

Success Stories

Name:

Auwalu Musa

Profile:

Auwalu is a former convict who is now a tailor in Jigawa State. He served 9 years in prison.

Story so Far:

Auwalu Musa served nine years in Gumel prison for theft. Whilst there he was able to learn the skill of tailoring at a skills acquisition centre. This resonated with him as his father had been a tailor but Auwalu had not followed the same path.

On his release from prison, Auwalu initially worked as a farm labourer to earn the money to purchase a sewing machine. Once he had made that purchase he was quickly able to establish himself as a competent tailor in his village and he now makes a good living from tailoring. Auwalu appreciated the help provided to him by the NPS as

he feels that his life now has meaning. Without his skills as a tailor he may have ended up back in prison. He said

“ I am a better person now, people that used to keep their distance from me now embrace me ”



Auwalu has stayed in touch with the staff and other inmates at Gumel prison and sometimes contracts them to carry out embroidery work on some of his products as he does not have an embroidery machine of his own.

Name:

Chino Obiagwu

Profile:

Chair, National Working Group on Criminal Justice Administration

Story So Far:

Chino revealed that the passage and eventual signing of the ACJ Bill into law has shown that Nigeria is willing to discard outdated and redundant criminal justice administration practices and embrace contemporary practices that speed up processes and treat persons with dignity.

He said,

“ The impact of this new legal regime will be monumental. The current challenge is to ensure its implementation and replication in all states of the Federation. ”

What happens next?

The Justice for All programme will continue its support to the criminal justice system across Nigeria.



Our impact reports capture the positive changes brought about by our activities.

For more information visit: www.j4a-nigeria.org

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Cross-Sector Co-ordination

CIP 4.1

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Enhancing co-ordination, planning and joint working in the justice sector

Cross-sector co-ordination, planning and joint working in the justice sector is not commonplace and where it does occur is largely ad hoc and unstructured. A more structured approach to co-ordination and joint working has the potential to make a significant impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of individual justice sector processes and the sector as a whole.

The Justice for All Programme supports selected coordination groups at both state and federal levels, to lead reform processes. Work in this area encourages the establishment of Justice Sector Reform Teams (JSRTs) which provide the platform for a sector-wide approach to reforms in the justice

sector, incorporating both the demand and supply sides. The Programme also supports groups formed to advance specific thematic issues. For instance J4A has supported the Legislative Advocacy Coalition on Violence Against Women (LACVAW) on the advocacy for the passage and signing into law of the Violence

Against Persons Prohibition Bill (VAPP) and the Human Rights Agenda Network (HRAN) which advocated for the passage of the Administration of Criminal Justice Bill (ACJ) at the federal level and its replication across several states.



Jigawa State Justice Sector and Law Reform Commission Enabling a Crime Free Society

Jigawa State Re-integrating Ex-Convicts into Society

A Jigawa State Justice Sector and Law Reform Commission (JSLRC) initiative aimed at helping to reintegrate former inmates into society is also assisting to reduce the re-offending rate in the state.

The JSLRC-led project that began in 2013 saw the revival of skills acquisition centres for inmates in three prisons in Jigawa State. The centres were equipped by the JSLRC to provide training to inmates in tailoring, carpentry and electrical skills. By April 2014 a total of 52 inmates had benefitted in Gumel and Hadejia prisons and the Kafin-Hausa reform school.

Inmates not only acquire technical skills but are also able to sell their products and use the proceeds to buy essentials such as working materials to make more things or they receive the proceeds on their release.

According to the officer in charge of Gumel prison, none of those trained had been returned on further charges since their release. He added that

“giving convicts an opportunity to develop skills helps in maintaining peace and order within the prisons and gives hope to the inmates that they can go back to being normal citizens after their release”.

The Nigerian Prisons Service, Deputy Controller of Prisons (Admin) said, **“Re-offending has reduced to next to nothing in the recent past”** adding that the skills centres are an important part of this.

The JSLRC are currently engaging with the Ministry for Economic Empowerment on the possibility of providing ‘seed money’ to trained inmates on their release to enable them to start a business.

