, AFJN continues to push for more responsible sourcing practices and equitable trade systems in critical minerals.

HOW WE SUPPORT AFRICA

Issues AFJN Addressed in Africa/Africa Focus Areas

| Issue Areas | Countries | Participants | Activities |
|--|--|---|--|
| Early and Child (and Forced) Marriage and Domestic Servitude | Ghana (Tamale, Tusani Ayendi); Uganda (Kampala, Karamoja); Nigeria (Akwa Ibom; Enugu State; Lagos State; Ebonyi; Rivers State; Plateau State, Anambra State) | Chiefs, Government Officials, Government Offices, Nongovernmental organizations, Faith-based Organizations, Community Leaders, Youth, Religious Women | Training, policy briefings, media outreach, videos, establishing Community Monitoring Systems, adopting Memorandums of Understandings (MOUs) safeguarding children's rights, town crier publicly announcing the news, reports, dramatizations, youth training, reporting and monitoring systems, "If You See Something Say Something" campaign, farmers market outreach, 16 Days of Advocacy Against Gender-Based Violence campaign participation, Facebook Live |
| Food Security | Uganda (Lokupo, Iriiri) | Women and Youth, Community Leaders | Community farming education and training, water access, providing food for community |
| Sex Tourism | Kenya (Mombasa) | Community Leaders, Hotel and Airbnb Operators, Government Officials, religious women, youth | Coalition creation protecting children, sensitization of local communities, creation of future task force, media outreach |
| Female Genital Mutilation | Nigeria (Ebonyi) | Government, Community Organizations, Faith-Based Organizations, Religious Women, Youth | Participation in the "Step Up the Pace" march on the "International Day of Zero Tolerance for female genital mutilation," media outreach |

Securing Food - Securing the Future in Uganda

In communities facing deep poverty and limited economic and educational opportunities, identifying sustainable solutions is essential. In Karamoja, a largely nomadic, herding region, survival has become increasingly difficult as grazing land diminishes and conflicts intensify, reflecting broader challenges across Africa. Despite these hardships, the community has shown a strong willingness to adapt and learn new skills. Through a pilot initiative under the Women Empowerment Project, three young people were trained in sustainable agricultural practices suited to their harsh climate, with the goal of returning to share this knowledge with others.



Local commitment to the project was evident, as two communities donated land for a pilot farming initiative. In 2025, they celebrated their first successful harvest. By building capacity in sustainable agriculture, the initiative aims to strengthen food security and provide viable alternatives for youth, reducing vulnerability to domestic servitude and supporting at-risk children. Community members also raised concerns about student safety, advocating for the construction of a school fence to ensure children are protected while learning.

Safe Coast, Safe Women: Building the Capacity of Catholic Sisters to Prevent Trafficking and Exploitative Tourism

Tourism is a major part of local economies especially for coastal towns in nations like Kenya. Modern technology platforms for vacation rentals like AirBnB and Verbo have expanded ways in which homeowners rent rooms or their homes to tourists. There are little to no regulations to vet the owners, the properties, or those booking the rental. This makes it easier to engage in sex trafficking. To fight this, AFJN trained sisters on the realities of sex trafficking in Mombasa, one of the hubs in Kenya. Following the sensitization training, the sisters had direct engagements with local communities, government officials, leaders, and other organizations to come together in partnership to identify and address ways to end sex tourism. The District Commissioner, noting the regulations were insufficient for vacation rentals and lacked child protection enforcement, expressed gratitude for the sisters' visit and requested the sisters engage those in Nairobi to encourage new regulations. Eleven organizations committed to participate in a coalition, led by the sisters, to target vacation rentals and hotels that allow sex tourism and trafficking and to advocate for stronger and more robust regulations and enforcement. In the future there are hopes for a task force that will deal with sex tourism and trafficking.



