



PeaceWorks News

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Members of the Peace and Security Working Group at its inaugural meeting. Center in suit is Engr Funso Kupolokun, GMD of NNPC. Port Harcourt, September 2005.

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Peace and Security Strategy for the Niger Delta

*Dr. Judith Burdin Asuni,
Executive Director, Academic Associates PeaceWorks*

Partially as a result of the violent conflict which has rocked Rivers State and Warri in recent years, a number of stakeholders have come together to build a Peace and Security Strategy (PaSS) for the Niger Delta. This was initially the brainchild of Dr. Stephen Davis, an Australian who was one of the authors of the WAC report that pointed to the role of the Shell Petroleum Development Corporation in creating conflict in Nigeria. He was later hired by the MD of SPDC to implement some of the recommendations of that report. Stephen and I first met at the NNPC Youths Stakeholders Workshop in April 2004 and began working together informally last August. As the concept developed, we received good endorsement from President Obasanjo; buy-in from Engr. Funso Kupolokun, the Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation; and support from Dr. Edmund Daukoru, the then Presidential Adviser on Petroleum and Energy.

Almost one year later, the Peace and Security Secretariat is up and running in new offices at 116/118 Woji Road, GRA Phase II, Port Harcourt, Rivers State. In addition to the PaS office, the compound also

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Helen Osawe (2nd left) with other members of the Karu team on the cassava farm.

A New Dawn for Partnering between Government and Civil Society in Nigeria

Helen Osawe, Project Officer, AAPW Abuja

Recently, the trumpet has been blowing from all tiers of the country for better networking/partnership / cooperation, call it what you will, between the Nigerian Government and Non-State Actors

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Peace and Security Strategy for the Niger Delta: (Contd)

Dr. Judith Burdin Asuni

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Sir Gabriel Toby, Rivers State Deputy Governor (left), his Bayelsa State counterpart, Goodluck Jonathan (middle) being welcomed by Dr. Judith Asuni to venue of the inaugural meeting of the Peace and Security Working group in Port Harcourt recently.

hosts the three founding Nongovernmental Organizations. The International Centre for Reconciliation of Coventry Cathedral, England is the international NGO; Academic Associates PeaceWorks is the Nigerian national NGO; and Our Niger Delta is the delta regional NGO. Simon Lewis, myself, and Von Kemedi, respectively, represent the 3 NGOs on the Management Group. We have the admin officer, Nenebari Ogali on board and a full-time coordinator, Chris Alagoa, joining us soon, as well five project officers.

The Secretariat is under the guidance of the Peace and Security Working Group, which held its inaugural meeting on September 8-10. The Working Group is chaired by Dr. Edmund Daukoru, now the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources. It consists of the Deputy Governors of the five participating states (Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta, and Ondo); representatives of three oil companies (Shell, ChevronTexaco and NAOC Agip); the military; the Nigeria Police; the SSS; the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission; the Niger Delta Development Commission; NNPC; traditional rulers; and 10 representatives of civil society including youth, women, religious and peoples organizations

In preparation for the meeting, background papers were prepared on 10 issues we thought most relevant to peace and security in the Niger Delta: illegal arms importation, illegal oil bunkering, money laundering, disarmament, demobilization

and reintegration, drugs and cults, early warning system, reconciliation, corporate practices, and the media. During its first meeting, the Working Group identified 2 other major areas of concern- governance, values and ethics; and human capacity building/livelihood generation. Additional papers on these topics, as well as the strategic action plan, are being developed for the next meeting of the Working Group in late November.

NNPC and the Rivers State Government have provided the initial funding for the take-off of PaS. We shall be seeking additional funding from other state governments, the oil and gas industry, NDDC and foreign donors. To date interest has been very high, as all stakeholders- be they government, industry, indigenes of the area or the international community realize that the peace and security of the Niger Delta are vital to not only Nigeria but the region as a whole.

Copies of the background papers and further information can be obtained from the:

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A New Dawn for Partnering Between Government and Civil Society in Nigeria (contd)

Helen Osawe, Project Officer, AAPW Abuja

◀● *Continued from cover page*

(NSAs), which include Non Governmental Organizations, the Private Sector, and Civil Society Organizations. The acronym 'NSA', has all of a sudden become the choice word at meetings and gatherings which centre around discussing the performance of the Nigerian Government in relation to the rest of society. The history of the relationship between these two entities has been very embittered. The Federal Government has been accused, like the age old description of an English country-side aristocrat filled with self-importance, of having a “stiff upper lip” when it comes to engaging with people it considers subordinate to fully comprehend the intricacies of governance...or simply with people who show any sign of opposition to its rhetoric and policies. The Federal Government has also been accused of excluding the larger public on decisions that eventually affect the entire population. For instance, what is the 'Cotonou Agreement'? How many of us have even heard of this pact to which Nigeria is party, let alone understand what its ramifications are? NSAs on their part have been accused of making impossible demands, being impatient, and on some occasions unnecessarily forceful in their methods of getting their message across. Allegations and counter-allegations have been made with one accusing the other of being uncooperative, distant or even sometimes downright defiant, you would think one was referring to two women vying for the affections of one man...then again the similarities aren't that far-fetched, because we would hope that both Government and NSAs in this renewed effort of partnering are trying to win the affection and support of the Nigerian people vis-à-vis their ambition to improve the policy-making process, which will in the end improve the lot of the citizenry as a whole. Let there be no mistake, if the entire process is taken seriously by all stakeholders, it is going to be a Herculean task, but like they say, “it ain't over until the fat lady sings!”