The JSLRC is a Justice Sector Reform Team supported by the Justice for All programme

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Highlights of Achievements

1. Each JSRT has agreed to tackle an average of more than 10 justice sector initiatives
2. By the end of June 2015, 91 of the 149 agreed initiatives are delivering results
3. The Administration of Criminal Justice Bill has been passed into law
4. The Chief Judge of Cross River State has replicated the J4A supported Justice Sector Reform Team (JSRT) initiative in the state
5. Family Court rules have been signed by the Chief Judge of FCT. It will regulate the enforcement of the Child Rights Act.
6. Kano State signs into law tougher punishment for rape related offences to deter perpetrators

Highlights on Gender

1. Kano JSRT and Coalition Against Rape and Violence carry out public sensitization on rape
2. A dedicated telephone hotline has been provided to receive reports and calls from rape victims and relatives. It will be used to refer clients to the police, hospitals and other institutions that provide support to rape victims
3. Violence Against Persons Prohibition Bill passed into law

FCT Chief Judge Signs Family Court Rules

The Chief Judge of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Justice Ishaq Bello, has signed the family court rules, which will regulate the enforcement of the Child Rights Act within the FCT. This follows the drafting of the rules and advocacy for its implementation, which was undertaken by the Federal Justice Sector Reform Coordinating Committee (FJSRCC) with support from the J4A programme.

The rules will be applied by family courts in Abuja during the hearing and determination of cases arising from the provisions of the Childs Rights Act.

The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs has also appointed assessors who will sit alongside judicial officers in the family courts to provide advice on the best interests of the child in the determination of issues before the courts.

The FJSRCC with J4A support also organised sensitization workshops for stakeholders involved in the implementation of the law. These include judges, magistrates, lawyers, CSOs, Nigerian Prisons officials, staff of NAP TIP and other agencies, including the Social Services Secretariat of the FCT.



“Children have always been an important part of our society and creating a special and dedicated system of Justice Administration for them was born out of the understanding that they are relatively different from adults and therefore, need special care and protection against the harshness of the normal court process.”

Hon Justice Ishaq Bello, Chief Judge of the FCT

The Violence against Persons Prohibition Bill signed into Law

The former President, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan signed the Violence against Persons Prohibition Bill into law on 25th May 2015. The new Act aims to eliminate violence in private and public life, prohibit all forms of violence against persons, provide maximum protection and effective remedies for victims and punish offenders.

The Bill is the result of a 14-year-long process of activism in civil society that began at a legislative advocacy workshop on violence against women in 2001 in Abuja. At the end of the workshop, participants agreed to form a coalition – the Legislative Advocacy Coalition against Violence Against Women (LACVAW) – to pursue the goal of pushing for a national Bill prohibiting violence against women. The content of the Bill is home grown, reflecting the realities of violence in Nigeria today. It also incorporates provisions based on Nigeria’s commitment to international

human rights principles.

First presented to the House of Representatives in May 2002, the Bill on Violence against Women became a Bill on Violence against Persons in 2008 when it was harmonised with 8 other Bills on gender based violence in the National Assembly.

Under the newly enacted law, the following are all offences: spousal battery (s.19); forceful ejection from home (s.9); forced financial dependence or economic abuse (s.12); harmful widowhood practices (s.15); female circumcision or genital mutilation (s.6); harmful traditional practices (s.20); substance attacks (s.21); political violence (s.23) and violence by state actors (s.24). Victims of violence are entitled to comprehensive medical, psychological, social and legal assistance by accredited service providers and government agencies. It stipulates that their identities must be protected during court cases.

The Justice for All Programme supported civil society groups through the Human Rights Agenda Network (HRAN) to attend and make presentations at the public hearings organised by both Houses of

Parliament. Logistical support and resources were also provided for both the Legislative Advocacy Coalition on Violence against Women (LACVAW) and the Gender Technical Unit of the National Assembly (GTU) in the process leading to the harmonisation of the two versions of the Bill passed by the National Assembly.

“The length of time it has taken LACVAW to get this far is an indication of how deeply violence against women is tolerated in the society. Whilst a new law prohibiting violence is not sufficient to change this situation, it is necessary to send a message that the state accepts its responsibility to ensure that impunity for such action no longer prevails.”

Dr. Charmaine Pereira
Chair LACVAW Working Group



Law on rape reformed to provide for strong penalties for perpetrators

The Kano State Justice Sector Reform Team (KJSRT), a J4A supported initiative is leading the reform on sexual/gender based violence laws in the state.

