

# PeaceWorks News

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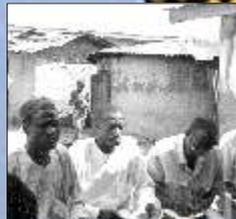
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# “The Day Karu Danced..”

**Bassey Okon.**  
**PeaceWorks Productions.**

It was a day to be a proud “Karuan”. A day to appreciate the diverse cultural makeup of the fastest growing LG Area in the world, the Karu Local Government. An event witnessed by dignitaries, diplomats and passersby alike.

The date the 26<sup>th</sup> of January, 03, remains a significant cultural history in annals of Nasarawa State, when the first ever held cultural event took place tagged “The Karu Unity Festival”.

The Genesis: As part of complementing the numerous workshops on peacebuilding, conflict management, capacity building and many other workshops executed by AAPW in Nasarawa State, the production arm PeaceWorks Productions



*A pole masquerade dazzles the crowd with its incredible display of balance, as it hops all over the festival arena.*

conceived the festival to enable the indigenes and non-indigenes to come together as one and stop seeing one another as complete foreign entities from space. The first step was to constitute a planning committee and from there the cultural census team went to work with a brief of visiting the villages that were within the local government, selection of groups from the villages, shaping them and explaining the rules of the festival. We followed their rehearsals progressively as the D day approached. Other members of the committee were working round the clock. After a proper census of 29 cultural groups and approval of their presentations, all “T’s”

were crossed and “I’s” were dotted. The town was agog with the heat of the festival, invitations had gone out far and wide, the festival secretariat became a beehive of activities. Everyone looked forward to the day.



*(Top) The Tiv of Benue are easily recognizable in a crowd through their beautiful black and white traditional colours.*

*(Right) The Gbagyi women, performing.*

The “D” Day: Come the day, the venue, Karu Local Government secretariat was expectant of



troupes and guests from all walks of life and of all colours and shades. The troupes started arriving from 10 am and as they arrived a copy of the programme of events was handed to the troupe leaders. They settled down under their tents, obviously warming the space for the formal opening of the festival. As time passed by, we observed that we had more troupes than we invited which meant that some just heard and decided to be present on that day with their full troupe. So, our first calamity was how to shelter these uninvited guests; we crossed that bridge and were confronted with the next obstacle after the arrival of dignitaries. After speeches from the Executive Governor of Nasarawa State, the Festival director, the Esu Karu and other invited dignitaries, it was time for the march past of all troupes, before their individual performances, but for our very much welcomed uninvited guests, the programme changed to giving them between three and five minutes to perform so we could entertain every group. Even that didn't turn out to be the best of decisions as most groups, especially the uninvited ones, refused to vacate the stage, HA!

Did I just mention stage? The troupes completely abandoned the stage. Why? Because the troupes had more than the fifteen members troupe that were asked for. At the mention of a group the entire community appeared on stage. Stage? No an...Arena, as it turned out to be a “theatre in the round”.

However, it was a very colourful event as each group appeared with a distinct style and character in costumes and performances and surprisingly, most dignitaries, to identify with their kinsmen, joined the performers in the Arena.

The festival featured, Cultural Dances, Songs and Drama, Art and Craft Exhibitions, Acrobatic/Traditional sports as well as Photo and Culinary Exhibitions.

The event was applauded and really appreciated by all that came and they earnestly wish it becomes an annual event because of its singular ability to bridge the ethnic differences and minimize and possibly eliminate violent conflicts between different ethnic groups.



*H.E. Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu, The Executive Governor of Nasarawa State. Dr. Judith Asuni, AAPW Director(left)*



*A Jarawa traditional dance troupe with origin from Plateau State, display an energetic warrior dance sequence.*

# CONFLICT IN KARU

Mararaba: A City of Diverse Problems

*Danjuma Sa'idu*

*AAPW Peace Education REFLECT Trainer*

When I undertook to write this article, I had no idea how difficult it was going to be. First, my boss, as usual has an uncanny gift of asking one to do the most difficult task in the shortest possible time available. Secondly, Mararaba, the subject of my discourse is the only semi-urban town in Nigeria that has all the ethnic nationalities that are living in Nigeria. Then you have other nonNigerians such as the people of Niger Republic, Ghanaians, Togolese, Camerounians, Senegalese, who have come all the way from their various countries to find source of livelihood in the most conducive of all places, Mararaba!