In order to reiterate the importance of this new development, examples of events held in September 2005 which address the Government and NSA dichotomy are: the Special Retreat on Government/Civil Society Partnership Programme held in Kaduna, and the European Union consultative

meeting with Civil Society/NonState Actors where representatives of Federal Government parastatals were also invited to participate. During this EU seminar, which I was privy to attend, I was bombarded with all manner of acronyms and academic jargon that were meant to entice my democracy-loving brain cells, but the only thought which kept going through my mind was “haven't we heard all this before”? and will this renewed effort be allowed to succeed? The objectives of these meetings were essentially focused around the same theme of capacity building and providing the fora to initiate improved partnering between Government and Civil Society. Contributions from both sides of the fence were encouraged so as to reach a consensus on creating a fair framework to conceptualize, implement, regulate and evaluate the performance of partnership activities. However, I did go away from the seminar having learned something. My interests are centered around international business, and I learned that in order to successfully engage in it, I cannot ignore its linkage to the peaceful co-existence between Government and Civil Society, something I had never recognized before.

Come 2015, in regards to the goal of achieving the Millennium Initiative (which is being beaten like a worn-out camel), and even though a good majority still have reservations about the actualization of this noble goal, if poverty alleviation...or may I be bold enough to say eradication...hasn't been fully achieved, at least we will be on the right track. The increased awareness of the need to bring the Nigerian Government and Civil Society together, and the positive effects of a stable partnership is a constructive step towards attaining some of our goals.

To the naysayers out there, give Nigeria a break...it took most European countries 200 years to reach their current level of fair governance, and Nigeria is barely 50 years old. I'm optimistic about seeing light at the end of the tunnel concerning the progress of partnering that can be created between the Nigerian Government and NSAs...and I'll be looking out for the fat lady! ●

Ogoni Youth Camp: Success or Failure?

Lucky N. Duumaa And Lemene R. Ekeke
AAPW MacArthur/NDDC/Rivers State Office, Khana Local Government

The sporadic and spontaneous conflicts in the Niger Delta by the Youths, led the government of Rivers State to organize youth camping as a measure to reorientate and redirect their mindset from vices. This resulted in leadership and citizenship training at Shere Hills Jos, Plateau State for 700 former members of armed groups and other youth leaders in January, 2005.

The cry of marginalization by the few Ogoni youths who attended the January Camp resulted in the soliciting for funds and later camping for 340 Ogoni Youths from the four Ogoni Local Government Areas, namely: Khana, Gokhana, Tai and Eleme. A one week field survey was carried out to identify major ring leaders who were responsible for crises in the area and also constructive youths to achieve behavioural transformations. The camp held for one week in February 2005, and included Outward-Bound type of physical challenges supervised by the camp staff, as well as classes in conflict management, personal development, business training, community development and action planning, conducted by AAPW staff and consultants.

The Ogoni youth camp has come and gone but the dust raised still remains on the faces of leaves. It was a welcome development and milestone in the history of Ogoni youth development; the camp achieved a relatively high result, by redirecting and refocusing the mindset of the Ogoni youths who for a long period have suffered frustration, suppression and oppression in spite of their majority in the "geographical location" called Rivers State, following the confrontation between Ken



Lucky Duumaa and Lemene Ekeke in front of AAPW office. Bori, Khana Local Govt Rivers State

achieved from the youth camping in Jos. It was a magnificent experience and indeed had a great bearing on the mindset of the people for giving them a sense of belonging.

The outcome of the camp was tremendous and measurable. Comments from the youths who attended the camp actually showed that it was a great experience, exposure, and capacity building, as many of them were able to use the experience gained to involve themselves in meaningful and useful ventures for the benefit of their families as well as Ogoni at large.

After the camp, hopes of the people were raised and unrealistic false expectations were high owing to rumours started by confusionists who felt they did not benefit from largesse of the process. This is not an unusual action, especially in the Niger Delta where stakes are high and people who view themselves as not being in control of a process try to destroy it. For example, an action plan for the Ogoni youths had been developed during the camp in Jos. However at the grand reception accorded the Ogoni youths on their return from camp by the Executive Governor of Rivers State, Sir Dr. Peter Odili, a different action plan from the original was presented.

These kinds of divisions and undermining of one group by another have stymied human capacity development in the Niger Delta, especially Ogoniland. It is time for all of us to work together to return Ogoniland to its former glory, and to work collectively for the peace and development of our land.

The Mere Mention of HIV

Zara Goni
Project Officer, AAPW Abuja

The mere mention of HIV/AIDS makes my blood level rise. Is it the stigma or the disease that makes me feel this way? I really cannot say. I shiver and get paranoid anytime I see those posters with captions like “persons living with HIV are just like any other persons among you”, “AIDS no dey show for face etc.” While working with Internally Displaced Persons I had come in contact with Persons Living with HIV/AIDS and once upon a time I met a man who had full blown AIDS who stretched out his hand to shake me. I stood still, looked into his face and could not bring out my hand to shake him- I was sooo scared that I may contact the dreaded disease. As soon as I got back home I removed every cloth I had on and took a decent bath with an Antiseptic so that I was clean, at least that was how I felt. I never took any chances with HIV/AIDS and I was so scared of it. Never a time was I asked to work on any project concerning HIV/AIDS would I agree to do so, no matter the amount I was going to be paid for it.

In Nigeria the AIDS situation is pathetic. The country has been rated as the third most infected country in the world in terms of absolute numbers. This could be due to paucity of data- about its prevalence, lack of reliable information/data about orphans of HIV/AIDS victims, poor data on access to health care and poverty level of the various local governments, poor awareness of the pandemic in the various communities and lack of research work about the demography of HIV/AIDS by existing institutions in the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja).

