



*A Practical Framework for Empowering
Citizens, Families & Communities*



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NATIONAL CATHOLIC HANDBOOK ON SELF-RELIANCE AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE:

*A Practical Framework for Empowering Citizens,
Families & Communities*




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FOREWORD

Our society faces a multitude of challenges: poverty, youth unemployment, insufficient access to basic amenities, and environmental crises, all of which continue to deepen existing vulnerabilities. In response, the Church feels an urgent responsibility to act by leveraging its expansive network to support those who are most in need.

In fact, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, through its Church and Society Department, has long recognized the need to address the socioeconomic challenges facing our nation. It is with this commitment in mind that we are pleased to present the *National Catholic Handbook on Self-Reliance and Community Resilience: A Practical Framework for Empowering Citizens, Families & Communities*. It originated from the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the department in 2023 as the fruit of the robust academic presentations and shared experiences from Nigeria and Bangladesh on the need, urgency and opportunities of deploying the Church's structures and capillary service channels to drive economic and social transformation.

Our goal with this publication is to encourage parish leaders, Catholic lay organizations, and communities to envision self-reliance and resilience as attainable and vital to our mission as a Church. They are to actively engage in resource mobilization, small-scale enterprise, cooperative development, and educational outreach to foster economic sustainability and social cohesion. At the same time, we underscore the importance of solidarity and compassion as key tenets of resilience, knowing that our faith calls us to serve not only ourselves but also our neighbours. It lays out a structured approach that builds upon our parishes' unique position as hubs for community engagement and development, offering practical, actionable strategies rooted in our faith and values. It is designed as a vital tool, drawing upon Catholic Social Teaching to inspire economic self-reliance and

foster resilience among communities in Nigeria, beginning from Catholic parishes and their outstations.

The *National Catholic Handbook on Self-Reliance and Community Resilience* is structured into three sections. The first section provides a foundational understanding of self-reliance and community resilience from the Catholic perspective, contextualizing these principles within the teachings of the Church and our scriptural call to care for one another. Here, we emphasize the moral imperative to promote human dignity, recognizing that poverty and disenfranchisement are affronts to the sanctity of life. Economic empowerment and social justice, as outlined in Catholic Social Teaching, are not mere aspirations; they are mandates for which the Church must take up its mantle of leadership.

The second section of the handbook details practical strategies for building resilience within communities, focusing on income generation, financial literacy, and sustainable resource management. This section, partitioned according to the submissions of the diocesan directors of the five composite units of the Church and Society department (Education, Family and Human Life, Health, JDPC and Migration and Refugees), provides overarching guidance on how to establish parish-based structures and systems to drive savings and cooperative groups, small businesses, and skills acquisition centres. Through such initiatives, we aim to foster economic independence and resourcefulness among our people. By guiding communities to establish sustainable livelihood projects, we encourage them to rely on their strengths, skills, and resources to break the cycle of poverty and become more resilient to economic shocks. The final part of the book presents the case of Katsina-Ala diocesan Self-Reliance Commission showcasing in practical terms how the Church can walk the talk...

At the operative points, the handbook affirms that resilience is not just an individual effort but a communal one. We cannot overemphasize the importance of fostering unity, setting up networks of support, and

creating channels for effective and strategic communication. Collaboration and partnerships between parishes and across dioceses are viable strategies for building and sustaining resilience and readiness for unexpected challenges, whether they be environmental, economic, or social. As a Church, community resilience is anchored on the understanding that collective strength can lead to individual empowerment and stability.

The principles of subsidiarity and solidarity serve as the backbone of this handbook. Subsidiarity calls us to support local solutions, empowering parish communities to take initiative in addressing their specific challenges while being supported by the Church's broader framework. Solidarity reminds us that we are interconnected, and each community's wellbeing contributes to the wellbeing of the nation as a whole. We call upon our parishes, organizations, and the laity to see themselves as agents of transformation, empowered by their faith and called to contribute to the common good.

