



**NIGERIAN CONCERNED GROUP FOR ENVIRONMENT,
POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

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Attn: Amanda Ottoman
Center for victims of torture
Minnapolis USA

SUBMISSION OF REPORT

I hereby submit the report of the interactive session held on the 15th of December 2004 as agreed in the micro grants approval.

Also find attached the minutes of the session as recorded by the Rapporteur. Copies of the poster and receipts will be sent later by surface mail.

Please confirm receipt of these documents.

Thanks.

Yours sincerely,

Chinyere Elendu

Report on the interactive session held by Chinyere Elendu of Nigerian concerned group for environment, population, and development. (N-COGEP-D).

On the 15th of December 2004, an interactive session on the ***New Tactics in Human Rights Project*** was held at our office at 57 Njiribeako street Owerri, Imo-state, Nigeria.

This was a sequel to my participation at the symposium in Ankara Turkey. It was a session that involved information sharing on lessons learnt at the symposium and brainstorming by participants drawn from a network of NGOs in Imo-state Nigeria called FINGO (Forum for Imo NGOs).

With the support from the center for victims of torture through the micro grant, our organization, Nigerian concerned group for environment, population, and development (N-COGEP-D) was able to carry out this activity to the benefit of other organizations in our region.

During the session, I shared my experiences at the symposium and contents of the five workshops I participated in at the symposium which were

- (a) Workshop 1: Accompaniment for Victims as They Share Their Stories
- (b) Workshop ii: Creating Community Access to Justice
- (c) Workshop iii: Training Peer Counselors
- (d) Workshop iv: Using Cultural Resources To Build Awareness and to Inspire Action;
- (e) Workshop v; Investing in Strategy Building;

Materials used and distributed at the meeting were

- (a) Photocopies of some of the new tactics in human rights notebook series
- (b) Posters in local language on Violence Against Women
- (c) References were also made to the new tactics manual and copies of relevant pages made available to participants.

During the session, poster on Violence Against Women in local language (Igbo) was presented to the participants and it is interesting to note that some of the pictorial representations sparked off arguments amongst the participants who had different views on these violations.

Amongst all the scenarios x-rayed by the poster, two were identified as been rampant in all the traditional Igbo communities where these organizations work and they are **widowhood practices and wife beating**.

Widowhood practices- In Africa in general and Nigeria (Igbo speaking) in particular, the death of male spouse automatically puts the woman under the searchlight as a suspect because in local parlance, no man dies naturally. The woman has to prove her innocence beyond reasonable doubt and this process could lead to activities such as taking an oath before the village shrine, drinking water that had been used to wash the corpse of the dead man, wearing clothes smeared with locally prepared food flavouring called 'Ogiri' which has a terribly offensive smell, shaving of all hairs including pubic hairs, being flogged by masquerade, waking up early and screaming and crying uncontrollable at the top of her voice etc.

Wife Beating - is another issue that featured prominently in the session. In many communities, women and children are usually categorized together so if children can be flogged and chastised, why not women? So many women get beaten and in some cases defaced by their spouses and all society does is to

'let sleeping dogs lie'. As it were, no body wants to 'rock the boat' even when a complaint is made to either law enforcement agents or the traditional peace keepers, the woman will be sent back to sort out her problems with her husband. They will advice her to go and be 'submissive' to her husband and being beaten is one of the ways to show 'submission'.

All these were issues discussed at the session.

The high point of the meeting was the introduction of a **new tactic** which none of the participants had ever practiced **-tactical mapping**.

The participants were divided into two groups where they tried to establish the links between relationships that are affected or that reinforce these violations. (Please find attached the outcome of this exercise.)

In conclusion, the session was a really interesting gathering for the participants as it afforded them the opportunity to discuss issues and tactics that could help them in their work as social workers and also learn a new tactic that gives them a first hand view of relationships that could be involved in any human rights issue.

The participants also requested that a comprehensive training on tactical mapping should be done for NGOs in our region to better equip them on tools that can be employed to advance human rights and achieve zero level abuse in our communities.

They also expressed their gratitude to the center for sponsoring the session.