Last year while I was studying in India, the FCT Action Committee on AIDS (FACA) advertised for partnership in working towards reducing the scourge. AAPW sent in a proposal and won an award to do an evaluation of HIV/AIDS prevalence and prevention in some area councils of the FCT. I was then called in to partner and



Zara Goni (third from right) helping John Cramsie of Resource Advisors, Australia celebrate his birthday in Abuja September 2005

many more stories. I started working on myself to believe that even though it is a deadly and dreaded disease I must help others discover its might!!!!!! So a behavioural change was needed. In fact every Nigerian has a stake in this campaign, it is everyone's responsibility to ensure the prevention and control of the disease and as a humanitarian worker, I must practice what I preach and this is the starting point. The objectives of the project are to evaluate and compile information on the current situation of HIV/AIDS in a given population around the FCT and utilize this information to enact and promote further action to diagnose, treat and educate those affected by the disease and assist the Federal Government in drawing guidelines aimed at reducing the disease. This we will do by conducting a survey through interviewing and counseling youths aged 19-24 years- the most vulnerable group.

My story now is that I am fully involved in the above mentioned project and I am highly interested in what I am doing, as it has not only kept me busy but it has also given me a total insight into how to deal with PLWHA. I have truly learnt a lot and I am still learning. WOW!!!!!! At last I am free. ■■■■■●

Degema Local Government Area: Problems and Prospects for Development

*Damiete Sanipe & Daniel Yellowe
AAPW MacArthur/NDDC/Rivers State Office, Degema*



Damiete Sanipe in front of the AAPW Degema office

Degema Local Government Area is one of the oldest administrative political units in Nigeria, with official colonial accounts suggesting that Degema Consulate, headquarters of the modern-day Degema LGA, pre-dates Port Harcourt, Rivers State capital. Contemporaries of Degema include Lokoja, Calabar, Ikot Abasi and Zungeru, famous for the activities of the Lander Brothers, Mungo Park and the Royal Niger Company. The ethnic groups in the local government are the Kalabaris, who constitutes the majority. There are also the Udekama, Bille and Bukuma ethnic groups with their distinct languages, dialect, cultures and local administrative structures. However, it is as a result of differences among these ethnic groups that had been the source of violent conflict in the areas.

It is appropriate to draw a firm distinction between the common problems of underdevelopment common in most rural communities in Nigeria and the intra and inter communal violent conflicts peculiar to Degema Local Government Area. Here, we find a growing concern over the last five years of crisis worsened by cults and armed militia, with their related violence of Ateke and Asari, which has spilled over whole communities. Most youths in these areas have made their communities vulnerable to violence at the least disagreement or provocation. Very often, land and chieftaincy disputes or struggles for political offices in the new democratic dispensation have left most communities devastated and in near irreparable ruin. Bakana, Tombia and Bukuma are good examples

even though the last two are the worse hit in this regards.

Added to this dimension is the oil-related violence as a result of oil exploration. The associated gas gathering (AGG) project by Shell Petroleum Development Corporation is located at Cawthorne Channel in Degema Local Government. Therefore, there had been continuous agitation for compensation by the host and impacted communities. The communities had often claimed that the pollution leaves the environment depleted, endangered and unable to sustain the regular daily subsistence agricultural practices of the communities. Unfortunately, the oil companies have been unable to

extricate themselves from the blame of employing divide-and-rule tactics in their management of the claims of the people for compensation in their overall community relations policies. Some are even accused of being too high-handed in dealing with cases of environmental degradation. According to members of the affected communities in Degema, the carrot-and-stick method of managing communal conflicts by government and oil companies arising from oil-related problems can best be equated with the old Gun-Boat Diplomacy techniques of the colonial master!! The consequences of this approach are always grave and counter-productive.

The problems of underdevelopment so identified can be resolved through the following measures:

? Evolving a massive stakeholder approach to addressing community development problems. A collaboration, of credible community development committees, government, NGOs, the Media, religious bodies and oil producing companies is advocated to evolve and management development programs in the LGA.

? A transparent result-oriented procedure involving the stakeholders for accounting for the finances of the communities from the companies, and projects from government, companies and NGOs must be backed by legislation to eliminate waste and distrust.

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Peace and Development Committees: Projecting Community Development in Karu

Yusuf Kassim Project Officer, Karu Local Government



Karu Peace and Development Staff ;Simon Iya, Lynda Abur, Yusuf Kassim (seated), Busola Ogunsanya, Helen Osawe, Mohammed Usman, Fatima Yakubu.

The central concern of any sustainable development project is how to make human beings lead a better life. There is development when, to borrow from Claude Ake, people pursue objectives they have set by themselves “in their own interest and by their own resources”. Here, the autonomy and the ability to choose for oneself, either as an individual or as a community are crucial. This is the only way by which the individual is the end, and not the means to an end. Viewed this way, one point becomes paramount: that development cannot be achieved by proxy. It is either a people develop themselves or they do not. This implies, inter alia, that they have by themselves participated directly in the process that leads to the improvement in their economic, social, political and moral life.