In a world facing significant social and economic upheavals, this handbook is a call to action, challenging all of us to move beyond charity and instead work towards lasting empowerment and resilience. The Church stands committed to supporting these efforts by providing guidance, resources, and support to parishes as they embark on this journey of transformation. Together, we can foster a self-reliant and resilient Nigeria, where individuals, families, and communities thrive, rooted in the dignity and hope our faith provides.

It is our prayer that this handbook will serve as both a guide and an inspiration. May it be a catalyst for growth, resilience, and a strengthened spirit of empowerment. Let us remember the words of St. Paul, who reminds us, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13). Guided by our faith, we can work to build a future where self-reliance and community resilience are not just goals but realities within our reach.

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Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria

Abuja.

November, 2024

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADR	-	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AGM	-	Annual General Meeting
CAFOD	-	Catholic Agency for Oversea Development
CBCN	-	Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria
CMO	-	Catholic Men Organization
CWO	-	Catholic Women Organization
CYON	-	Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria
CRS	-	Catholic Relief Service
CSN	-	Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria
CST	-	Catholic Social Teaching
CT Scan	-	Computed Tomography
ECG	-	Electrocardiography
FHLU	-	Family and Human Life Unit
JDPC	-	Justice Development and Peace Commission
M & R Unit	-	Migrants and Refugees Unit
MEAL	-	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MRI	-	Magnetic Resonance Imaging
NBS	-	National Bureau of Statistics
NCE	-	National Certificate of Education
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization
NHIA	-	National Health Insurance Authority
SDG	-	Sustainable Development Goal
SHG	-	Self-help group
SVC	-	Second Vatican Council
PADEF	-	Participatory development framework

PTA	–	Parents Teachers Association
PTF	-	Parents Trust Fund
WAD	–	World AIDS Day
WHO	–	World Health Organization



CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE FOR THIS HANDBOOK

Background

Roman Catholicism is among the dominant Christian dominations in Nigeria with millions of congregants. Meanwhile, according to the National Bureau of Statistics, 133 million (66.5%) of the country's estimated 200 million population live in “multidimensional poverty”, (NBS, 2022). Further, in 2019, the country was designated the “poverty capital” of the world (Brooklyn Institution). The poverty indices have been exacerbated by dwindling economic fortunes, evidence-poor policies, a weak health system, spiraling insecurity, political fragility, and a rise in migration or in this case brain drain (the *japa* syndrome).

Given the aforementioned, a few questions come to mind. Consequently, looking at the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations, it important for the Church to key into these goals which in essence addresses the various aspects of social justice and development, and is focused on all persons with the motto of this 2030 Agenda “Leave no One Behind”. It is necessary to ask questions

like what should the Catholic Church do to assuage the intensity and impact of the palpable poverty toga on the citizens? How can the Nigerian Church operationalize the Catholic Social Teaching in order to arrest the multifaceted indignities of poverty and facilitate the integral development of the poor and vulnerable; pulling them away from the morass of squalor toward economic self-sufficiency?

It is thus obvious that economic empowerment is an existential imperative for Nigerians at the present time of our national life. Fortunately, the Church possesses robust operational experience and the organizational structures to spearhead countercurrent transformations needed in this regard. Thus, in addition to its widely acclaimed successes in education, healthcare, and social justice initiatives, the multitude of Nigeria's subdued poor now looks up to the Church to leverage its penetrative community networks, experiences, and sundry resources to address poverty on multiple fronts. By intervening at the intersection of economic empowerment, self-reliance, and community resilience, the Church would be actuating the mandate of Jesus Christ, “*Give them something to eat...*” Sustainable development would be fostered while its missionary mandate thrives.

The 2023 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Church and Society department of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria brought together scholars, practitioners, and pastoral workers to ventilate the country's poverty ramifications and to craft a practicable roadmap for the way forward. The theme for the AGM was *Economic Empowerment and Capacity Strengthening for Self-Reliance and Community Resilience*. The following are excerpts from the resolutions of the AGM:

Economic Empowerment and Capacity Strengthening

- i) As Nigeria has been declared the poverty capital of the world with over 133 million citizens living in multidimensional poverty, economic empowerment and capacity-strengthening of persons, families and communities are viable means to

resilience and sustainable poverty alleviation.