Chinyere Elendu

N-COGEP-D

Dec 2004

**MINUTES OF AN INTERACTIVE SESSION/WORKSHOP HELD ON 15TH
DEC, 2004 AT THE FORUM FOR IMO NGOS (FINGO)
SECRETARIAT, OWERRI, IMO STATE, NIGERIA AS A FOLLOW-
UP TO AN INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON 'NEW TACTICS IN
HUMAN RIGHTS' HELD IN TURKEY SEPTEMBER 29th-
October 2, 2004 ATTENDED BY CHINYERE ELENDU.**

Participants at the one day workshop were drawn from heads and representatives of non- governmental organizations, who are members of the networking forum known as Forum for Imo non-governmental organizations (FINGO). They include;

1. Lady Ugo Okorie - Tranworld charities
2. Anyanwu Jovita - AFRIGEHD
3. Ijeoma Sam-Kamange - Forward Africa
4. okeke Felicia - Rural Health Foundation (RHF)
5. Orisakwe Jacinta - Women in health Development (WIHD)
6. Richards Nzeocha -Imo Self Help Organization (ISHO)
7. George Udoha - Life Source Initiative (LISI)
8. Oleru Harrienth - Women in Nigeria (WIN)
9. Ekewuba B.O. - Rural Life Improvement Foundation
10. Akaneme Oby - Community and Youth development
Initiatives(CYDI)
11. Augustina Egbufor -Imo Youth Network Programme
(IYNP)
12. Rose C. Nwigwe (MRS) - FEHD Foundation
13. Kennedy Ofurum - Community Health Development and Advisory
Trust (COHDAT)
14. Rose Nwaogwugwu -Natural Resources and Development
Motivators (NARDEM)

15. Lady Claribel Okpara - Nigerian Concerned Group for Environment, Population and Development (N-COGEP-D)

Opening session-

The workshop session started at about 12:15 am with an opening prayer said by Lady Ugo Okorie.

The workshop Convener/ Resource person- Chinyere Elendu intimated the participants on the topic/activities marked for the day, which she outlined as

- -Introductions and brief on activities by participants;
- ground rules;
- expectations from participants;
- presentation and review of symposia lessons and materials;
- Discussions and interaction;
- Lunch; Group exercise/ presentations;
- photographs;
- and way forward.

A Rappoteur was appointed.

The highlights were followed by formal introductions and brief recollections of current activities by NGO representatives present. After all preambles, the interactive session on the Turkey symposium followed. The Turkey conference was captioned ***NEW TACTICS IN HUMAN RIGHTS'***

Workshop proper-

Chinyere Elendu introduced the organization and the coordinators of the project as Center for Victims of Torture, USA. She directed participants' attention to specific pages on the New Tactics Manual where the website and emails of the center could be found.

Next was the spelling out of workshop expectations by participants. To which participants generally outlined:

- identification of human rights abuses,
- and the strategies for eradication

as the summary of their expectations.

The information-sharing segment facilitated by the convener followed. She enumerated some of the main objectives of the symposium and proceeded to share her experiences and lessons learnt at the five sessions of the workshop she participated in. Firstly, there was a brain storming session where participants gave varying definitions of their understanding of **tactics** and **human rights**. Terminologies outlined were strategy, violence, abuse, deprivation etc.

An overview of the new tactics project was given where terms like **strategy** and **tactics** were explained to the participants. References were made to the new tactics manuals. Mrs. Elendu introduced 3 topical issues as essential steps in the management of human rights project thus;

STRATEGY: this defines what is important to do and involves the gathering of many decisions working towards a goal. She said a sound strategy incorporates;

(a) Selection of key objectives; which in this context involves

- (i) The creation of awareness on violence against women.
- (ii) The eradication of violence against women.

(b) Constituency and resources; -she said that this step reviews where the campaign is to be extended to, what the available resources are, what and who to be involved, and what and what will be needed for maximum results.

She further stated that an ideal result is achieved when the activist first understands his/her adversary, understands him/herself (his/her strength and weaknesses and know the terrain in which work will be executed.

(c) **Tactics:** - this is defined as a specific or concrete action taken to affect a given situation. It is part of the larger strategy. Tactics involves the training systems for new leadership and that helps to determine strategy; to bear effectively on different targets, appeal to different constituencies, create flexibility, surprises and teaches us how to engage in the world.

After the overview, the convener proceeded to sharing lessons learnt at the five workshops she participated in and how some of these tactics can be applied into the various areas of our work in this part of the country.

WORKSHOP 1: ACCOMPANIMENT FOR VICTIMS AS THEY SHARE THEIR STORIES:

The convener gave a brief overview of this tactic as presented by resource persons at the symposium especially by the group from Nigeria- BAOBAB FOR WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS. She tried to show its applicability to our work as social workers.

She cited some of the cases encountered at the local communities like rape, sexual harassment and stressed on the need to lead and show support (by physical presence) to victims as they take centre stage where they express and expose their past and painful experiences, share hidden anxieties and sorrows. She said that such support give victims a sense of security. She emphasized the need for documentation on human rights abuses meant to be addressed at human rights tribunals. Mr. George Udoha contributed his experiences on the mock tribunal sittings on violation of Rights of Women in Calabar (2002) and the Violation of Reproductive Health Rights in Enugu (Dec.2004).