In order that communities in Karu Local Government of Nasarawa State are able to initiate, implement, monitor and evaluate new projects and maintain old ones, Academic Associates PeaceWorks {AAPW} organized a series of workshops aimed at capacity building in all aspects of development and conflict management. Most recent of such workshops was held between 4th- 5th March 2005 with the theme “extracting optimum service delivery from peace communities in Karu”. In attendance were district heads, ward heads, village heads, Karu business community and members of the communities. It was amazing to see leaders of communities being assigned to groups, cooperating among themselves using various practical tools to carry out team work, leadership, communication, resource mobilization and conflict management skills. It was as if they were all back to their youth playing football. I overheard Chief Habu Shawaza {District head of Kabusu}telling his group to cooperate and be committed so that their assigned task could

be accomplished in good time. Imagine what this means for community development.

The model in Karu is such that it provides a comfortable platform for partnering and networking between government and non-state actors, emphasizing a close working relationship between the federal, state, and local governments, nongovernmental organizations, community based organizations and external donors, all working towards the development of Karu. In such an environment therefore, it's natural that roles and interests clash, thereby negating the developmental drive in the communities. It is in this light that AAPW organized the first monthly stakeholders meeting, creating a channel of communication between them. Though stakeholders have their individual duties and responsibilities, it's very important to have a common role, common behaviour and a common commitment, developing a general and collective partnership towards development in Karu.

In a bid to convert community resources {land}into “kudi” meaning cash in Hausa, AAPW has over the years mobilized, sensitized and educated these communities on the benefit that can be derived from the production and processing of cassava. This is in line with the New Partnership for Africa Development {NEPAD}and the Federal government's Presidential Initiative on Cassava. Our “cassava evangelism” led to an explosion in the demand for high breed cassava stems in all the communities. Various government agricultural agencies such as the Root and Tuber Expansion Programme, Agricultural Development Project and the Nigeria Cassava Growers Association were contacted. But it became evident that there was no way we could meet the demand even when there were funds.

On Monday the 20th June 2005, the Executive Director AAPW led a delegation to the Honourable Minister of Commerce, Ambassador Idris Waziri who also doubles as the Chairman to the Presidential Initiative on Cassava. The team included the Esu Karu, Secretary to Karu Local Government, Chairman of the Karu Business and Economic Development Committee, the Karu LG Community Development Officer, and myself. The aim was to explore opportunities for capacity building on new methods of cassava production and processing and marketing the cassava from the PDC 6 hectare farm (sponsored by the Nasarawa State Governor) which is due for harvest in October.

Our meeting with the Honourable Minister paid-off when he announced his intentions to site the national pilot cassava project in Karu. These projects were to commence immediately and are to produce cassava chips for export to

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From the Desk of the Executive Director

Dr. Judith Burdin Asuni

You may well wonder why you have not seen an AAPW newsletter since September 2004. It is because October 2004-October 2005 has been one of the most challenging years of my life. I have spent much of the past year in Rivers State, working with the members of the armed groups, the state government, and security agencies in restoring peace to what was a highly volatile area. In the process, I have gained access to and good cooperation from the Governor, the Brigade Commander, the Commissioner of Police, MDs of various oil companies, as well as about 2000 adopted "sons" who are trying to change from being members of armed groups to being constructive members of society. Governor Odili recently commented that I have a peculiar affinity for these young men, and I realize that I derive incredible joy from seeing them take positive control of their lives.

Take for example Casi, who was the secretary to Ateke Tom during the armed struggle that ended October 1 last year. A few months prior to the cessation, Casi asked himself what they were doing and how joining a cult at the age of 14 for identity and protection, had led him at 27 into a vicious cycle of killing. Now after a process of mindset reorientation and financial assistance from the Rivers State Government, Casi is back as a final year undergraduate, studying political science. The topic of his final year essay? Political violence! I believe

that Casi should get an A on his paper. Don't you?

Casi is one of the 3 Wise Men- former leaders of confraternities who came together to preach peace and encourage other young people to avoid the path of violence. Casi was on the Ateke side, while Olo and JP were fighting with Asari. Now these three young men from different sides of the battle are working together. They spoke at a panel on political violence at a seminar organized by American University and the Yar'adua Centre, where they told eloquently about being used by politicians and then dumped. Their message is particularly relevant as we near the 2007 elections. They are only 3 of hundreds of young people who are trying to change their lives.

People often ask, "How did this happen?" It's an interesting and unusual combination of people working together to salvage a bad situation. After President Obasanjo invited the members of the fighting groups to Abuja in late September/early October of 2004, the leaders agreed to stop fighting and to hand in their weapons. A public destruction of weapons was held on November 15, documented by monitors from SaferAfrica in Pretoria. Very early in October, Von Kemedi and Miabiye Kuromiema of Our Niger Delta, and I had approached Gov. Odili about working on the



Charly Boy and Orits Wiliki visit the Rivers State youths at the citizenship & Leadership camp, Shere Hills Jos. January 2005

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From the Desk of the Executive Director (contd)

Dr. Judith Burdin Asuni

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Casi Boate, Judy Asuni, Senator Diffa and a representative of the Inspector General of Police at the seminar on political violence Yar'adua centre, Abuja, March 2005

disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the armed youths. We conducted case studies on the various groups, met with their leaders, and helped organize a meeting between the governor and about 50 youth leaders on November 19. We also joined the Rivers State Rehabilitation Committee, and worked with it on an action plan. One of the early steps of this plan was a December church service of confession and forgiveness, at which over 2000 young people, primarily men, gave up cultism and confessed their sins. Our Niger Delta organized a very exciting leadership and citizenship camp for 700 youths from Rivers State at Shere Hills, Jos, Plateau State in January 2005. In spite of the challenges of managing 700 youths who had been previously fighting each other, the camp was another step of a process of reorientation and mindset change. This process was further consolidated through technical skills training given to over 2000 youths, by Hon. Justice Mary Odili's TAP programme and the training at the Approved School, organized by Chief Priscilla Vikue of the Rehabilitation Committee.