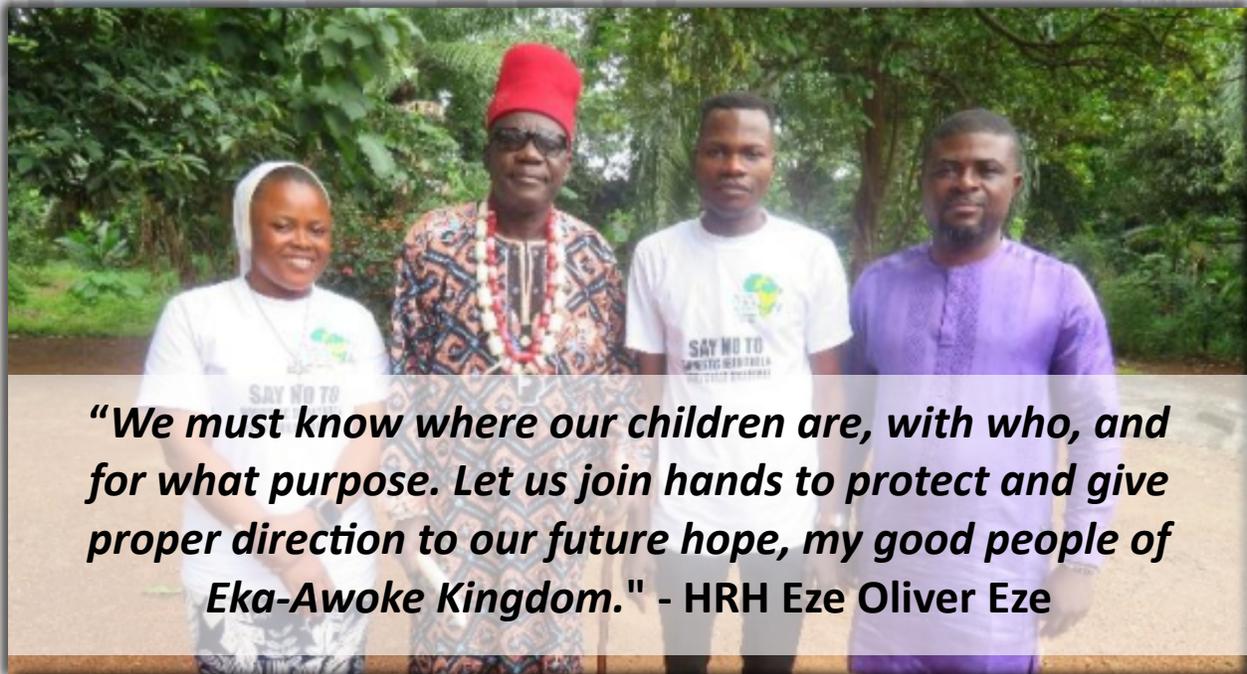


Nigeria Communities Level Up Their Commitments to Protect and Educate Children

AFJN Women Empowerment Project with AFJN Nigeria stepped up their game by challenging chiefs, community leaders, and key stakeholders to do more than just verbally affirm their commitment to end early and child marriage and domestic servitude. This nationwide child protection initiative spanned eight states and implemented tools



like the Community Monitoring System and Child Protection Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs). Many communities in the country suffer from poverty, cultural norms, and limited access to education. At the outset the group was unsure how the communities would respond to the adoption of the MOUs, but many traditional rulers, community leaders, and clergy embraced the effort. Figures such as HRH Eze Oliver Eze, Traditional Ruler of Eka-Awoke and Rev. S. N. Ewah of the Assemblies of God Church signed on and began implementing accountability measures within their communities. In Ebonyi, community advocacy efforts led to the establishment of the Out-of-School Learning Centre with the National Commission for Out-of-School Children to provide informal educational opportunities for out-of-school and drop-out children. Community members and professionals are also eager to utilize the tools and information learned like Mrs. Elizabeth Alo, HOD Social Welfare and Education.