*Part of the roadside market in Mararaba was destroyed, as it was used by miscreants as a center for drugs and crime. Mararaba with a population increase of 40% per year receives migrants from all parts of Nigeria as well as neighboring Niger*

However, Mararaba also happens to be a hotbed of political, social as well as ethnic intrigues that one can find anywhere in Nigeria. The reasons for this are many. First, Mararaba is one of the closest semi-urban towns to Abuja, the Federal Capital of Nigeria, therefore its tendency to attract all manner of people from different walks of life, who have come to either trade or find work in the FCT. Secondly, because of the high cost of living in the Federal Capital, these people prefer to settle in Mararaba and then shuttle between there and the capital city, Abuja. It is this situation that led to the emergence of Mararaba as a mini-Nigeria with its entire ramifications. Thirdly, Mararaba seems to be the most developed of all the districts in Karu Local Government Area. This is due to its proximity to the Federal Capital Territory as well as its location on the busy Keffi- Abuja road! This position has drawn the envy of the other districts, especially Karu district, which is the headquarters of Karu Local Government, under which Mararaba falls.

Many of the problems of Mararaba emanated from the fact that the Hausa tribal group was claiming dominance over the others. Their claim was based on the fact that they were the earliest immigrants who came to the area to trade. Similarly, majority of the Hausa people live in the city centre and control the

commercial activities of the area. This had become a major problem for members of the Gbagyi ethnic groups who are the indigenes of the area. There were several attempts by these two groups to dominate one another through

ascendance to the district headship of the area. Political means were also used by the parties involved to gain control. During the June 30 fuel price increase and the attendant riots that greeted it, Mararaba was one of the most affected areas. This was because some people, especially members of the opposition parties that lost the April 2003 elections, used the protest to cause violence. This led to destruction of vehicles as well as properties. Some lives were also lost during the riots.

The Mararaba market is located by the roadside, on the busy Keffi- Abuja road. The location of the market has made the road very difficult for motorists to pass because of the constant go-slow. The road leading into the market itself is very bad such that it has become practically impossible to pass, especially during the rainy seasons. This situation had led most traders to abandon their shops and relocate to the main road. This has combined to make the traffic situation even worse! The Nasarawa State Government therefore found it necessary to demolish part of the market in order to ease the traffic flow in and out of the market area. Similarly, part of the market has been serving as a hideout for criminals and other miscreants. There are about 9 Video/cinema viewing centers inside the market and these viewing centers are used by drug dealers to conduct their activities. During the June 30 crisis most of the jobless youths

who had participated in the riot had used these viewing centers to hide from the security personnel.

Because of the demolition of part of the market, affected traders are blaming the Nasarawa State Government of insensitivity to their plight. They believe the demolition of the market is an indirect attack on the traders who might have been supporters of the opposition parties! Thus we see that the problems of Mararaba are indeed diverse!



*Development of infrastructure has not kept pace with population growth in Mararaba. An even bigger problem is unemployment of the thousands of jobless youths, who can be hired to cause trouble.*

# DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

“We are getting there”!

*Kaneng Ja and Dorothy Payi  
AAPW Abuja*

The Peace and Development Committees in the various communities of Karu Local Government Area were formed as a result of the Conflict Management Workshops held in these communities with initial funding from GTZ. The Peace and Development Committees have the backing and support of the Nasarawa State Government which is funding this phase of the Project. PDCs were formed in Mararaba, Karu/New Nyanya, Masaka, Kabusu, Gurku, Kodope, Ado and recently Aso and have been working tirelessly to ensure the promotion of peace and development. For instance, the civil disturbance in Mararaba which extended to Masaka on Friday, November 29, 2003 was quelled because members used their conflict management skills to stop the conflict from escalating into a major crisis. Also, a chieftaincy tussle that was threatening the peace of Kabusu community was eventually settled.



*L-R: Chief Sabo Fyenu, Treasurer PDC in Karu, Chief Sarki Sule Chief of Ado, Ail Yahaya - Member PDC Ado During PDC Karu Exco's visit to Ado July 9<sup>th</sup> 2003*

In February/March 2003, an evaluation of social services was carried out in these eight communities. Mararaba was observed to have the highest population in the whole of the Karu Local Government Area and as such, exerts a lot of pressure on the limited resources available. Consequently, persons from

Mararaba and all the other communities were identified for entrepreneurial or technical skills training which has led them to register and fully participate in the UNDP skills acquisition center in Karu.

As part of promoting the development process of these communities, AAPW has visited and met with donor agencies such as the Irish, Swiss, Japanese, German, and US embassies; the Canadian High Commission; GTZ; and Water Aid for financial and



*PDC Karu Exco's Visit to Masaka July 9<sup>th</sup> 2003*



*Taking Development to the grassroots: A local peace and Development Committee meets to prioritize the needs of its community and to seek support from a bilateral donor*

technical assistance. These donors will deal directly with the communities with the aim of providing basic social services beneficial to them. As such, a proposal writing training was organized by AAPW for

representatives from each of these communities, as they understand their needs better than anyone else.