We have come a long way in the past year, and Rivers State is basically peaceful, in spite of sporadic outbreaks of fighting, primarily intragroup power struggles. However there are many things left to be done. We still need serious livelihood generation activities, wherein the youths can receive realistic salaries through employment or self-employment. We need a great deal of enlightenment, to discourage the next crop of restless youths from becoming involved in political violence. Finally after almost one year, we now have a group called the Facilitators of the Rivers State Peace Process, which includes the Honourable Commissioner of Youth; the Chief Security Officer; the head of the police Swift Operation; the SSS

representative; head of the Nigerian Drug and Law Enforcement Agency; head of the Citizenship and Leadership Centre, Aluu; Chairman of the Rehabilitation Committee; representative of TAP; three youthful members of civil society; and myself. After being in the trenches together for the past year, we now have developed a relationship of trust and can maximize each one's potentials.

That is the principle of the newly inaugurated Peace and Security Strategy, as well as our partnering projects throughout the Niger Delta and in Karu. All of these are focused on building bridges of trust and cooperation among the various stakeholders in maximizing peace and development efforts.

It's been an exciting year with lots of rewards. But to be honest- I hope that the coming year is a bit less challenging! ■ ●

Peace and Development Committees (contd)

Yusuf Kassim

◀ ● *Continued from page 7*

China, Europe and America. His visit earned him the traditional title "Barden Karu" meaning a knight of the Karu Chiefdom. The same day, he proceeded to inspect the proposed land provided by Karu community (350-500 hectares). The project was on course but excellent ideas are like crying babies in the church or mosque who need to be carried out immediately.

It is worthy to note that a people can only develop if they are collectively committed to the public good as against their individual and private interest. It is by so doing that we can have both social amenities and infrastructures in our communities leading to positive improvement in our lives. ■ ●

From the Corpers' point of view

Busola Ogunsanya & Fatima Yakubu, AAPW Abuja

Serving with Academic Associates PeaceWorks is best described as an experience I know I won't forget in a hurry. The first day on the job I was drafted on the Karu team and that same day was taken to the Karu office to get a feel of things. A few weeks later I was on my first trip to Kugbaru and Katenyi, still under the Karu Local Government area, for a local Peace and Development Committee meeting. The road was bad, it was raining and the only good thing about the trip itself was the scenery and I kept thinking what I had gotten myself into. Thankfully by the time we arrived it had stopped raining. When the meeting with the community was over, it was time to visit the cassava farm, which as I soon found out was across what was supposed to be a small stream only it had risen to the point that we couldn't cross with the bus but we could wade in the water. DISGUSTING.

There are other local PDCs and the central Peace and Development Committee meetings where representatives of the various ethnic groups meet monthly to find ways of collectively moving their community forward. When I said various ethnic groups I meant Igbos, Yorubas, Tivs, Gbagis, the works- all coming together to build a peaceful brighter future. Along the line we had a wonderful addition in the person of Fatima Yakubu, another Youth Corper. Yes that's why she's wonderful; we Corpers are really something, aren't we? She has been following our activities in Karu with keen interest and decided to jump aboard not minding which team she would work with. The first time she came to AAPW she had no idea of what it took to work in an NGO. Like me she had heard a lot about them but never thought it involved such selfless service. Fatima found herself on the Karu team as well; for her being on a team with which she had already been familiar has made it easier to adjust. Those were the early days, let's fast forward a bit.

It's Tuesday the 27th of September precisely 4:45pm. Four members of our now seven strong Karu team trudge out of the Karu office. We have various things on our minds apart from writing proposals which of recent has really made our hands full. Two of us just missed lunch and one her regular ride home, but we have one thing in common, fulfillment, the feeling that comes from being a part of something meaningful, enhancing the Quality of Life of the ordinary man. It's a

feeling one would never trade for anything in the world. At this point you're probably wondering what's all the fuss about Karu? The Karu Local Government though in Nasarawa State shares a boarder with Abuja. Its proximity to the Federal Capital has brought a lot of economic migrants and more recently those in search of more affordable accommodation, which in time past has brought about the fear of dominance to the indigenes. It's as a result of this that our Executive Director implemented various activities which led to the birth of the PDCs and of course the Karu team.

Basically PeaceWorks is all about development, conflict resolution and management for a world of peace. As Youth Corpers we are both honored and proud to be a part of this organization. ■●

Degema Local Government Area: Problems and Prospects for Development (Contd)

*Damiete Sanipe & Daniel Yellowe
AAPW MacArthur/NDCC/Rivers State Office, Degema*

◀● *Continued from page 6*

? There must be a conscious attempt toward reorientation of the youth on the cultural and ethical values of honest, hard work, nonviolent agitation, due process and respect for the rule of law.

? Peaceful communities must be deliberately favoured in siting development projects to motivate others to embrace peace.

Degema Local Government is the 5th office of the Academic Associates PeaceWorks Partnering Project, and is sponsored by the Rivers State Government. The office opened in March 2005, with courtesy calls in different communities, followed by stakeholders' database collection, which is continuing. The on-going violence in some communities in the local government hampers our work but we believe that with the help of AAPW and the support of the people, we can contribute toward restoring peace and development in Degema Local Government.