WORKSHOP II; CREATING COMMUNITY ACCESS TO JUSTICE;

The facilitator said that this involves creative adaptations and mechanisms at the community level that helps promote access to justice and rights. She likened this to the concept of ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) which is widely

practiced in our local communities and which involves using available human resources within the community and generally accepted by the community, to manage crisis. This is, in essence, providing alternatives to the court system which has a lot of bottleneck bureaucracy lining its trail. She wants participants to consider how this applies to our work on human rights promotion.

WORKSHOP III; TRAINING PEER COUNSELLORS;

Mrs. Elendu said that the ever increasing social upheavals in the world and subsequent negative implications on the society has necessitated the excessive demand for services beyond the capacity of professionals in various fields of service rendering. And for this, more and more support personnel are needed and trained. She said that such strategies have contributed to significant social services efficiency in most cases that are notable in the NGO world. She assigned participants to consider how this applies to their work on HIV/AIDS programme.

WORKSHOP IV; USING CULTURAL RESOURCES TO BUILD AWARENESS AND TO INSPIRE ACTION;

The convener first of all asked participants to enumerate the cultural resources that abound in the local communities where we work. Participants cited drama, dance, oral poetry, storytelling, moonlight activities etc. She pointed out that due to cultural inhibitions in Nigeria especially in igbo land, some issues of violence and human rights abuses are usually difficult to be discussed or brought to the consciousness of the public but through the use of this tactic, the silence can be broken and the violations publicized through such cultural avenues. These could be used to raise awareness and inspire action.

WORKSHOP V; INVESTING IN SYTRATEGY BUILDING;

She said this involves the application of advocacy and other legal means to effect positive changes with regards to human rights abuses. She said certain strategic constitutional laws were used to build legal cases against rights abusers.

After this segment, there was a question and answer session.

One of the participants, Lady Ugo Okorie observed that this tactics were not new to them but wanted to know how they can be further utilized within our own cultural framework. Participants gave different answers and suggestions. At this juncture, photocopies of some of *the new tactics notebook* series were given to the participants and a poster on violence against women translated to local language was also distributed. The participants identified two scenarios (widowhood practices and wife beating) in the poster as very rampant in all the communities where we worked.

The convener further elaborated on violence against women, which she defined as all abuses on women, and these abuses amount to torture. She defined torture as an act of intimidation and suppression and in most cases involves the infliction of physical/ emotional injuries on the victim, particularly in local communities where silent approval is given to these issues. Participants further defined torture as suppression, excessive punishment, battery, harassment, starvation and deprivation. The list was endless.

Another participant Mrs Rose Nwigwe also observed that some of this tactics weren't new to us but what is new is the realization that some seemingly silent tactics that we have been adopting in our various engagements were really been practiced in other parts of the world but unfortunately, we have not been able to document these tactics.

GROUP WORK:-

The highlight of the meeting was the introduction by the convener of a **new tactic** she learnt which none of the participants had ever practiced -**tactical mapping**. This she explained to be a graphic representation of relationships that affect any given human rights issue.

The convener explained the concept of mapping which she said social

development experts devised as an excellent tool for effective human rights development projects. Participants were divided into two syndicate groups for the exercise based on the two scenarios identified earlier by participants from the poster. -Widowhood practices and wife beating.

GROUP PRESENTATION:-

Group A's presentation was done by the representative from NARDEM-Rose Nwaogwugwu and their topic was on **wife beating** where they tried to explore relationships that could be affected by or relationships that reinforce this bestial act.

George Udoha of LISI presented group B's work and their topic was **widowhood practices**. The group tried to enumerate all relationships affected and those who reinforce this violation by explaining the real problem, perpetrators and victims of such abuses as the deceased families (usually husbands), married daughters, kinsmen, others and victims' families and the society respectively. The convener elaborated by citing real cases of widowhood practices in Owerri Imo state where a smelly local mixture is rubbed on the deceased clothing and forced to be worn unwashed by the widow in her private part for 4 days and also in Orlu Imo state where a widow is forced to drink water used in washing the late husband's corpse to exonerate herself from the suspicion that she killed him.

Other participants also cited cases of abuse where a broken bottle is used to scarp hairs on all parts of the widow's body including the private part and also a case where the widow is forced to cry out loudly in the early mornings calling out to the deceased husband. She said that such practices are witnessed in Ehime Mbano LGA of Imo state.

WAY FORWARD;

Participants requested for CD's of the Turkey symposium to which the convener promised to make known to the coordinators of the project.