Water Aid, an international NGO involved in water and environmental sanitation, will be going on a tour with AAPW staff and members of the Peace and Development Committee to inspect water facilities and advise on ways to make water available in the communities where this is a priority.



*PDC in Karu Exco's Visit to Mararaba July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2003*

AAPW staff members have visited these communities to carry out an assessment programme of social services and to help residents identify what their priorities are so that these can be met at different levels. They have shown interest and willingness to be part of this process and they have agreed to work with all concerned parties to become an epitome of peace and development. It has been an inspiring experience working with these communities members, watching how eager they are to be the best and also make the best of the resources they have. What you see on their faces is “We are getting there”!



*Danmasanin Karu Chief Maikasawa Auta Political adviser to PDC in Karu during visit of PDC to Mararaba. Sitting is the Chief Allahyayi Zakwoi Chief of Mararaba July 12<sup>th</sup> 2003*

# Karu Peace and Development Committee

*Peace and Development Committee Evolves in Karu Local Government Area*

**Goodluck N. Onyegbule**  
AAPW Abuja



Peace & Development Committee in Karu Local Government Meeting.  
Exco in Front, AAPW Staff in Rear

Peace is said to be the foundation of development in any community. But life is war and living together in a diverse community could be a basis for unhealthy competition and eventual retardation. Interestingly, provision of basic infrastructure for empowerment and community development is a veritable means of ensuring peace for sustainable development.

Against this background, the good people of Karu Local Government Council, having realized their diversity and common interests, came together to form a Peace and Development Committee (PDC). The structure has a Central Working Committee and sub-committees in all the eight (8) communities in the Council i.e. New Nyanya/Karu, Kodope, Kabusu, Ado, Mararaba, Masaka, Aso, Gurku. The Central Committee is led by a duly elected EXCO headed by the Chief of Masaka, Chief Danjuma Tuta. It has a board of patrons comprising of the Esu Karu, HRH Dr. Ishaku Chetubo; The ED, AAPW, Dr. Judith Asuni; and the Local Government Council Chairman, Hon. Mika'ilu Gurku. A team of advisers has also been appointed and they include:

Barr. Adamu Haruna  
DPO, Karu  
Dan Masanin Karu  
Ms. Nneka Iyke - Enemo  
Mr. Goodluck Onyegbule

Legal Adviser  
Security Adviser  
Political Adviser  
Economic Adviser  
Business Adviser

With a dream team so enumerated put in place, the Peace and Development Committee (PDC) has since gone into action both at

the community levels and at the central level. The good work of mobilization and networking has started to yield results. Meanwhile His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Nasarawa State, Alh. Abdullahi Adamu has endorsed the effort of the Committee by approving an office apartment for it at the Council headquarters. He has equally endorsed the Committee's coordinating role in the current World Bank Assisted Project of urban development in Karu.

The PDC under the auspices of the dynamic Executive Director of AAPW has begun packaging series of collaborative ventures with donor agencies and other international organizations for the empowerment of the various segments of the Karu communities. Such projects include cassava and soya beans for export as well as waste recycling ventures. As the World Bank Assisted Urban Development Programme of the Nasarawa State Government in Karu gets underway, the PDC is poised to act as the agent of dispersal. It is little wonder therefore that other development agencies like the German GTZ, Japanese and Swiss are seriously romancing the PDC initiative for meaningful developmental relationships.

Indeed, the Karu Peace and Development Committee initiative is a pragmatic avenue for community development via peaceful co-existence. All well-meaning organizations at home and abroad are invited to join this effort.

# “Peace Offering”

**Frank Igbaji Monkom.**  
**PeaceWorks Productions.**

The diversity, NIGERIA is endowed with lots of material and human resources that make her stand out as giant of Africa. But the reverse is usually the case when it comes to choosing her political leaders, as disgruntled politicians with negative attributes have turned election periods into a time of sober reflection. A typical Nigerian politician sees politics as war (a do-or-die affair), which is the reason why he goes to the extent of recruiting youths as political thugs. These youths who are let loose to intimidate political rivals do not stop at that, they go as far as unleashing terror and mayhem on innocent citizens who in the true sense are the legitimate king makers. This election violence, which often brings bad blood in

which was funded by the Embassy of Switzerland, in February and March 2003, embarked on a seven state tour, promoting violence-free elections with thirty performances in conflict-prone areas.

The high standard of professionalism with which the youthful actors selected from various parts of the country gave to the drama presentation left a positive and lasting impression on the audience which, if you ask me, is the dividend of the civilian-to-civilian transition we all enjoy today.