The Stakeholders Partnership Committee: Visions and Expectations

*Festus Ugwuzuo, with contributions from Godwin Emenike Egbulefu & Chidinma Egbegbu
AAPW MacArthur/NDDC Office, Etche Local Government*

Following the successful conduct of the Second Stakeholders Meeting and the inauguration of Stakeholders' Partnership Committee for Etche Local Government, Rivers State, a new vista in community-driven development was ushered in. The body is made up of thirty persons of proven integrity drawn from the five clans with six members from each clan. I am the secretary of the committee.

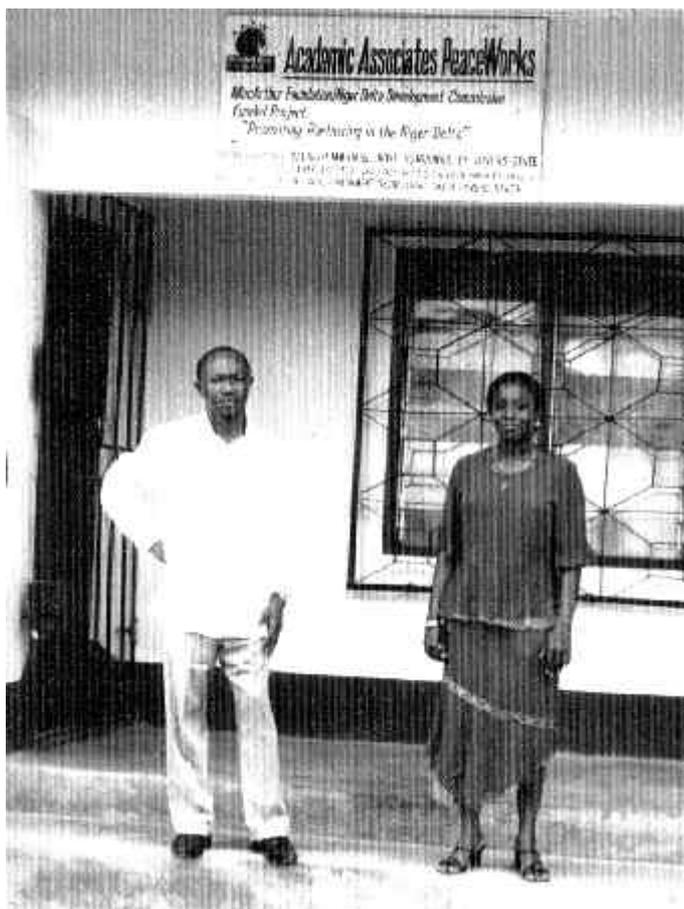
The committee has already begun to taste what it is like to shoulder its community's responsibilities by holding its first training workshop in strategy planning. This will prepare us with the necessary skills to face the challenging future task of planning activities that have bearing on the peace and development of Etche Local Government Area. We, the committee members are to intervene in issues that can be resolved to restore values in the community and usher in development. We are also to articulate the needs of the communities and move towards reaching them. Our first major task therefore is to draw an action plan that will enable us address these needs through constructive engagement with other stakeholders. That's what partnership is all about, I think! This also goes to show that "to whom much is given, much is also expected!

Our ability to perform therefore depends on our sense of purpose, the use of our skills in conflict management and conflict sensitive approach to development as well as our knowledge of our communities' interests, needs and fears. We believe that the combination of these skills and our volunteer initiatives would make us succeed. We however need to work hard in building the peace in our communities and identify potential partners so that together, we can sustain the stakeholder partnership. Before we can succeed, we need to make clear to our potential partners what we want to achieve; what or who

has to change to reach our goals; what change we have already achieved; and who are our partners in each situation.

Our goals and vision therefore are to restore peace and harmony throughout Etche by carrying out enlightenment campaigns on constructive conflict management for youths, community leaders, women, etc. We will try to alleviate the sufferings of Etche people through diplomatic approach and dialogue with state and local government as well as oil companies operating in Etche to live up to their social responsibilities in providing electricity, water, good roads, hospitals, schools for the people. We hope to double our efforts in reducing youth restiveness

by finding an outlet to channel their energy in meaningful activities like skills acquisition that will enable them to be self-reliant. We also hope that our activities will rejuvenate our cultural/social values to match with our present circumstances and redirect our people to use our traditional institutions to resolve their differences through the application of dialogue, which is the best option in conflict resolution. Finally, we believe the Stakeholders Partnership Committee of Etche will always work voluntarily by carrying out environmental scanning of the communities in order to identify and document existing and abandoned projects to enable government and companies to take action. ●



Godwin Emenike and Chidinma Egbegbu of the AAPW Etche office

Warri and Underdevelopment: Blame it on Ethnic Differences

*Kingsley Akeni, Franklin Ejoh and Francisca Abulu
AAPW MacArthur/NDDC Office, Warri South Local Government*



Kingsley Akeni and Franklin Ejoh of the AAPW Warri office

Warri, a city in southern Nigeria, is located in Delta State. It is a major port city in the Niger Delta and serves as the cargo transfer point between the Niger River and the Atlantic Ocean. It was visited by Portuguese missionaries

in the 15th century. Subsequently, it served as the base for English and Dutch slave traders. Warri developed during the late 1800's when it became a centre for the palm oil trade. The population has grown drastically since the 1960's because of the worldwide oil boom. The city has its strategic significance to the development of the nation's economy due to its contributions to foreign exchange earnings.