"We must know where our children are, with who, and for what purpose. Let us join hands to protect and give proper direction to our future hope, my good people of Eka-Awoke Kingdom." - HRH Eze Oliver Eze

Issues AFJN Addressed in 2025 in Africa

| Issue Areas | Countries | Participants | Activities |
|--------------|--|---|---|
| Education | Uganda (Lokopo), Ghana (Tusani Ayendi) | Community Leaders, Youth, Religious Leaders, Government Officials, Families | Food security, water access, building a fence, media outreach |
| Youth Clubs | Ghana (Kuli, Tusani Ayendi); Nigeria (Akwa Ibom) | Youth, Community Leaders, Religious Women | Girl and youth in sports, civic engagement, media outreach |
| Safeguarding | Kenya (Nairobi) | (Sponsored by) Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (SNDdeN) Leadership | Safeguarding training |

***“AFJN made us know that we have a voice.
I used to feel these issues are for elders.
Not anymore.”
- AFJN Youth Advocate***

Youth Advocacy Drives Creation of Catholic Youth Body in Ebonyi State

AFJN and AFJN Nigeria brought together over 1000 youth with 5 from each parish, across the 13 local government areas (LGA) in Ebonyi State to tackle early and child marriage and domestic servitude. Following targeted sensitization on these issues, their advocacy led to the establishment of the Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria (CYON) Diocesan Body, creating a centralized platform for reporting cases and coordinating action. This structure is designed to support a sustainable, youth-led monitoring and response system across the state. Equipped with training and awareness, these young advocates are now empowered to identify risks, report violations, and actively work to prevent child exploitation within their communities.