- ii) Twelve types of empowerment scenarios have been identified: economic, social, educational, political, psychological, gender, community, organizational, cultural, physical, individual, and religious. These categories, if responsibly and faithfully explored, have the potential to lift majority of the citizenry out of multidimensional poverty. In combination, they not only improve the means of livelihood and material well-being, but also enhance the personal dignity, mindset and macro-environments in which citizens live, work and pursue happiness and prosperity.
- iii) Mainstreaming women and youth in local economic development are critical adjuvants in holistic poverty eradication efforts. The continued exclusion of women and youth from the nation's democratic processes, appointive positions, and in major national decision making perpetuate mediocrity, underdevelopment and intergenerational distrust. The refusal by grand- and great-grand parent politicians to relinquish power to younger Nigerians is a very serious impediment to our country's progression into the 21st century and beyond.
- iv) The decentralization of political and economic activities through restructuring of the governance systems has proven efficacy in producing rapid economic transformation and people empowerment at the grassroots. Ultimately, development is local: facilitated access to capital is a low-hanging fruit strategy for moving families and communities out of the poverty circuit. The concentration of economic activities within the central and state governments; and the seeming neglect of the local governments and community leaderships has hindered meaningful progress.

- v) Handing out financial tokens as palliatives is an ineffective and inefficient strategy to economic revival. In fact, such evidence-poor approaches only promote politically-motivated impoverishment of the citizens and perpetuate the weaponization of poverty. The sustainable approach is *to teach the people how to fish, not giving them fish crumbs!*

Recommendations by the 2023 AGM of CSN's Church and Society Department

The participants at the 2023 AGM recommended as follows, that:

1. The Church and the governments at all levels should deliberately create avenues to promote individual and/or community economic empowerment, capacity-building, vocational skills development, entrepreneurial training, and support for self-reliance and sustainable livelihood. These initiatives are visible steps in upholding and championing the principles of the Catholic Social Teachings.
2. The government should develop and implement pro-poor policies, programmes and activities working through faith-based and community-based organizations to reach the target populations at the grassroots targeting rural dwellers, urban slums and persons at the margins of society (widows, internally-displaced persons, people living with disabilities, returnee migrants, etc.).
3. Nigerians should demand the strengthening of government institutions to promote the rule of law, holistic people empowerment, the common good and national development including cutting down the cost of governance and channeling the freed resources to genuinely supporting the citizens to attain improved economic self-sufficiency and quality of life.

Guidelines for Self-Reliance and Community Resilience Programmes

The Church and its functionaries need to work with, and for, the individual person. Wealth and richness first and foremost begin with the particular person, at the micro-level. Therefore, both educational and catechetical encounters with the faithful in addition to their spiritual focus have to also incorporate self-survival and economic wellbeing strategies. Specifically, pious societies, lay sodalities, community/state associations and groups including the three statutory bodies (Catholic Men Organization, Catholic Women Organization and Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria (CYON) are to be mandated and supported to expose their respective members to entrepreneurial and business development opportunities through seminars, trainings and guest speaker sessions.

At the family (meso-level), efforts are to be geared in the following key areas:

- Leadership Training to include the catholic business ethics (integrity, honesty and incorruptible standards. The need for continuous training cannot be overemphasized.
- Formation of Self-Help Groups whereby persons of like minds, like trades, neighbourhoods or parish form mutual support teams to support themselves including holding one another accountable for meeting group decisions.
- Prioritizing Women and Youths – based on the Bangladeshi experience, focus more on women and young people to drive the micro-level initiatives.
- Building Partnerships and Collaboration with persons and organizations of like mind, faith or ethics.

- Linkages to Local Financial Sources including philanthropists, microfinance banks and lending outfits that do not prey on the helplessness of the self-help groups.

At the macro-level, in the following short chapters, we present the overarching approaches that were articulated by the national coordinators of the five units of the Church and Society department of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN). They considered these as actionable, practicable measures to enable Catholic faithful and other citizens of goodwill in Nigeria to lift themselves and their families out of the morass of poverty.