The Warri ethnic crisis, which blew into unimaginable proportions in the late 1990's practically snuffed life out of the local economy and crippled social life and the collective destiny and unity of the people. Warri had been a symbol and a demonstration of the Nigerian ethnic unity amidst cultural and language diversity. This was because it is populated by three heterogeneous ethnic groups- Urhobos, Ijaws and Itsekiris. These people lived peacefully and evolved a strikingly similar cultural affinity in terms of local food (delicacies), dressing, marriage rites, customs etc. This made everyone who grew up in the oil-rich town to be proud of being referred to as a "Warri boy" irrespective of age. Nightlife was characterized by social interactions and fun-seekers were treated to entertainments and jokes at various night clubs that inundated the area. This accounts for the fact that today the artistes who grew up in Warri are at the centre stage in the entertainment industry in the country. This was Warri!

However, it is indeed sad to note that with the advent of the erstwhile Warri ethnic crises of 1997, 1999, and 2003, things fell apart and the love and brotherliness that held the town together gave way to despair, sadness, gloom and sorrow. This was because people who had lived together in love suddenly turned on each other with suspicion and hatred. Never in the history of the locality had its people been brought so close to the total absence of basic social amenities and psychological trauma as was the situation after the crises. Many communities, mostly in the riverine areas, were sacked leading to a mass exodus of people to Warri urban, thereby heightening the housing problems and creating social tensions.

However things have improved considerably over the past two years, with the reestablishment of peace by the Joint Task Force and various governmental and civil society initiatives. The fact that the riverine waterways are safe was recently underscored when a civil society group brought a pre-delegation team of Americans to visit the locality. This was done without a single military escort and they actually stayed for days in Oporoza community, a village along the Escravos River in Warri Southwest Local Government area. The full delegation team is expected in November 2005.

There is also need for deliberate programmes and actions by relevant agencies and institutions geared towards urban- rural migration with built in capacity for the development of the local economy to sustain livelihoods. During the height of the Warri crises, virtually no development agencies were willing to work in the area. The challenges of advocating for serious commitment on the part of donor and government agencies to carry out development projects/work in the area has been quite enormous but we on the AAPW team have remained undaunted in our efforts. We have proven to skeptics through the EU-funded projects currently going on in the area that their excuse that the area is volatile is a fallacy and deliberate falsehood designed to allow the status quo of lack of development to remain. AAPW successfully carried out advocacy efforts that made it realistic for the European-Union (EU) funded micro projects to be implemented for the first time ever in the Warri area!

Already, the rebuilding of age- long ties and unity amongst the ethnic group is becoming grounded by the day with economic and social linkages being promoted

Continued on page 13 

TV Drama Reaching out to Nigerian Youth

*Dora Payi
AAPW Abuja*

Academic Associates PeaceWorks has been collaborating with Search for Common Ground, a well-known international NGO, and its production arm, Common Grounds Productions (CGP) for several years. I know we have been talking about the TV Drama Project for quite sometime now, but I am very pleased to inform you that we have finally developed a curriculum, written scripts, obtained a studio in Omole area of Lagos and, wait for this, auditioned performers through "The Academy" which will be aired as a quasi-Reality Show!!! . The Academy is going on air in early October, followed by the actual tv drama, The Station in time for the December holiday period.

Academic Associates PeaceWorks (AAPW), in partnership with Common Ground Productions (CGP) proposes to develop a set of community-based outreach activities to accompany the broadcast of the thirteen episode television drama series. The Station which is aimed at Nigerian urban youth ages 15 to 25 is the story of an independent television news station in Nigeria that covers the entire country and all sectors of society. The philosophy of The Station is to be completely unbiased and fairly represent every side to each complicated story. This program is a character-based drama series, meaning the primary characters in the story are protagonists who lead the viewers in and out of stories, messages, solutions and problems all of which have been chosen in order to address issues that are of most concern to Nigerian youth.

The outreach activities are aimed at reinforcing key important areas of the population's understanding of the lessons conveyed through the television series and to apply them to everyday life in Nigeria. It is envisaged that the program will reach urban areas throughout the country and will address the issues of young people's sense of powerlessness, insecurity, lack of national identity, and need for social action. The television show will impact society's knowledge and attitudes around these issues, setting an ideal for society to which people aspire.

The whole idea of this Project is to reach out to the Nigerian youth and to help take across the message of youth restiveness and unemployment and their resultant effect on the nation's economy and existence, from loose gangs in Lagos known as Area Boys to the armed militia in the Niger Delta region to cults in universities. The planned outreach activities include: a column in national newspapers; discussion guides and tapes/VCDs of the

series given free of charge to video houses, religious organizations, etc.; youth radio; videos on youth who have turned their lives from negative to positive; photo exhibitions of youths' life stories; and leadership training for youth. The Station and the outreach activities will aim at helping the youth to increase their sense of power, security and national identity. They are designed to model behaviors of non-violence, mutual respect and understanding.

With the support of the Federal Government of Nigeria and other donor agencies who have understood the importance and value of this project especially as it deals with Nigerian youth and those from other parts of the world as well, The Station will be coming your way soon and very soon. ■●

Warri and Underdevelopment: Blame it on Ethnic Differences

*Kingsley Akeni, Franklin Ejoh and Francisca Abulu
AAPW MacArthur/NDDC Office, Warri South Local Government*

◀● ■● *Continued on page 12*

amongst them without regard to tribal differences. It is painful to remark that the various multinational exploration companies have continued to maintain that the Warri urban metropolis area is not a core area for their operations even though it plays hosts to their corporate offices. Even more bewildering is that the rural communities from where the oil resources come which are predominantly riverine communities are claimed to be unsafe and too volatile for communal development assistance. We have punctured these arguments in various meetings and forums and interactions with them. The Warri area is safe and its peoples whose lifestyles have been adversely affected are war-weary, eager and expectant of any lifeline to better their collective lot in terms of projects. It is most imperative to note that it is only the development of the people and communities that can engender lasting peace because a threat to peace anywhere is a threat to peace everywhere. ■●

Problems of the upcoming Integrated Oil and Gas Project in Gbarain/Ekpetiama

*Eriye Tuaweri and John Waripamo
AAPW office Gbarain/Ekpetiama*

The coming of the multi billion naira integrated oil and gas project to Gbarain/Ekpetiama Local Government of Bayelsa State was highly celebrated by the people of the area. As their prayers for development of the area were answered by Almighty God, they did not envisage the possible conflict that would arise. The project on its own is indeed a blessing to the people because every area of their lives would be touched, for both the people now and the next generation to come.