*Shaking to the melody of the talking drum an interesting blend of music and speech*

the country leads to tribal and religious conflicts. In order to stem these outrageous and corrupt practices, and further saving Nigeria's nascent democracy, the PeaceWorks Productions, team which is the production affiliate of AAPW, embarked on a massive political mindset orientation of the Nigerian populace through a live drama presentation entitled “PEACE OFFERING”. This traveling theatre troupe



## Research: A Necessity

**Shedrack Best**

Since the inception of AAPW, research has constituted a very important tradition in its chain of activities. This is primarily handled by the Department of Research and Intervention. AAPW has conducted research into many community conflicts in Nigeria. There is perhaps no NGO in the conflict transformation sector in Nigeria that has the wealth of experience of AAPW in conducting action research for conflict intervention. Among areas where research has been conducted are Wukari and Takum in Taraba State, Zangon Kataf in Kaduna State, Tafawa Balewa in Bauchi State, Igbo Ora in Oyo State, Mangu-Bokkos in Plateau State, Ife Modakeke in Osun State, Kano city in Kano State, Pastoralist-Farmer conflicts in the North East region, etc. Most of these are violent conflicts where populations are internally displaced, lives lost, and property destroyed. Some of the most recent case studies include the one at Warri in Delta State. Research into the Toto conflict in Nasarawa State is on-going.

The objective of conflict research is to avail AAPW and its team of conflict management experts who usually intervene in conflict situations, namely The Corps of Mediators, with necessary information about the conflict in question. More often

*Contd: on page 8 >>*



*Inna Erizia Abubakar and Frank Monkam play the Blind Citizens - blind both physically and to the corruption around them.*

# The Warri Crisis

## New Perspectives for Peace Building

*Dimieari Von Kemedi*  
Consultant to AAPW

In March 2003 ethnic conflict between Itsekiri and Ijaw communities, as well as some action by the military authorities, disrupted oil production in the Warri area, leading to cutbacks of as much as 40% in output, adversely affecting Nigeria's already battered economy. Combined with the then impending War against Saddam's Iraq, the Warri crisis, signaling instability in the Niger Delta, and the shortfall in the oil market as a result of cutbacks led to a northward trajectory in oil price.

Any attempt to trace the origin of this conflict can easily plunge into the muddle of contested history but in more recent times the conflict has centered on control of local politics and access to the oil companies, particularly ChevronTexaco and Shell.

The Ijaw and Urhobo ethnic groups accuse the Itsekiri of practicing apartheid government through a series of political moves that are said to put the majority Ijaw and Urhobo under the thumb of the minority Itsekiri. This revolves mostly around the contentious issue of electoral ward delineation and local government creation that Ijaw and Urhobo claim have been done to favor the Itsekiri. The other big issue is the politics of ChevronTexaco that are perceived to favor the Itsekiri over the Ijaw and Urhobo.

Since the beginning of recent violent incidences amongst the Itsekiri, Ijaw and Urhobo in the Warri area several committees, panels and commissions have been constituted by the government. These various interventions have in the main made similar recommendations to government. The government however has failed to take effective action in line with these recommendations.

The failure of the government, at the Delta State and federal levels, to bring an end to the persistent violence in Warri has been regarded by all primary parties to the conflict- Ijaw, Itsekiri and Urhobo- as an indictment on the government.

The Itsekiri contend that the primary responsibility of any self-respecting government is the protection of lives and property.

Drawing from the attacks on their villages, the Itsekiri argue that federal and state governments have failed. They therefore advocate effective military action by the Federal Government to bring peace to Warri.

The Ijaw and Urhobo however see the problem of violence in Warri not as much a security as a political and economic issue. They believe that better political representation in the form of creation of separate local governments for the rival ethnic groups or more equitable ward delineation, etc and the involvement of these two nationalities in the oil spoils politics as key to peace.

These conflicts, as well as AAPW's 1999-2001 intervention in the Warri crisis are described in our latest book *Conflict and*

*Instability in the Niger Delta: the Warri Case* (Imobighe, Bassey and Asuni: Spectrum Books 2002) A more recent element in the Warri crisis is illegal oil bunkering.

A team from Academic Associates PeaceWorks, including Prof. Imobighe, Dr. Asuni and myself, visited Warri in late



*Elders and youths in the Warri Peace Forum, part of AAPW's intervention in the communal conflict which involved 3 major ethnic groups: Ijaw, Itsekiri and Urhobo.*

June and again in early August 2003 to discuss with potential peaceniks on all sides. There was a sense of frustration on all sides, regarding the failure of previous efforts towards securing peace. The pessimism engendered by past failures is however thinned by a fresh perspective offered by AAPW. In the past, government commissions and panels led efforts towards peace building. The Ijaw, Itsekiri and Urhobo were seen as children fighting or "two fighting pens" and government as the headmaster, and the oil companies as completely out of it. Now more people see that the government and the oil industry are as much part of the problem as the solution.