- Education Unit
- Family and Human Life Unit
- Health Unit
- Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) Unit
- Migrants and Refugees Unit
- Case Study of Katsina Ala's Self-Reliance Commission



CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO CATHOLIC APPROACH FOR SELF-RELIANCE

Changing the Poverty Narrative: *One Family at A Time!*

In the rapidly evolving landscape of our nation, the urgency and criticality of fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and business sense development at home and in schools cannot be overemphasized. As we navigate the exigencies of our ever-changing realities, it has become imperative to equip our youth and women with the right skills and mindset necessary to thrive in the dynamic challenges that lie ahead.

The fourth industrial revolution is upon us, marked by unprecedented technological advancements, global connectivity, and a paradigm shift in the economy of the nation. In this era of rapid transformation, the traditional models of education are proving insufficient to prepare individuals for the demands of the future. The ability to innovate, think entrepreneurially, and understand the intricacies of business is no longer luxury but a fundamental necessity.

At home, parents play a pivotal role in cultivating a culture of

innovation. It begins with fostering a mindset that embraces curiosity, resilience, and a willingness to take risks. By encouraging children to explore their interests, experiment with ideas, and learn from failures, we lay the foundation for a generation capable of adapting to the uncertainties that lie ahead.

In schools, the curriculum should reflect the evolving needs of our society, emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education is paramount, but it should not be isolated from the development of critical soft skills such as creativity, problem-solving, and effective communication. Entrepreneurship education should be integrated into the core curriculum, providing students with practical experiences that mirror the real-world challenges of starting and running a business.

The urgency lies in our ability to bridge the gap between education and industry demands. The pace of change in technology and the global economy requires a workforce that is not just well-educated but also possesses an entrepreneurial spirit. Our nation's future prosperity hinges on our ability to produce individuals who can not only adapt to change but drive it forward.

The call to action is clear: we must invest in educational strategies that prioritize innovation, entrepreneurship, and business sense development. By doing so, we empower the next generation to be architects of their own success, contributors to economic growth, and catalysts for positive change in our evolving nation. The time to act is now, as the future belongs to those who can innovate, create, and navigate the complexities of an ever-changing world.

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Catholic Women Organization of Nigeria Leads the Change

In providing this brief commentary on the participation of women in the capacity building initiative in the Church, I sincerely commend the Catholic Church for this laudable initiative with the theme "Economic Empowerment and Capacity Strengthening for Self-Reliance and community Reliance"

This could not have come at a better time than now that families are struggling with the harsh economic situation in the country.

Investing in women's economic empowerment sets a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth. Women make enormous contributions to economies, whether in businesses, on farms, as entrepreneurs or employees, or by doing unpaid care work at home. But they also remain disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination and exploitation.

The key Church structure for the economic revival of individuals, families, parishes and communities is the Catholic Women Organization of Nigeria at all levels: national, provincial, diocesan, parish and outstation). I am therefore calling on women at all levels to key into this noble initiative of the Church and partner together to gain greater control over their own future development as it holds the key to upturning the economic quagmire that most families are currently facing. In the face of poverty, women can and should become beacons of hope for resilience through self-sufficiency.

Dame Mary Asibi Gonsum
National President

Catholic Women Organization Nigeria



CHAPTER 3

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR SELF-RELIANCE AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN NIGERIA: A CHRISTIAN SOCIO-ETHICAL REFLECTION

Introduction: Nature and Mission of the Church

The Church is the Body of Christ; the community of the people of God, gathered by the Holy Spirit and on the way to the kingdom of God. Hence, the Church is both divine and human, spiritual and physical. The Church exists in time, while pointing to eternity. The Church exists to continue the mission of Jesus Christ, who came to bring about the holistic salvation of man (cf. Jn. 10:10). This salvation is both spiritual and temporal; hence, the Christian mission is not only to lead men to eternal salvation, but also to shape the world in which they are now living. Pope Paul VI affirms the inseparability of the spiritual and temporal concerns of man when he says that “between the Gospel ... and human advancement there are in fact profound links. These include links of an anthropological order, because the man who is to be evangelized is not an abstract

being but one subject to social and economic questions.”¹

While seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, Christians expect “other things” to be added (cf. Mt. 6:33). Like everyone else, Christians want to be successful in their earthly endeavours; they desire to enjoy the fruits of their labours and live dignified lives. Besides, the Church teaches that the kingdom of God has both temporal and eschatological dimensions. In other words, the peace, joy and blessings of the kingdom can be experienced in the world while we wait for its full realization in heaven. Hence, the people of God can expect to have the basic necessities of life and already enjoy God's blessings in this world.