The first sign of problems came about during the conduct of the Environmental Impact Assessment. A consulting firm (name withheld) was contracted by Shell to carry out the exercise. However, only 2 people from the 17 communities were on the EIA team. Even so, they did not take part in the exercise. They were only invited by the consulting firm to Yenagoa, the state capital, to make their input on the finished report. The two representatives were not only angry with the way the EIA was conducted, but were disappointed with the fact that Shell included their names as members of the EIA team in the finished report. The two representatives have since taken the matter to court, as they do not want to be associated with what they perceive as an inadequate exercise.

Other problems such as land ownership, sharing of compensation money for land acquisition by SPDC, nonimplementation of MOU, chieftaincy and leadership tussles, which usually characterized the relationship between communities and oil companies in the Niger Delta, also began to arise in Gbarain/Ekpetiama. As at the time of writing this article, the communities are polarized along the lines of those who are to benefit from the gas gathering project and those who will not. This unhealthy

situation is compounded by the fact that some corrupt government and company officials are cashing in on the helplessness of the communities to make money out of the whole situation. During the recently held AAPW Second Stakeholders Meeting, some youths confessed that they were neither aware that EIA training was conducted by AAPW for leaders of the communities nor the subsequent EIA exercise that was carried out in the communities.



Eriye Tuaweri, Weke Iwekumo and John Waripamo in front of the AAPW office Gbarain/Ekpetiama

The communities had even begun making a comparison between Gbarain/Ekpetiama and the Garden of Eden in the Bible, saying just like Eden, Gbarain/Ekpetiama is blessed with abundant mineral resources (crude oil). But the people are not allowed to enjoy it (forbidden fruit!) due to the callous manner they are treated by the oil companies. That's why recently the youths from Ogboloma stopped the dredging work in their communities! To make matters worse, even compensation paid to land owners was not uniform. This had led some families to reject the compensation paid to them. However, just like most communities in the Niger Delta,

some families had gone ahead to collect their compensation, despite the irregularities. Don't blame them though. They are just trying to survive in the harsh impoverished condition they were subjected to!

As part of the MacArthur/NDDC partnering project, we the AAPW staff in Gbarain/Ekpetiama with assistance from the project directors, will attempt to bring genuine representatives of the community together with the companies working in the area, with the objectives of clearing these misunderstandings and encouraging the companies to follow best corporate practice. ■●

Here & There

New Arrivals/Entrances & Exits!!!

Dora Payi



Tammy Abaku, our new admin officer, with project director, Danjuma Saidu, AAPW Port Harcourt

Entrances

We have 3 new members of staff at the Abuja Office. They are Helen Osawe, Busola Ogunsanya and Fatima Yakubu. They are presently working on our Peace and Development Project in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.

We also have Tamuno Abaku who is the new Admin/Accounts Officer for the Port Harcourt Office. We are greatly impressed by her efficiency and hardwork. Keep it up. We are not forgetting Nenebari Ogali who is at the Peace and Security Office, Port Harcourt.

And guess who is back. ZARA! Zara went for a Master's Program in Human Resource Planning & Development at the Institute of Applied Manpower Research, New Delhi India. She is now working on the FACA HIV/AIDS project and IDPs.

Exits

Remember Gato? He was an IT intern from the Global Information Internship Program, (GIIP), Santa Cruz, California. He left last year shortly before Christmas after spending 6 months working with Organizations and their staff on website development.



Janice Whang and Derin Asuni

Janice Whang was here from Harvard University to intern with Centre for Democracy and Development to know more about the process of

Democratization and Gender issues in Nigeria. She came May 2005 and left July 2005. She stayed here at AAPW and was part of the family for that short a time

New Arrival

Kate Onuoha who was Admin Officer in the Port Harcourt Office has a baby boy. His name is Kennedy Kamsiyochim Ndisreke Abasi Onuoha. He was born on 28 June, 2005.

Congratulations Kate!



Kennedy Kamsiyochim Ndisreke Abasi Onuoha

Wedding Bells!

Danjuma Saidu, who has been our Peace Education Officer and who is presently managing the Mac Arthur Partnering Project in the Niger Delta got married to Fati on May 21, 2005. He is getting used to married life and doing a good job at it. Wishing them the very best.



Rev Victor Musa (Chairman, AAPW Board of Trustees) blessing the marriage of Danjuma and Fatima Sa'idu. Jos, May 2005

Friends & Associates

An Australian firm, Resource Advisors, is here in Nigeria to provide consultancy services to the Federal Ministry of Solid Minerals by helping to attract the international minerals exploration and investment industries back to Nigeria. They are Ken McMahon, John Cramsie, Geoff Applegate and Graeme Deegan. ■ ●

AAPW Offices



AAPW Head Office, Abuja.



New AAPW Office, Port Harcourt, Rivers State



The 'community' office complex housing the Peace and Security Secretariat, International Centre for reconciliation, our Niger Delta and AAPW

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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