AAPW is now working with peaceniks in Ijaw, Itsekiri and Urhobo communities as well as community leaders and the government in an effort to design a process that will address the core issues of the conflict. It is hoped that with time the oil industry will become involved in the process as their involvement is indispensable to any genuine peace process.

# Nasarawa Vows to be the Best State House of Assembly in Nigeria

Judy Asuni



AAPW facilitates at the first training for members of the Nasarawa State House of Assembly on team building and strategic planning. (L - R) Dr. Judith Burdin Asuni, Dr. Shedrack Best, Chief Ason Bur



A sub grouping of House working on its strategic action plan



Members of the house were active participants in the July 2003 workshop

The members of the Nasarawa State House of Assembly have stated their goal of becoming the best House in all of Nigeria. The members decided this as part of the Strategic Planning workshop conducted by Academic Associates PeaceWorks for the 24 members and 10 senior officers of the House. The first part of the training programme, which emphasized teambuilding and planning, was conducted in July 2003. A second part comes up in early August, with conflict management training for the members of the House, followed by similar training for the Commissioners when they are appointed. The final programme will bring together the members of the House of Assembly and Commissioners in jointly practicing good collaboration, negotiation and mediation skills.

The facilitators for these activities are: Chief Ason Bur - a retired Federal Permanent Secretary, former Deputy Governor of Benue State, member of the National Corps of Mediators, and Trustee of AAPW.

Dr. Shedrack Best - political science lecturer at the University of Jos, and Research and Intervention Officer for AAPW.

Danjuma Sa'idu - experienced peace education teacher and literacy trainer for AAPW, also of the University of Jos.

Dr. Judith Burdin Asuni - Executive Director of AAPW, Abuja

In expressing his appreciation of the first training, the Honourable Speaker of the Nasarawa State House of Assembly, Hon. Mohammed Ogoshi stated that all members had gained much from the experience. The workshop was closed by the Nasarawa State Deputy Governor, Mr. Labaran Maku, who commented that he had attended some of the AAPW trainings as far back as 1997, when he was a Democracy and Governance Officer for USAID, Lagos. Maku was pleased to see the experienced team of trainers still together after a number of years. ●

## Research contd:

than not, interventions fail because the information available to interveners is wrong, inadequate or non-existent. AAPW deals with this problem by conducting research into conflict situations ahead of any form of intervention.

The research also assists mediators to generate the background and historical context of any given conflict situation, identify the parties to the conflict, analyse their positions, interests and needs, and to map the conflict. Research also affords conflict workers the opportunity to discuss and identify entry points into a conflict, and the possibilities for the resolution of such conflicts. It is also the research tradition of AAPW to identify persons and groups that could be useful contacts and actors in the resolution of the conflict. These may, or may not necessarily be stakeholders in the conflict.

The Warri case study completed in 2000 is an example of a successful conflict research. Funding for the research, and the intervention that was to follow the research, were provided by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), under the auspices of AAPW. The research was carried out by a team of highly respected Nigerian scholars led by Professors Thomas Imobighe of the Edo State University Ekpoma, and Celestine Bassey of the Delta State University, Ekpoma. Three other scholars from the key ethnic groups in the conflict, Professor V.F. Peretomode (Ijaw), Dr. A.S. Akpotor (Urhobo) and Dr. D.A. Tonwe (Itsekiri) took part in the study. The research, apart from achieving the objectives earlier identified, helped to document the perspectives of the three parties in the conflict. Following the research an analysis meeting was held at Warri, in which the researchers, key parties in the conflict and other stakeholders were invited to subject the study to brainstorming. The exercise aimed to test the research for accuracy and factual

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# Election Monitoring

The 2003 election period in the Nigerian nascent democracy was characterized by anxiety, fear and uncertainty. This was due to the unsuccessful civilian-to-civilian transitions in the past. It was therefore not surprising that when the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), released the timetable for the 2003 general elections, many people viewed it as a litmus test for the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria. These elections were very important for the democratic development of Nigeria. They also present an important measure for the credibility of the dispensation.

Academic Associates PeaceWorks (AAPW), as a neutral and nonpartisan organization, which had in the past, conducted several peace and development activities in Karu Local Government, felt the need to carry out independent monitoring activities that involved both civil society and the security agencies working together to ensure that the 2003 elections were free and fair within the local government area. To facilitate a smooth and successful deployment of volunteer local monitors, AAPW recruited, trained and coordinated local monitors.

## Recruitment of volunteer local monitors

With about 34 polling units in the 3 ward areas namely Karu, Gurku/Kabusu and Aso/Kodope in Karu Local Government area, AAPW recruited 26 volunteer local monitors, supplemented by 6 AAPW staff including the Executive Director.