Human Well-Being and the Christian Attitude to Material Wealth

Being able to meet temporal needs and enjoy the blessings of the earth aligns perfectly with the will of God. The biblical account of creation supports the idea that God created earth for the wellbeing and happiness of the human person (see Gen.1:1-31). Faith also tells us that God continues to sustain the created world in his love and providence. However, God's providence does not preclude the necessity of human effort in sustaining his own life. Man should be able to access the wealth in creation through creative work, and utilize it for his own benefit.

Indeed, Jesus Christ taught his followers not to be overly anxious about material things (cf. Mt. 6:25-34); but he also showed them the value of industry as well as mobilization and management of resources to cater for human needs. He showed the dignity of labour; and being known as the carpenter's son, and he willingly worked with the tools of his trade. In the story of the Good Samaritan, he taught about charity and humanitarian engagement (cf. Lk. 10:25-37); in feeding the crowds, he

¹PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation: *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, AAS 68 (1976) 9-6, n.31.

also exemplified the need for intervention in crisis situations, demonstrating leadership in helping people deal with the vagaries of life (cf. Mk. 6:37).

Though he saw investing and saving as important (Mt. 25:27), Jesus did not approve the amassing of wealth and financial resources as a way of securing the future or attaining life's goals (cf. Lk. 12:15). In fact, he warned against materialism, greed, avarice and the idolatry of serving Mammon. The Scriptures are filled with many warnings about the danger of riches, such as the difficulty for a rich man to enter heaven and that the love of money as the root of all evil (cf. Mt. 19:23-24; 1Tm. 6:10). However, the intense and unabated craving for money, especially to satisfy vain desires, is not to be equated with the effort to satisfy legitimate needs. In itself money is neutral; its value is assigned by man and it can be used for evil and for good. So, despite his warning, Jesus did not disapprove, regard or scorn money and the value it has for securing the goods of life. Indeed, in engaging in economic activities, Jesus handled money. In his itinerant ministry he kept money in his company; he used it to teach vital lessons of life and the kingdom. He also used money to fulfil his civic responsibilities, pay dues and meet the needs and obligations of life.

Historical Contributions of The Church to Human Development Through Economic Interventions

In carrying out her mission in the world, the Church has always sought to maintain the right balance between spiritual progress and material prosperity. Like Jesus, the Church denounces the avarice, covetousness and vanity that often accompanies worldly gain and material prosperity; but so also the negligence, unaccountability and irresponsibility that engender poverty and other deprivations (for example, the prodigal son in Lk. 15:11-32). Without acceding to the fallacy of the gospel of prosperity, which correlates spiritual and material progress, the Church recognizes wealth can be a blessing from God.

Wealth creation is a legitimate human activity; it is an expected

outcome of conscientious and productive economic activity. Over the centuries, the Church has helped to shape the economic fortunes of peoples and societies. In medieval Europe, ecclesiastical leaders were in charge of local economies and helped to secure the material sustenance of the poor majority. They also helped to bring about economic innovation and productivity, as we find in the monasteries that excelled in economic activities like brewing, bakery, wood and metal works, science and technology. Medieval monasticism pioneered education and research that promoted self-reliance, showing the inevitability of economic engagement for human development.

However, as the economic sector became more specialized, particularly with the disintegration of the feudalism of the late Middle Ages, the influence of the Church as a key economic actor also diminished remarkably. As the economic sector, with its new-found autonomy and impulse developed rapidly both ideologically and materially, the role of the Church shifted more to a moral one: constantly insist on the parameters of economic progress, namely, that the human person is the originator, the centre and the goal of the economy². The historical change of the Church's role in the socioeconomic domain also means that she does not offer any specific economic model. Indeed, the technical competence of the Church in the context of contemporary global economy is admittedly limited as her primary duty in this regard is to permeate the social order with higher and nobler values. However, this is not to be mistaken as a denial of the task of making practical contributing to socioeconomic development.

