

REPORT ON ONE-DAY NEW TACTICS SYMPOSIUM HELD IN KADUNA, NIGERIA BY LEAGUE OF DEMOCRATIC WOMEN (LEADS NIGERIA) ON THURSDAY 16H DECEMBER 2004 AT Y.A. AHMED HOUSE.

About League of Democratic Women (LEADS NIGERIA)

The League of Democratic Women is a non governmental human rights and pro-democracy organization founded in Kaduna in 1996. Its aims and objectives include amongst others to create legal awareness among Northern Nigerian women, aid in the strengthening of laws and institutions that protect women and children's rights, encourage female education in Northern Nigeria, provide legal aid and assistance to victims of human rights violation, lobby for the repeal or abrogation of customary law and practices that discriminate against women, organize seminars, workshops and conferences on women and children's rights issues as well as conduct research and publish reports on women's rights issues.

Project Objectives

The symposium was to among other things and within the limit of the funds

- Introduce local activists to the New Tactics Project,
- Help build a network of activists/ organizations in Kaduna State who would be sharing tactics and other emerging trends for the advancement of human rights.
- Share human rights tactics with other participants around specific categories of human rights abuses and interventions.
- Provide linkages on the different thematic issues.

Target beneficiaries

In all, 25 organizations were invited to the symposium cutting across different human rights thematic areas. 22 participants drawn from 18 organizations in Kaduna Town/ State attended the symposium. The areas included general human rights, women & gender, HIV/AIDS, Children's rights, minority rights

The organizations that were in attendance included Human Rights Monitor, Center for Research, Development and Advocacy, Interfaith Mediation Center, Mothers Welfare Group, Gender Action Team, The Abrahamic Group, Civil Society Group Against Aids, Human Values Proactive, CARE- NGO, Abantu for Development, Civil Liberties Organization, Women in Nigeria, Strategic Empowerment and Mediation Center, Connecting Gender for Development, Legal Watch and Mother and Child Health Care.

Project Outcomes

Ms. Rebecca Sako- John, a participant at the International Symposium in welcoming participants to the symposium introduced the New Tactics Project to the participants. Relevant extracts Resource materials from the International Symposium were shared to participants. Such resources included the web address of the New Tactics in Human Rights Project. The note books, New Tactics in Human Rights; A resource for practitioners and others brought back from the Symposium were passed round for participants to peruse and extract relevant information relating to contact etc.

In setting the tone for the symposium, a short presentation was done on what is a tactic? The presentation was participatory as participants brainstormed on the difference between a tactic and a strategy. Many participants admitted that what they had been thinking to be a strategy was really a tactic, as they never really thought of it as a tactic. The discussions drew out the ways by which an organization would reach in devising a tactic. It was agreed that what we were doing with this symposium was long over due. This is understandable as much of the efforts of advocates hitherto were concentrated on getting the military out of power and a civilian regime entrenched. Now that we have reached that stage, many civil society organizations are yet to adapt appropriate tactics in dealing with the emerging spate of human rights violations, which are of a different kind and require a different approach. Sharing tactics with other practitioners would provide practitioners with diverse options to adopt and use subject to individual peculiar circumstances.

It was therefore resolved that human rights organizations in Kaduna State must pool together their different resources and through regular meetings, build the capacities of staff/ volunteers on human rights theological knowledge and trends. Tuesday 11th January was therefore fixed to hold the first of such meeting wherein more organizations would be invited.

After clearing the air on the different concepts, participants each made a presentation on one tactic their organization had or is using. The organization used the format in the Workbook wherein tactics were presented according to the 4 categories as per page 20 of the workbook.

Participating organizations presented a tactic each they had used successfully providing participants an opportunity.

Participants shared with each other the following tactics.

*** Preventive tactics in getting vital information into the hands of those who can prevent human rights abuse.**

- Through thorough investigation and information gathering vital information to the human rights community, Human Rights Monitor was able to counter false information covering up extra judicial killings of suspected demonstrators by the Police in Kaduna. The organization stressed the importance of cultivating a good working relationship with relevant stakeholders particularly the law enforcement agencies who at appropriate times could divulge confidential information. In order to prevent future human rights abuses, practitioners were asked to ensure that the information gathered were credible and sourced from all sides.
- **Gender Action Team** shared how they provided information on the negative effects of harmful traditional practices through road shows and distribution of IEC materials in areas where the practices are well entrenched in North Western Nigeria. The harmful practices include early marriage and its attendant problems like early pregnancy VVF, forced marriages, female genital mutilation, hot water

bathes for nursing mothers, multiple sex partners, etc. Most of the people have cited religious and cultural reasons for practicing some of these harmful traits while overlooking their effects on victims.