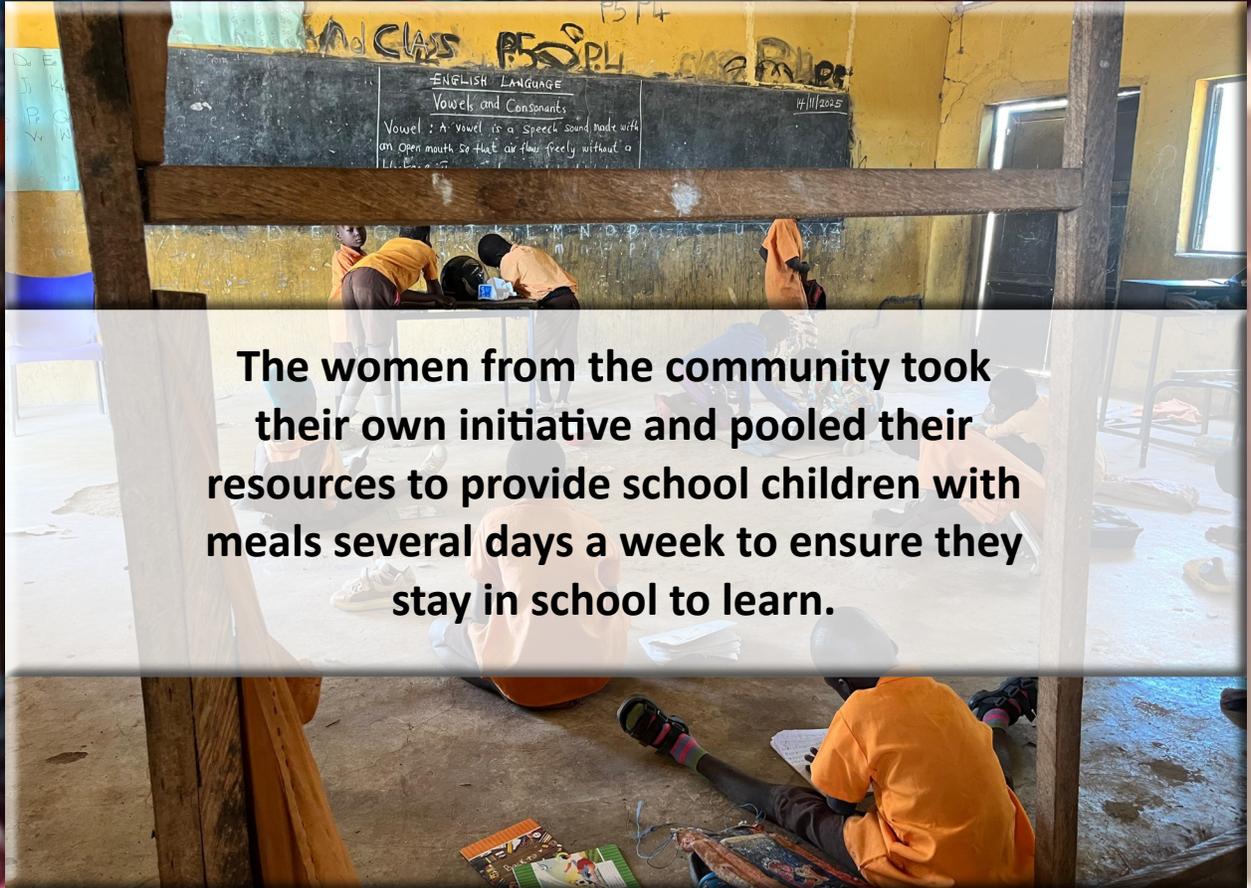


CHILD MARRIAGE

Faith &
Justice
Network

MISSION

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The women from the community took their own initiative and pooled their resources to provide school children with meals several days a week to ensure they stay in school to learn.



Girls Kicking Their Way Towards a Better Future

A closed school was reopened with over 350 students enrolled following AFJN and AFJN Ghana advocacy visits. In November, AFJN led sensitization on the realities of the harm of early and child marriage and domestic servitude; and the importance of girls education in several Ghanaian communities in Kuli, northern Ghana. There is a growing commitment to ending these practices (including the Kayayei phenomenon). To further support girls, soccer clubs were established to reduce social isolation; provide safe recreational spaces away from exploitative labor; and build confidence, leadership, and life skills. AFJN supplied jerseys and soccer balls. The initiative gained national attention through coverage by Ghana's TV3, helping raise awareness about the need for sustained educational support and community investment. AFJN observed a significant shift in community attitudes since engagement began three years ago. Today support for girls' education and participation in sports is strong.

In 2025, the women from the community took their own initiative and pooled their resources to provide school children with meals several days a week to ensure they stayed in school to continue their education. The youth mobilized to clean and restore the long-abandoned school building, went door to door to enroll children of school age, and those with some educational background volunteered to teach. There is now new energy towards education among the youth and within the community with over 350 pupils attending school. The soccer matches are providing the community with new spectator activities (the first of its kind). The community is being asked by others what are their best practices to have such a large impact on school enrollment.



Issues AFJN Addressed in 2025 in Africa

| Issue Areas | Countries | Participants | Activities |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|
| Accountability | Liberia (Gbarnga) | Diocese, Religious Leaders, Educators | Issued a report of corruption in the Diocese, identified targeted interventions and resource allocations |
| Vital Records | Cameroon (Ngaounder, Yagoua) | Local Diocese, Government Offices, Community Leaders, Families | Establishing Strategic Monitoring Committees, holding mobile courts, conducting surveys, reduced fees in one area |
| Peacebuilding | DRC | Musicians, Local leaders, Tribal Leaders, Community Members, Youth, Faith-Based Leaders, Chaplaincy Outreach | Launched multiple versions of the "Let us live together without tribalism" song including a children's version, held a peaceful coexistence concert, videos, public events, competition, articles, caravan |
| Land Grabbing Prevention | Ghana (Volta and Oti Regions); Sierra Leone (Baomahun) | Community Leaders, Religious Leaders, Community Members, Youth, FB Gold Representatives, Government Officials | Creation of a documentary for the 10-year anniversary our AFJN's work in the region in Ghana, community engagement meeting between stakeholders and company, article, report, media campaigns and rebroadcasts, town hall meetings, community meetings, follow-up reflections, land governance reforms advocacy |



“Our gold should not just shine in the markets abroad; it should shine in our schools, our hospitals, and in the eyes of our children.”