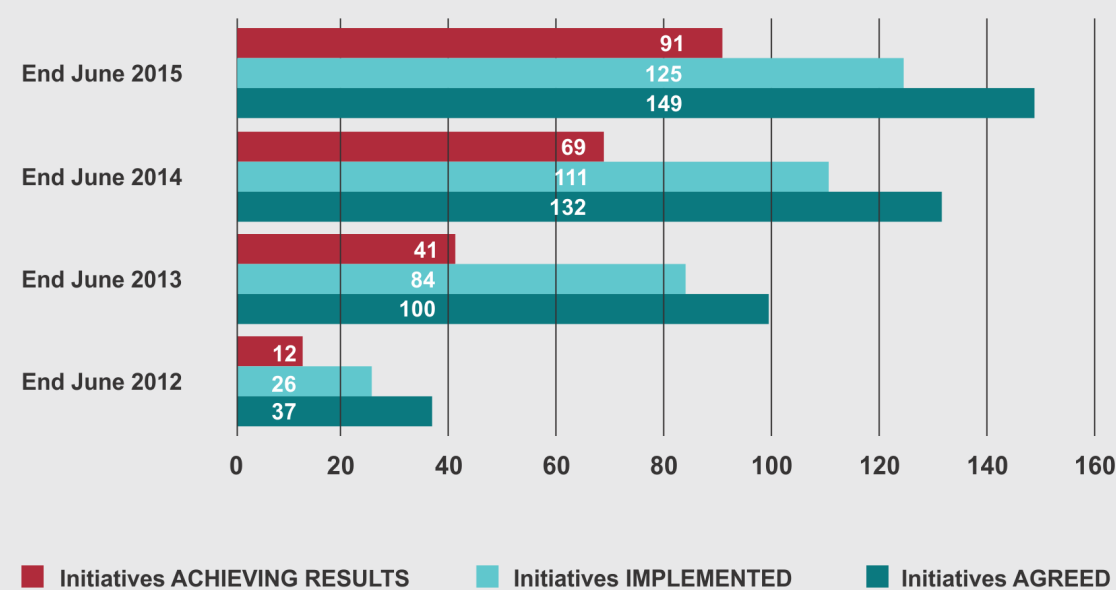
The KJSRT has set out several initiatives to address the issue and commissioned a review of the relevant provisions of the Penal Code. One of their aims is to increase the punishment for rape related offences to serve as a deterrent to perpetrators. Following the review and legislative advocacy, the Kano State House of Assembly passed the draft amendment bill into law and

increased the punishment for rape on conviction from two to fourteen years imprisonment without an option of a fine. The law was signed into law by the Executive Governor of the state, Dr. Rabiu Kwankwaso before he ended his tenure.

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Getting Results

Total JSRT Initiatives Agreed, Implemented and Achieving Results (Cumulated)



JSRT Data, 2011 - 2015

Administration of Criminal Justice Bill becomes Law

The Justice for All programme under its Cross Sector Coordination component has been providing support to various groups to enable the passage of the Administration of Criminal Justice (ACJ) Bill. The Bill, which has been pending at the National Assembly for a decade was signed into law by the former President, Goodluck Jonathan before his administration came to an end on May 29th, 2015.

Besides convening a meeting of CSOs to discuss and collate civil society input and participate in public hearings, J4A also provided support to the Technical Committee of the Panel on the Implementation of Justice Reform (PIJR). The committee articulated the submissions of stakeholders following public hearings in both Houses of the National Assembly.

The ACJ Bill is aimed at addressing the numerous challenges facing the criminal justice system in the country. These include the undue delays in the progression of cases from investigation, prosecution and adjudication; inconsistent regulations for the bail of suspects and the indefinite remand of suspects by lower courts for lack of jurisdiction. This has contributed immensely to the high number of awaiting trial prisoners that accounts for more than 70% of Nigeria's prison

population.

Innovations introduced by the Bill to address these problems include the establishment of time limits for the remand of suspects by lower courts; the introduction of alternatives to custodial prison sentences like community service and probation and the licensing of bail bondspersons, whose responsibility it will be to perfect bail conditions when granted by the courts.

The J4A Programme has already commenced the dissemination of the Act to relevant stakeholders and is in the process of awarding a grant to support the development of templates and manuals as required for the implementation of the Act in the FCT. Advocacy for the replication of the Act in other states of the federation continues.

Cross River State Inaugurates a Justice Sector Reform Team and Successfully Implements Two Agreed Initiatives

Cross River State has joined the ranks of states that have established a justice sector reform team to drive justice sector reforms in the state. This follows the formal inauguration of the team by the Chief Judge of the state, Justice Okoi Ikpi Itam on April 28, 2015.

Justice Itam attended the last JSRT Network Conference Meeting in November 2014 as an observer and

following presentations made by existing teams decided that there was need to replicate the J4A initiative in Cross River State. After the inauguration, the J4A programme facilitated a two-day retreat for the team to develop project management skills, promote joint working and develop priorities for the next year.

Four initiatives were agreed by the reform team out of which two have been successfully implemented. The two successful initiatives relate to the advocacy for the signing into law two justice sector bills which had been passed by the State House of Assembly but had not been signed by the Governor as required by law. The

law establishing a Multi-Door Courthouse and a law creating a Customary Court of Appeal for the state were both signed into law following intensive advocacy carried out by the team.

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