In the post-modern society, the Church has continued to play an essential role in the economic domain. Since *Rerum Novarum*³, the Church has taken a stand that has had concrete economic implications.

²See Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes* (promulgated by His Holiness, Pope Paul VI on December 7, 1965) n.63.

³Issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 and acclaimed as the acclaimed first social encyclical of the modern era.

Pope Leo XIII's teaching on the condition of workers, the terms of economic contracts, the right to private property or the right to form associations was an effective response to the economic injustices of the time in Europe, arising from the uncontrolled tendencies of pure capitalism and economic liberalism. The impact of the Church's social teaching since has been enormous on socioeconomic issues, particularly in Western societies that adopted it⁴.

In addition to helping to craft the theoretical foundations of developed economies, through the principles of her social teaching, such as respect for human life and dignity, the common good, solidarity and subsidiarity, the Church has continued to make considerable impact through action and enterprise. This is evident in investment in education, healthcare, industrial innovation, and various initiatives leading to wealth-creation as well as social, cultural and economic transformation for individuals and communities. Economic prosperity and the attendant goods and freedoms are part of the continuing legacy of the Church and Christianity in many parts of the world.

Helping to bring about human development through economic prosperity was an important element of western missionary endeavours in Nigeria in the late 19th through the greater part of the 20th centuries. Many initiatives and projects were directed at helping to fight poverty, disease, ignorance, obnoxious cultural practices and other forms of underdevelopment. The successes of those and subsequent endeavours helped to establish the Church as a force for good in Nigeria.

⁴Bishops' conferences like those of Germany, the United States of America, England and Wales, as well as others have made crucial contributions to the shaping of the economic structures of their countries and thus the development and well-being of their people. In Germany for instance, so instrumental was the Church in socioeconomic and political reconstruction that it is often said that Catholics were the "actual discoverers" of the republic.

The Challenge of Continuing the Church's Legacy in Nigeria

Having embraced Christianity, Nigerians expect the Church to continue to make impact in their concrete existential lives. Millions of Nigerians today owe their progress and livelihood to the presence and efforts of the Church in the economic sector. Indeed, the Church has recorded great success through many interventions, mostly with the support of foreign contributions. However, with the era of the foreign missions gradually ending and foreign aid decreasing, the local Church must find ways of continuing the legacy of Christianity. This is because despite the change of fortunes, the basic responsibility of the Church remains unchanged, as long as millions of others, including the young and the old, families and individuals, remain economically traumatized and go without the basic necessities of life.

So, how can the Church in Nigeria continue to fulfil her mission of caring for the spiritual and temporal needs of the people, particularly in the light of present realities?

Fulfilling the Prophetic Role

In her prophetic role as the conscience of the society, the Church must continue to confront and denounce all forms of injustice and social ills such as corruption, mismanagement of public funds or bad leadership that militate against economic prosperity and perpetuate poverty. Pope John Paul II states that the credibility and relevancy of the message of the Gospel depends on the commitment of the Church to helping to find solutions to social problems⁵. And as the bishops of AMECA-IMBISA stated at the African Synod, the Church will commit a sin of omission if she does not denounce social injustice, for the promotion of justice and peace is the basis of evangelization⁶.

⁵Francesco Pierli et al, *Social Ministry*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2009, p. 20

⁶Cf. *Ibid.*

There is ample evidence in development research that a constant confrontation through graphic presentation of the problems of a people is the first step towards their being overcome. Hence, the Church in Nigeria must continue to “expose and oppose” evil wherever and however it exists in the society. The Church possesses strong and powerful media to do this, if she would avail herself of them. Large sections of Nigerians can be reached through homilies, bulletins, ecclesiastical newspapers, social and digital media, seminars, workshops, crusades, meetings and other church programmes⁷.