- Woman’s Leader, Valunia Chiefdom, Sierra Leone



Forging a Future in Gold: Mining in Sierra Leone

For more than two years, commitments made to the Baomahun community under the Baomahun Gold Project remained largely unmet, fueling frustration and deepening mistrust. In 2025 AFJN responded by launching the “Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges” initiative, marking the first-time representatives of FG Gold and the Baomahun community met face-to-face to address these concerns directly. This historic town hall created a long-overdue platform for open dialogue, bringing together more than 800 members of the Valunia Chiefdom to demand transparency, accountability, and inclusion in decisions impacting their lives. The Baomahun Gold Project, established through an agreement between FG Gold and the community, was intended to deliver shared benefits as Sierra Leone’s first large-scale commercial gold mine. However, community members reported displacement without adequate compensation, environmental degradation, contaminated water sources, unsafe roads for schoolchildren, and limited employment opportunities. By facilitating this unprecedented dialogue, AFJN helped shift the dynamic from exclusion to engagement. Community members were able to voice their concerns directly, while company representatives were given the opportunity to respond—setting a new standard for accountability in the extractive sector. The meeting resulted in the formation of a Joint Community-Company Dialogue Committee to monitor commitments and address grievances, as well as a Community Action Plan outlining shared priorities. Continued engagement offers a pathway toward more equitable outcomes, where the benefits of mining are shared and the dignity of the Baomahun community is upheld.



“Avevi is built on the strength of its land and resilience of its people.” - His Royal Highness Chief Togbui Bosoka III



Dignified Expulsion - Communities Standing Up to Predatory “Investors”

For more than a decade, AFJN has worked with communities in Ghana to combat land grabbing by raising awareness of predatory tactics and strengthening local capacity. In 2025, this advocacy contributed to two key interventions in Anfoe, where community members - supported by a local lawyer - successfully resisted misleading land deals. During negotiations in a luxury hotel, companies misrepresented binding contracts as simple memorandums of understanding while omitting critical terms, including the community’s asking price and their right to continue farming. When the community refused to sign, they and their lawyer were expelled, highlighting both the risks they face and the importance of legal literacy.



At an AFJN-led town hall in Avevi residents shared how poverty and limited infrastructure push communities toward risky land agreements that promise development. Weak oversight allows individuals to enter deals without broader consultation, putting entire communities at risk. As His Royal Highness Chief Togbui Bosoka III stated, “Avevi is built on the strength of its land and resilience of its people.”



A culmination of AFJN’s 10 years of advocacy on preventing land grabbing is captured in a recently launched 14-minute documentary on AFJN’s YouTube Channel, featuring voices of those directly impacted and highlighting efforts to protect land rights and community dignity.



Youth Sing for Peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Music transcends boundaries and is deeply rooted in the Congolese culture, making it a powerful medium for fostering resilience, healing, unity, and peacebuilding. The Unity Through Diversity Program's second year expanded by introducing several campaigns to harness the voice of children and youth. The first was the Children's Voices for Peace Contest featuring children from ages 5 to 17. Fifteen finalists were chosen to participate in the launch of the children's version of the "Let Us Live Together Without Tribalism" anthem. The finalists accepted the role of Youth Ambassadors for Peace and recorded their original songs of peace in a professional studio including "We are Siblings," "Let Us Love Each Other," and "I am Sorry, My Friends."

The second major campaign was the parish-wide concert with Saint Aloyse Catholic Church featuring 13 youth choirs with nearly 1000 singers on the International Day of Music. The Choirs specially wore T-shirts sharing the message of the anthem and was inline with the Congolese Bishops Conference's peace message read during the Mass. Local Protestant churches also opened their doors to the children to sing for peace.





New music videos featuring children's voices of the anthem are gaining popularity. Videos of the caravans and concerts are reaching thousands of viewers online. These songs carried by the innocent voices of children, have become powerful tools for inspiring peace, change, and healing. This model, which harnesses the power of music and youth engagement, is highly scalable and can be adapted to other communities and regions as an effective tool for promoting peace and social cohesion.