## 1-day training of volunteer local monitors

The 1-day training was conducted by the duo of Imam Mohammed N. Ashafa and Pastor James M. Wuye of the Muslim/ Christian Dialogue Forum, Kaduna. They were among those trained by the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) for the 2003 elections. AAPW supplied funding for the training and transport allowances of volunteer local monitors, while INEC supplied the Domestic Observer identification tags.

## How Civil Society and Government Reinforce Each Others' Efforts

When AAPW set out to monitor the 2003 elections in Karu Local Government area, it realized the important role the security agencies, especially the Police, will be playing to ensure that a peaceful election was achieved. Therefore, before the beginning of the monitoring exercise, the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) in charge of Karu Local Government was informed of AAPW's intentions. Incidentally the DPO and some of his men were among the participants trained by AAPW in both Conflict Management and Responding to Early Warning Signs of Election Conflict workshops in Karu and Abuja respectively. The cordial working relationship that existed between AAPW and the police during the election monitoring has shown that the security agencies and the civil society can work harmoniously and benefit from each other. Several examples of how this working relationship yielded positive results are as follows:

- During the National Assembly elections, AAPW discovered that a polling unit at Tudun Wada had no security personnel to keep law and order. The Executive Director, with the Chief of Masaka, and some AAPW staff contacted the DPO who, with some of his men, were going round the various polling units to check how things were going. When the DPO was informed of the situation at Tudun Wada, he quickly dispatched two of his men to that polling unit.

- Also during the National Assembly elections, one polling unit in Mararaba had several hundred voters whose names were not on the computerized register, and tensions were rising that they were being disenfranchised because they're Muslim. Close inspection of the voters' tear-off slips showed that there had been a clerical error in which codes for local government and polling unit were reversed. We assured the voters that we would clarify this before the election the next weekend, and the crowd dispersed peacefully. A few days after the April 12 election, we held an assessment meeting with civil society monitors, the DPO, Director of SSS and INEC officials. Before the next election, INEC had brought the handwritten voters' register, which included the missing names and thus the voters were able to exercise their civic responsibility. This is an example of how a simple misunderstanding and suspicion could have degenerated into violence if not handled promptly.



*hundreds of voters form an orderly line to cast their ballots at the voting center at the palace of the Esu Karu.*

During the gubernatorial/presidential elections, voters at Mararaba Garage polling unit had rejected the idea of using only one ballot box and therefore refused to vote. The DPO, some election observers, party agents and AAPW staff had a brief meeting at which the DPO was advised to go and get another ballot box from INEC office which he quickly did. This timely decision helped to calm people and voting commenced peacefully.

- During the Gubernatorial/Presidential elections, voters at Mararaba

Garage polling unit had rejected the idea of using only one ballot box and therefore refused to vote. The DPO, some election observers, party agents and AAPW staff had a brief meeting at which the DPO was advised to go and get another ballot box from INEC office which he quickly did. This timely decision helped to calm people and voting commenced peacefully.



*Results being collated at the polling unit, with the benefit of a gas lantern*

- Also in Mararaba White House there was a crowd of about 800 people, many of them Hausa Muslim supporters of Buhari, the ANPP presidential candidate, lingering around the polling unit during the

gubernatorial/presidential elections. AAPW met with the Sarkin Hausawa, to request his support in ensuring that his people did not provoke a crisis. When tensions were high at the end of the collation, our monitor, who luckily was a Muslim Hausa woman, gave us the correct results, which we then verbally transferred to the DPO to ensure that the written results were not altered when they reached the ward or local government level. Thus the voters were assured that their mandate was respected.



*Because the polls were open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., results often reached the ward level after dark, necessitating use of a generator.*

- Sgt. Gayus Caleb a policeman attached to AAPW roving monitors proved very useful as he provided useful information about the nature of some polling units and the voting pattern of the voters.

- The DPO, on so many occasions, displayed impressive leadership qualities. For instance, he honoured the invitation extended to him by AAPW to brief the volunteer local monitors on the security measures taken by his department. He was able to give a lengthy lecture on the security situations at the various polling units. On many occasions he was on hand to advise the monitors on the steps they should take to avoid confrontation with voters or party agents.

- Finally, the security agencies had shown, through their conduct during the election, that it was easier to work with the civil society in order to achieve a violent-free election. ●

# Police Training

In preparation for the 2003 elections, Academic Associates PeaceWorks conducted two workshops for the Nigeria Police on "Early Warning Signs of Election Conflict". 300 top police officers and men attended each workshop. The first one, held in Lagos on April 4-5 for the southern states, was opened by the Inspector General of Police, Tafa Balogun. The second workshop for the northern states, held in Abuja April 7-8, was opened by Commissioner of Police FedOps, Lawrence Alobi.

