



The Impact of the Positive Development Approach in Countering Trafficking in Persons by Mercy Oguche

Synopsis

The quest to counter the peril of trafficking in persons using different approaches beyond the norm has yielded results wherein more persons are increasingly becoming aware of the ploys of suspected traffickers and their agents. However, there is a need for aggressive sensitization across communities, towns, cities and on social media in order to get the message to as many young persons and youths as possible. Taking into consideration the fact that young persons and youths are the most vulnerable to being trafficked as indicated in a research report by the International Organization for Migration, 2022; half of the victims/survivors of trafficking in persons are between the ages of 19 to 33 years¹. It is against this background that LEAP Africa implemented '*Strengthening the Positive Youth Development capacities of Civil Society Organizations to Improve their Effectiveness in Countering Trafficking in Persons*' in partnership with the Palladium Nigerian Strengthening Civic Advocacy and Local Engagement (SCALE) Project with funding from United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The Measure

Moving past the walls of residential workshops to a virtual community of practice for seven months to the evaluation of the impact of the capacity building on participants and their mode of interventions, it was worthy of note to see youths reaching out to other young persons with information on preventing trafficking in persons across different regions in Nigeria. Seventy representatives of seventy organizations in the Federal Capital Territory, Adamawa, Akwa Ibom, Bauchi, Borno, Edo and Lagos states respectively were trained on integrating the Positive Youth Development (PYD) in CTIP become CTIP Ambassadors. The participants were mandated to cascade the training to their colleagues and sensitize young persons and youths using existing platforms to enhance a wider reach. In due course, the capacity of the participants were increasingly built in programming for activities on preventing and responding to TIP. Consequently, this led to a boomerang of activities across the regions of focus.

The Aftermath

In Bauchi state, Rose Hakila, the Executive Director of the Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation explained how the PYD approach had impacted her and she had taken a step back to allow the youths in the organization, Ezra Daniel Yau, 33 years old; Youth project officer to coordinate activities for youths and Rachael Markus; a 26 years old deaf lady to coordinate activities for the persons living with disabilities. She said she was inspired to let the youths lead program activities after participating in the online coaching and peer learning sessions that were held for seven months. She said she also observed that the representatives of LEAP Africa were youths and was inspired to integrate the

¹ <https://www.ctdatacollaborative.org/story/age-victims-children-and-adults>

youths as partners in running program activities in the organization and that they have produced amazing results. Rachael had sensitized about 30 persons living with disabilities (blind, deaf, paraplegia) on how they can prevent trafficking in persons. Ezra sensitized over 70 youths in a Local Government Area on the need to be aware that not all seemingly better opportunities were genuine as they could be exploited in the process².

The Hope for the Living Joy Steve Foundation represented by Asmau Usman living with Paraplegia at the three days workshop cascaded the training to her team members (two of which participated in the coaching sessions) who in turn have sensitized over 120 secondary school students between the ages of 14 to 16 years in two schools in Bauchi and Seun Taiwo, a CTIP Ambassador visited five schools in Ogbomoso, Osun state and reached over two thousand secondary school students with sensitization on the dangers of human trafficking. Seun was a beneficiary of the two days of CTIP Ambassadors training.²

In Akwa Ibom State; the Hope for Coastal Women Foundation held a cascading session of preventing TIP with members of staff and volunteers. One of the volunteers, Essien Blessing Edidiong, 27 years old, studying Public Administration at Akwa Ibom State University became enthusiastic considering the fact that women and girls are more at risk. She has been using platforms in school to speak on the signs and dangers of human trafficking and during the Children's Day Parade on 27th May, 2022, the wife of the Local Government Chairman gave her the opportunity to speak to the children and she sensitized over one thousand children on preventing trafficking in persons especially domestic servitude in the guise of sponsoring their education the cities².

These results were born from cascading sessions from the training to the youths and encouraging them to carry out interventions on their existing platforms and avenues of creating awareness for young persons. The more people are informed about the signs and dangers of human trafficking, the less the chances of them falling prey to the menace and reporting suspected cases to the appropriate authorities.

Validation

Notwithstanding the importance of sensitizing the general public as some cases of trafficking in persons are fueled by parents, guidance relatives; there is no doubt about the fact that integrating the PYD approach in CTIP produced outstanding results within a year. It takes youths to effectively reach youths and young persons; thus it is apparent that youths are engaged as partners and participants in the pursuit of preventing the most vulnerable persons which are young persons and youths from being trafficked.

² https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eMKmoUxDT9oertcFTifgaRUYrfsG9Leo/view?usp=share_link