Continuing Charity and Humanitarian Interventions

It is part of the self-understanding of the Church to engage in charitable works. The Church must, therefore, continue to serve the people through her charity and humanitarian engagements. She must “give them something to eat” as Jesus commanded the apostles and disciples to do (cf. Mark 6:37). As much as possible, she must provide the basic services that she can, to save lives and protect rights. However, her resources are limited and she cannot assume the role of the civil State. Thus, she must work as a partner and stakeholder with the governments, organizations and philanthropic groups and individuals who are able to support or complement her efforts in this regard.

Promoting Empowerment and Capacity-Building for Wealth-Creation and Poverty Alleviation

Since everyone has a duty to sustain their lives and liberate themselves from all kinds of poverty, they ought to acquire the knowledge and the capacity to create material and financial wealth, which is necessary to acquire food, health and other material necessities. Poverty and

⁷UZONWANNE, M.C., The Ecclesiastical Input in Promoting Good Economic Management and Sustainable Development in Nigeria, *ENCOUNTER: Journal of African Life and Religion*, 2006, vol. 8, p.138.

suffering abound today among millions of people because, in addition to lacking the financial means to acquire their needs, they lack the capacity to harness the abundant resources that are otherwise available to them.

The Church can step up her commitment to fighting poverty and misery by working more intensively and collectively as a body for the dislodging of those structures that support economic retrogression among the people. These include, among others, ignorance and lack of capacity. In this regard, the Church can help to promote economic development by providing training, leadership and guidance for the people through empowerment for self-reliance.

There is need for the Church to reorientate the people on wealth-creation and financial self-reliance. This can be done through formal and informal education (trainings, seminar) on financial matters, including the basic principles of accountability and the ways, means and sources of wealth-creation as well as the appropriate use of money. The people should know if and where credit facilities exist and how they can access them. Knowledge and information can drive innovation and entrepreneurship. In this regard, the leadership of the Church in Nigeria needs to collaborate more with the government and various financial institutions to enhance wealth-creation and self-reliance at the individual, house-hold and community levels.

Furthermore, the Church could make a real and concrete impact in the daily lives of the people by helping to re-organize economies of local communities, where the impact of government policy and action is hardly felt or is virtually non-existent. Through her development agencies and organs, the Church could facilitate the formation of economic associations and cooperatives to represent the interests of their member and communities. In this regard even bishops, priests and church leaders at all levels can be at the centre of locating and mobilizing individuals and organizations to explore economic potentials and possibilities in their localities. Dioceses, parishes and

various organizations of the Christians could take the initiative and undertake business ventures through direct investments in agriculture, micro-credit schemes, real estate, capital market, exploration of natural resources and others that can provide jobs and help to fight poverty to varying degrees⁸.

On-going Formation on Socio-economic Matters

Attitudinal change is crucial to bringing about the desired change for better life that we desire in the society. The Church has enough charisms and a rich multiplicity of gifts drawn from a solid biblical, theological, historical and practical basis, for transformative action in the society. The multitude of her members must be taught that they are co-responsible for their own welfare and wellbeing, as well as the progress of the entire society for self and others⁹. They must realize that God has already empowered them and bestowing on them stewardship of his creation, and that they need now, more than ever, to take improve their lot through management and administration of resources.

Supplementing the empowerment and development programmes should be on-going formation in issues of social, political and economic relevance. Capacitating the people to take their destiny in their own hands should include helping them to understand the dynamics of social change, which is always happening. The people of God must be familiar and abreast with the laws, strategies and mentality of the economic and financial world. They must also learn to develop the ability to adapt to changes.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Economy at the Service of Charism and Mission*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, pp. 5-8

Helping the people to reach greater awareness and adaptability about today's and tomorrow's issues is a form of formation. It involves increasing knowledge, including acquiring the skills to anticipate, plan, prepare and engage with the challenges of life. In the ever-changing socioeconomic, political and even environmental climates, the Church and the people should give themselves new rules, find new forms of involvement, while focusing on the positive experiences of the past and present. Empowerment also means learning upgrading one's capacities, while trusting the providence of God and using the logic of the Gospel¹⁰.