Lady Ugo suggested effective networking and also collaborative activities by NGO's so as to make reasonable impacts on human rights promotion especially as it concerns the new tactics project. She also emphasized on the need for collaborative support amongst individual NGO's. To this end, participants agreed that a proposal be drafted under a common and existing coalition- FINGO and forwarded to the Center for Victims of Torture for possible funding.

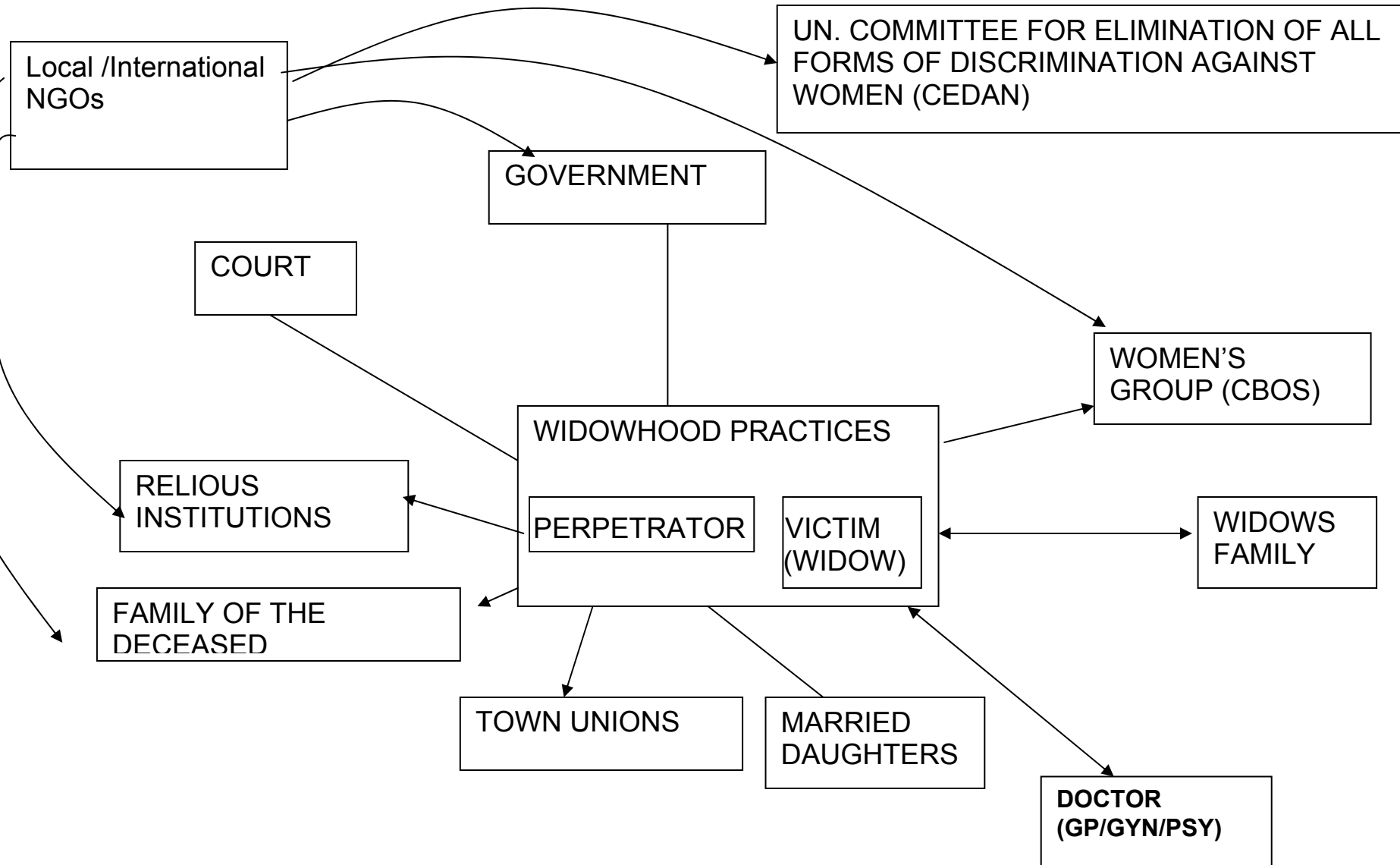
Closing remarks

Mr. Udoha emphasized the relevance of documentation and keeping pictorial materials of previous activities, as these would support individuals or group proposal or exhibition meant to attract grants for works on human rights.

Motion for adjournment was moved by Richards Nzeocha of ISHO and was supported by Kennedy Ofurum of COHDAT. Richards Nzeocha said closing prayer. Workshop ended at 4:30pm.

(TACTICAL MAPPING ON WIDOWHOOD PRACTICES)

GROUP B



**(TACTICAL MAPPING ON WIFE BEATING)
GROUP A**