- **The Abrahamic Group** is engaged in providing spiritual approach to HIV/AIDS preventive measures through Christian ministration, prayers and counseling. At sessions, they use religious teachings on fidelity, spiritual uprightness to aid prevention of transmission of HIV/AIDS through sex. The group goes to schools and form clubs and offer prayers for PLWHA to receive divine healing.

* **Seeking redress for human rights abuses-**

- Litigating against police impunity in extra- judicial killings to obtain justice and compensation for families of victims. In addition to providing vital information, Human Rights Monitors has taken up litigation against public officers who have violated the rights of citizens in the extra judicial killings of detainees. After giving minute details of the steps the organization took in getting their facts, participants were asked to be able to weigh when to compromise and to mobilize necessary stakeholders on an issue as it enhances one's negotiation powers. It was stressed that human rights activists would encounter problems if they are too secretive and do not share information.
- Mobilizing employees to picket in front of office to force employers to regularize employment of staff that would otherwise have been kept on contract basis and disposed of without due process. The Nigerian Labour Congress uses picketing at factories, companies to redress human rights abuses.

* **Strengthening organizations and organizational staff/ members.**

- Abantu for Development and Centre for Development Research and Advocacy spoke on how they had been involved in strengthening organizational capacities through the conduct of training and capacity building of individuals. In addition to capacity building, the organizations conducts research and disseminate information including publishing policies of government to the people.
- The Nigerian Labour Organization and Civil Liberties Organization have been involved in the Conscientization of the labor sector on workers rights and getting management to be alife to needs of labour.

* **Building collaborations.**

- The Interfaith Mediation Centre was set up to foster religious tolerance amongst Christians and Muslims in Kaduna following the series of religious clashes in the State since 1987. The Centre also known as the Christian Muslim Dialogue Forum has expanded its works to other parts of Northern Nigerian and are part of the reconciliation efforts in Plateau State following a spate of ethnic and religious crisis.

As part of their efforts in fostering religious harmony, the Organization is always represented at seminars and other activities by two members (a Christian and a Muslim). In their presentation, the Interfaith Mediation Center spoke of how they had been able to build the confidence of people from the two religious groups in coming together to chart a way forward in the State. One of the outputs of their work is the signing of a peace accord by representatives of the religious groups. The Civil Society Network on HIV/ AIDs in Nigeria (CISNHAN) is a network that works through bringing together Civil Society Organizations in developing strategies to fight HIV/AIDS. Participants were told of how CISHNAN has been collaborating with the National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA) and State Action Committee on AIDS.

Another organization that aids collaboration in human rights work is SEMA. The Agency identifies stakeholders and sensitizes them to facilitate communication as one of the ways to prevent conflict.

***Restorative tactics,**

Under this category, participants shared how they were able to build human rights culture and the use of persuasion tactics through traditional and religious leaders to talk to community members. Women in Nigeria Kaduna Chapter spoke on one of her Projects on Political Participation to create more spaces for women in 8 Local Government Areas in Kaduna and Katsina State. They identified persons whom they could use in each community and mobilized them. These people were then use to talk to the community members who were more receptive to one of their own than to strangers.

Following up on the agreement to enhance individual and organizational capacities of human rights activists, a meeting was held on Tuesday 11th January 2005. One of the outcomes of the meeting was the arrangement for the commencement of training for organizational managers to be followed by training for organizational staff. In the absence of any funding for the program, interested participants would be paying a token sum to cover administrative costs for the organization of the training sessions. To this end, participants with the relevant expertise on identified areas volunteered to facilitate the trainings as appears below: -

DATES	TIME	MODULES	FACILITATORS
February 23, 2005	10.00 a.m – 3 p.m	New Trends in Human Rights practice	Festus Okoye Esq. Ms. Ngukwase Surma
March 9, 2005	10.00 a.m – 3 p.m.	Research methodology	Hussaini Abdu
March 23, 2005	10.00 a.m – 3 p.m	Organizational Development	Mrs. M. Agera

After these series of training sessions for management staff, another set is being arranged for staff while funds would be sourced through individual organizations to cover

expenses for the training. It is hoped that this would aid in expanding exchange of tactics and in gathering data on tactics being applied around the State and region pending when a National Symposium would be convened.

Assessment of project activity

- Over 18 organizations introduced to the New Tactics Project. These organizations have visited the website of the Project and signified intention of signing on to share their tactics.
- 16 Tactics shared by participants, issues clarified.
- Collaboration, networking strengthened.
- Follow up capacity building training to commence soon. More activists brought on board.