In addition to general conflict management skills, much time was spent on detecting and responding to early warning signs of conflict, using specific cases of communal conflict in Nigeria. Based on AAPW's extensive practical experience in conflict intervention, the following case studies were handled by workshop facilitators:

- Kaduna: November 2002 - Pastor James Movel Wuye & Imam Mohammed N.Ashafa - Muslim/Christian Dialogue Centre, Kaduna
  - Plateau State: Dr. Shedrack Best & Mr. Danjuma Sa'idu - University of Jos
  - Rivers State: Mr. Blessing Abam - AAPW, Port Harcourt
  - Warri: Dr. Judith Burdin Asuni - AAPW, Abuja
- In addition, Mr. Blessing Abam, a retired Deputy Commissioner of



*The Inspector General of Police, Tafa Balogun with the Executive Director of Academic Associates PeaceWorks, Dr. Judith Burdin Asuni, during the opening of the Lagos Workshop for the Nigeria Police April 4, 2003*

Police, dealt extensively with the Public Order Act and the Electoral Law. Participants developed strategies for applying the Public Order Act and responding to early warning signs of election conflict. These were later discussed with the Inspector General of Police.

Generally the 2003 elections in Nigeria were peaceful, due in large part to the preparation by the Police. An article in the Sunday Punch of June 29, 2003 says "If there was anytime the police in Nigeria ever got unanimous accolades from a cross section of Nigerians, it was during the recently concluded elections. The encomiums came from all quarters. Though there were pockets of civil unrest, people believed they were not enough to taint that record...Despite persistent threat by some politicians and disgruntled elements in the country, coupled with various prophecies of doom, the police performed creditably well. It was

a surprise to most Nigerians." We congratulate the Nigeria Police on their good performance. A specific example of police/civil society cooperation is described under Election Monitoring on the AAPW website. ●



*A cross-section of participants in group work facilitated by Mr. Danjuma Sa'idu*

## From the Desk of the Executive Director

2003 has so far proved to be an exciting year for Academic Associates PeaceWorks. We started with a bang, by organizing the Karu Unity Festival which brought together more than 15 ethnic groups in the local government in a celebration of cultural diversity. Nasarawa State Governor Abdullahi Adamu opened the festival which was attended by members of the diplomatic corps and thousands of enthusiastic Karu residents. The Governor has also been very supportive of our peace and development work in Karu, and our project officers are quickly learning about development issues, from recycling to alternative water sources.

2003 has also seen some fruits of our labour, at attempting to bring civil society and government together. Much mistrust still exists, as during the military era these two groups were seen as enemies. However we conducted a very successful training of 600 top officers of the Nigeria Police in early warning signs of election conflict. AAPW and other civil society monitors also worked with the Divisional Police Officer in Karu Local Government in ensuring peace during the April/May elections.

AAPW worked in Warri from 1999 to 2001, and by the time our funding from the United States Institute of Peace ended in March 2001, the Warri Peace Forum was meeting regularly, keeping open channels of communication among the three ethnic groups in the area. However due to lack of support from government, the Forum later collapsed. The crisis that has been rocking Warri since

January 2003 has now inspired all parties to be more proactive. With funding from the US Embassy, AAPW is putting in place the Warri Forum for Peace, Security and Human Rights, which will involve not only members of the 3 ethnic groups, but also the oil/gas companies; government at local, state and federal levels; and security agencies. To date we have met with the President, 3 Ministers, Chief of Defence Staff, DG SSS, Chairman of NDDC, top oil company officials, elders, women and youth leaders in Warri- all of whom have expressed enthusiasm and support for the Forum. This will be an interesting civil society/private sector/government collaborative effort at returning peace to Warri.

On the fun creative side, PeaceWorks Productions' enjoyable play on nonviolent elections performed nationwide, as well as on national television. Our proposed television drama, in collaboration with Search for Common Ground, is moving ahead. We have strong endorsement from the Federal Government of Nigeria, the World Bank, and Canadian CIDA, as well as likely sponsorship from the private sector. I must say that I never thought of myself as a Co-Executive Producer of a television series! However I'm learning on my feet and have become very interested in how the media can address conflict issues in ways that are not only educational but also entertaining.

However it's done, it's clear that Peace Works! ●

## Television Drama

**A**cademic Associates PeaceWorks and Search for Common Ground, based in Washington, D.C. are collaborating on a television drama, aimed at urban youths aged 15 - 25 year. This is the group that is most prone to political, ethnic and religious violence. AAPW and SFCG collaborated on a radio drama in 2001 entitled Peace House. Based on the appeal of the radio drama, we are moving ahead with a 3 year project for a television drama of the same name. To date Canadian CIDA and the World Bank have made financial commitments, while President Obasanjo and the Federal Government of Nigeria have given a strong endorsement to the project, along with guaranteed airtime on NTA's national network. A 2-week visit by Allen Scheid, Vice President of Search for Common Ground, and Sheri Perelli, corporate fundraiser for SFCG, coincided with the inauguration of President Obasanjo for a second term. We also enjoyed a stimulating meeting with the President, as well as productive visits to various foreign donors and companies working in Nigeria.



