

Development Impact For Nigeria

Newsletter summer update May 2008
Charity Commission No. 1091028

In the past few months, DIFN has taken on key initiatives that have further cemented our work in promoting social injustice, empowerment and development in Nigeria. Despite few challenges (e.g. resources, bureaucracy and even personal challenges that can sap energies!), we have continued our work relentlessly in trying to make a difference in the lives of many people.

Below are key areas of work that we have been doing and which we need your support than ever before, in being able to build on our achievements and 'keep the flag flying' for DIFN.

[1] DIFN Ipaja Community Link

Our community development model project, **Ipaja Community Link (ICL)** is now firmly established in the Local area. The Local Government, churches and other NGOs see the project has a key partner on **health, employment and youth empowerment** initiatives set up to improve lives in the area.

However, the model has now been recognised within the Lagos State government. **The Ministry of Social Development Youth and Sport** have invited DIFN to initiate a development programme based on the ICL model to support their work in **reducing the problem of youth crime and unemployment in Lagos**. We have also had support from the Permanent Secretary to the Governor of Lagos State who has asked us to develop a proposal that could **be a model of best practice for community development, social care and youth work** in Lagos state.

Our thriving HIV/AIDS support work, community care for the elderly, school support work, youth development work (e.g. UNESCO Living Values programmes) and our partnership work with Churches for Justice Network has been officially recognised **by Christian Aid**. They have now chosen us as their Lead NGO partner in Lagos and have

confirmed some funding towards the development work DIFN will take on under the auspices of ICL.



[2] SKILLS ACQUISITION & BUSINESS SUPPORT PROJECT

The first key piece of work that Christian Aid will support us this financial year is the **Skills Acquisition and Small Business support programme**. The subject of unemployment across Nigerian society, especially amongst the youth, has long been a key political and economic problem. Nationally and internationally (e.g. United Nations and World Bank), **Lagos is now recognised as one of the 5 'mega cities' in the world**. It is therefore important to create a skilled workforce that will be adequate and will respond to the 'emerging economy' in Lagos. A recent local skills needs assessments carried out by DIFN's ICL, revealed that many would like to acquire diverse range of skills to help them start small businesses, **but access to community learning and support are few and far between**. As a result, 'idle hands' permeate Lagos society and potentially skilful and qualified men and women resort to doing nothing other than begging and criminal activity. **So DIFN is meeting an urgent need**.

An **ICL Skills and Business Support Centre** will be set up, partly with funding from Christian Aid and partly from fundraising by DIFN. The aim of the centre will be **to develop and train up**

to 2000 trainees a year on skills such as ICT, Digital photography, Jewellery Making and other diverse range of skills that will contribute towards setting up a small micro-enterprise. We will also support trainees in skills around business development and business plans. DIFN (ICL) will also act as 'Advocates' to help access loans and finance from micro-finance institutions and other related partners to help with start-ups. (The full programme for the year is attached on your emails).

DIFN needs your financial support to help fulfil this laudable project. Also, if any Diaspora Nigerians can contribute by volunteering their skills in helping to 'capacity build' the 'budding' business men and women who we will attract to this programme, it would be great. Perhaps you are planning a trip to Nigeria in the coming weeks and months. If please, get in touch with Yomi Oloko, our DIFN Project Director, developing the project 'on the ground' in Lagos with ICL. Email yomioloko@hotmail.com and with me Ade Fashade on afashade@sky.com

[3] VSO Diaspora Volunteer Programme

The **Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO)** have secured UK Central government funding (through DFID) to develop a programme of financial and technical programme **to support organisations such as DIFN in developing a volunteering programme.** DIFN has been invited by VSO to be part of this programme. It is widely recognised **that 'Diaspora Nigerians' (i.e. people of Nigerian origin) are regarded as one of the most skilful and highly talented groups of people in the world.** However, they are hugely underused in the area of development in the 'Majority' (i.e. third) world.

If you agree that something must be done to change the country and believe that **this needs to happen sooner rather than later, why you don't express that in real action.** This is an

opportunity to take part as a Diaspora volunteer. Under the VSO initiative, fares and living expense for volunteers will be paid. Volunteers must be professionals willing to spend at least 2 to 3 months in Nigeria using their skills to work on DIFN projects. This could also be a key opening for you if you want to 'enter the emerging market in Nigeria'. Your area of expertise may be **business planning, community development, finance/accountancy, education or youth development and social care.** This initiative provides you with the opportunity to put something back and also 'up' your own personal and professional profile in one of the world's most vibrant places to be at this moment - Nigeria.

Be part if the change that you require for Nigeria. You can start through this project. **YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU.**

URGENT VSO REQUEST....

The VSO Nigeria Office has got in touch with Yomi in Nigeria to develop an urgent proposal for **placements of 6 primary and secondary school UK-based teachers (Key stage 2 and 3) in Nigeria.** Ideally, this would be teachers of Nigerian descent who may have never been to Nigeria. This is scheduled to take place in **Easter 2009.** The placements will be through DIFN, who will act as the key agent. If you know of anyone who might be interested or if you are, please let Yomi know. Placements will mainly be with DIFN's operations in Nigeria and some partner agencies we are working with.

[4] Local Government Capacity Development Workshops & Conferences

Plans are underway to host a number of workshops and conferences on **Effective Local Government Management** in our main zone of operations. These workshops and conferences will be for local government councillors, NGOs and technocrats. Topics covered will include **democratic governance,**

partnership working, State and Civil Society and other related topics on social, economic and community development. We hope to start these workshops by **November 2008**. If you have any ideas or even want to take part, please get on touch.

[5] COMING EVENTS IN LONDON

DIFN plans to hold a number of **awareness raising and fun events in the UK** this year. We want to raise much needed profile of DIFN and its work. It is important to highlight and promote this amongst people in the UK. Also, DIFN belongs to you and is not a 'private' enterprise! Please share DIFN's work with friends, contacts and networks.

The first of these events will be an **'Information Day'** which we are planning for mid to late June 08. I will contact you all to confirm a date. It would be most helpful if you, however, indicate your interest in attending to hear about DIFN's work now and beyond, as well as **taking part in a key debate/discussion about 'burning' issues affecting Nigeria in the 21st century.** Look forward to hearing from you soon.

[6] YOUTH VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME

VSO have provided ICL with some funding to run a youth development & volunteering programme due to start in **July 07**. However, the project requires **10 fairly used PCs as part of running the programme for the young people (this is not covered by the VSO funding).** Can you help us? We require approx. £1500 to purchase the computers in Nigeria. **Any one-off amount whatsoever will be gratefully appreciated.** If you want to contribute, please contact myself or Yomi Oloko.

Well, that's it for now folks! Many thanks for your support. However, as you would agree, there is more to be done and can be done. **We urge you to take the opportunity of making DIFN your**

charity for this year and beyond. Are you able to give a minimum of £10 per month? We are still looking for at least 100 Nigerians to give this amount per month through standing order. So far we have only had 4 people responded to the call! Please join these 4 people as they are feeling quite lonely and alone! **DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION!** If you would like to give by Standing Order, please complete attached form or contact your bank direct, with our bank details shown on the form.

THANK YOU & GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

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www.difn.org.uk



If you have any comments or feedback regarding issues covered in this newsletter, please let us know. You can contact me direct on afashade@sky.com or the DIFN (ICL) Director in Nigeria, Yomi Oloko on yomioloko@hotmail.com .