Song Lyrics from the Peace and Unity Contest

“We are Siblings”

Where has love gone?
 Our Ancestors once lived in love.
 Where has unity gone?
 They lived together as one.
 Love is the pillar of peace.
 Unity is the foundation of harmony.
 Love-and let me love you.
 A neighbor is a relative.

Refrain: We are siblings,
 Even if we speak different languages.
 Even if we come from different places.
 Even if we belong to different ethnicities -
 We are still one family.

The greatest commandment God gave us is love.
 How can you love God,
 If you do not love the neighbor you see?
 We are one.
 We share the same blood.
 We are children of one Father.
 Let us not hate each other.

“Let Us Love Each Other”

Why has love grown cold between us?
 Why has kindness disappeared?

Why do we discriminate and kill each other,
 Though we are all children of the same
 Father?
 Let us end arrogance.
 What unites us is far greater
 than what divides us.
 Let us love one another -
 Because we are one.

“I am Sorry, My Friends”

I am sorry, My friends, I am truly sorry.
 Why has tribalism succeeded in dividing us?
 Why has regionalism torn us apart?
 Why has our beautiful linguistic diversity
 become a wall between us?
 Back then, in the struggle for independence,
 We stood together - Morning, noon, and
 night.
 Muluba, Mukongo, Muswahili, Mungala -
 We were united.
 It was through unity that we won our
 freedom.
 But today, tribalism has weakened us.
 Today, war has torn us apart.
 No, No to war!
 Stop, Stop tribalism!

Testimonies from Africa



◦ “Our drinking wells once quenched thirst, now they poison our lives.” - Community Advocate, Valunia Chiefdom, Sierra Leone

◦ “If you see a child being taken away for work, ask questions. We must protect our own.” - Rev. S. N. Ewah, Nigeria

◦ “This meeting marks a pivotal moment [...] to protect vulnerable children in our communities [...] by adopting these systems, we can ensure accountability and foster a safer environment for our youth.” - Traditional Ruler, January 24, 2025, Nigeria



◦ “AFJN made us realize that we are powerful. We now speak for children who cannot speak for themselves.” - AFJN Youth Advocate, Nigeria

◦ “I never knew it was dangerous. Nobody had ever explained the risks to me. Today I understand that my daughter belongs in school – not in someone’s house.” - Sensitization Participant Ebonyi State, Nigeria



◦ “We don’t reject investors. We reject injustice.” - Landholding Family, Valunia Chiefdom, Sierra Leone



◦ “This project gave us the strength to engage communities boldly. We now have evidence, not just passion.” - Mrs. Elizabeth Alo, Nigeria

◦ “The MOU changed everything. As a church, we now monitor our members, protect our children, and report cases. We preach it from the pulpit.” - Rev. S. N. Ewah, Nigeria

◦ “They call us unskilled, but no one was born knowing how to mine. Give us a chance to learn.” - Youth Leader, Baomahun Town, Sierra Leone



Media

IVC Capital Corps Connector

The Nigerian Voice (Nigeria)

Asiwaju Media (Nigeria)

Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (Uganda)

The Guardian

Daily Nigerian (Nigeria)

Business Day (Nigeria)

The Calabash Newspaper (Sierra Leone)

The Scoper Media (Nigeria)

Primer Media Group, Ltd. (Sierra Leone)

Radio Nigeria (Nigeria)

Zion News TV (DRC)

EVE24 TV (Ghana)

Ghana Webbers (Ghana)

Amenuveve Radio 105.3 (Ghana)

My Joy Online (Ghana)

Adom Online (Ghana)

Global Sisters Report

Background Briefing with Ian Masters

Africa Faith and Justice Network Nigeria

National Catholic Reporter

Africa Faith and Justice Network Ghana

Apex News Exclusive (Nigeria)

The Guardian Nigeria (Nigeria)

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