*(L - R) Allen Scheid and Sheri Perelli of Search for Common Ground; President Olusegun Obasanjo; Judith Asuni and Rosemarie McBean*

**S**earch for Common Ground and Common Ground Productions have produced highly successful television programmes in Macedonia and Cyprus, as well as radio programmes in many African countries. We expect this exciting television drama, to reach the Nigerian audience in 2004, following development of a peace education curriculum for the programme, and thorough training of Nigerian professionals in writing and production. Macedonia's drama is entitled "Nashe Maalo" (meaning "Our Neighbourhood"). This phrase has become synonymous with a new, non confrontational way of handling problems. We look forward to a similar reorientation in the Nigerian mind set through this kind of educational entertainment. ●

## Research contd:

correctness, and identify appropriate methods of intervention. The success of this analysis meeting led to a number of capacity building and peacebuilding activities that later brought peace to Warri, albeit for a short time. This is understandably so because of the nature of issues which affect conflicts in the Niger Delta region generally, and in Warri in particular. One major success achieved by the peace process, which began with the research, is the fact that following the AAPW intervention, the various groups began to talk to each other for the first time. The suggestion being made here is that it is doubtful if such successes could have been achieved without the research.

Out of the Warri research, a book has been published by AAPW titled Conflict and Instability in the Niger Delta: the Warri Case. The book is published by Spectrum Books, and is already available in the book stores. It addresses the underlying issues in the Warri conflict among the three major ethnic groups in the area. The book is written by Professor Thomas Imobighe, Professor Celestine Bassey and Dr. Judith Burdin Asuni. It is hoped that the book will contribute to the understanding of conflicts in the Niger Delta generally, Warri in particular; and to serve as a resource material for students of conflict in Nigeria and around the world. This publication brings to two the number of books that have been published by Spectrum for AAPW, on community conflicts in Nigeria. Both are products of conflict research by AAPW staff. The first, Community Conflicts in Nigeria published by Spectrum in 1999, has remained an invaluable reference material for conflict scholars and students alike in Nigeria and all over the world.

Looking into the future, it may be said with certainty that research will continue to constitute a central pillar of conflict intervention activities of AAPW in the future. Conflicts are getting more intense and the dynamics keep changing. There is need to step up research activities and update the methodology used, as a strategy of effectively transforming conflicts in Nigeria. However, it must be added that research is expensive, and many NGOs in Nigeria cannot afford to use this kind of approach. There is need for the funding community both local and international, to show more interest in sponsoring conflict research, and nurture the product of research to the point of publication. Without such funding AAPW could not have been in a position to conduct as many research projects, hold analysis meetings for them, publish the proceedings, and conduct conflict transformation activities in the affected communities. ●



*Dr. Shedrack Best, AAPW Research and Intervention Officer, far left seated in the first row, during a workshop in Wukari, Taraba State*

# HERE & THERE



*Danjuma Sa'idu, AAPW's Peace Education Officer, has been working with the Nigerian Opportunities Industrialization Centres (the local branch of OICI, based in Philadelphia, PA, USA) on peacebuilding training for the Kano technical skills training centre. Danjuma obviously enjoys his job!*

Academic Associates PeaceWorks has been studying the problems of displaced persons living in the Federal Capital Territory. More than 10,000 Tiv persons have relocated to Abuja, following communal conflicts in Nasarawa, Taraba and Plateau States. Others have come to escape imposition of Sharia law in some northern states. Tiv human rights activist, Yaro Tor Gowon (in beige shirt), has conducted a census of the Tiv and facilitated their registration for the National Identity Card. We are working with the Minister of the FCT and the Vice President in building bridges of collaboration between the Tiv and their hosts, to avoid possible communal conflict.



*Judith Asuni with Tiv women and children during a visit to their village in the FCT.*



*Do you remember the article in our last newsletter "Why not Nigeria?" Well Rosemarie McBean came to work in Nigeria for 6months and 14 months later she is still here! From the look on her face Rose (2<sup>nd</sup> right) obviously enjoys her colleagues" Goodluck Onyegbule (right), Zara Goni, Kaneng Ja (2<sup>nd</sup> right)*

## Academics Associates PeaceWorks

### Mission Statement

**"Building capacities for managing conflict through studies, intervention and peace awareness in society"**

### Objectives of AAPW

- To build awareness of the need and possibilities of peace in society.
- To empower individuals and groups in building peace, through training and networking.
- To develop the framework for the peace process through action-oriented research and intervention in current or potential conflicts.

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*The AAPW Travelling Theatre Troupe poses for a snapshot in front of the National Museum, Kano.*