Working for Social Justice

The charity obligation and economic intervention programmes of the Church do not exhaust the range of her social responsibility, which includes the obligation to contribute to the emergence of a just social order. According to Aylward Shorter, “in helping people to improve their living conditions, care must be taken that a fundamentally unjust system is not made permanent. [...] Temporary solutions are adopted as a crisis measure, but always with the long-term solutions in view.”¹¹

The long-term solutions refer to the establishment of a social order in which people will have the opportunity to develop their capacities so as to live their lives to the full. This is a task for all in the society generally, but specifically for the Church. Through *Gaudium et Spes* the Second Vatican Council clarified the role of the Church in the modern world to include activism for the cause of social justice. Contemporary theological accents such as those related to political theology or Christian social ethics emphasize that while a conscious distinction

¹⁰Ibid., p. 26.

¹¹SHORTER, A. *et al* (eds.), *Towards African Christian Maturity*, Kampala: St. Paul Publications 1987, p.77.

must be made between the charity and social justice obligations of the Church, there is not to be a separation between them. Activism for social justice aims structural transformation that will strike at the root causes of social problems¹² whose symptoms charity strives to heal.

The new understanding of the role of the Church implies that she must be pro-active and not just sympathetic, concentrating only on relief and alleviation efforts. The Church must take a more “offensive” posture¹³ to bring the transforming power of her social teachings and principles to bear on unjust social structures and institutions. This could mean using her pedigree and numerical potential (like in elections) to bring about positive changes.

Conclusion

As a country, Nigeria needs socioeconomic transformation. With the abundant human and natural resources, so many should not be suffering in absolute poverty and deprivation. To break the vicious circle of poverty that ravages the land, structural reforms are not only imperative but also urgent. However, with the often-proclaimed reforms of the government seemingly impoverishing the people further, the Church in Nigeria must continue to stand as a beacon in the darkness of misery. She must help to banish the crippling sense of

¹²This relationship has been clarified in the recent social encyclical, *Caritas in veritate*. According to Barbara Budde, the encyclical makes the church's teaching on the relationship between charity and justice very clear. His description [Benedict's] of charity – “caritas” – is much deeper, richer and more profound than just taking care of people's immediate needs. He reminds us that justice is the first requirement and that love encompasses justice. Charity goes beyond justice, because to love is to give, to offer what is “mine” to the other; but it never lacks justice, which prompts us to give the other what is “his”, what is due to him by reason of his being or his acting. I cannot “give” what is mine to the other, without first giving him what pertains to him in justice. If we love others with charity, then first of all we are just towards them,” the pope writes.” BUDDE, Barbara, “Social Justice: Charity and Justice in “Caritas in Veritate””, (September 2010),

http://www.austindiocese.org/newsletter_article_view.php?id=4223. Accessed on 10 February 2012.

¹³Boniface M. Bambu points out that this is the approach advocated by Johann Baptist Metz in the so-called political theology. See BAMBU, B.M., Op. Cit., pp.24ff.

helplessness and the myths of powerlessness and isolation among the people¹⁴ and lead them to see their hidden and untapped potentials. This she must do both in words and action.

The Church has done and continues to do much for social welfare and to keep hope alive. As the leaven of society, the Church must continue to permeate the social order with her noble values and social development principles so as to effect or support fundamental and structural transformation for good. Where the Church cannot be officially involved, she must encourage and support individual Christians who can, especially by schooling them on the tenets of Christian social teaching, whose bearers they also truly are.

¹⁴PIERLI, F. et al, *Social Ministry*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2009, pp. 27-29.



CHAPTER 4

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MAINSTREAMING INNOVATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENTS IN CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS ACROSS NIGERIA

Introduction

Innovation and entrepreneurship through skills development in Catholic education are the renewed doors that offer assurance of rescuing the Nigerian youth and women from the shackles of economic dependability, unemployment, poverty, restiveness and social quaqmire. Although the current national education curriculum has provided some windows to innovations and entrepreneurship but falls far short from meeting the general needs of the teeming population of Nigerian youths. In fact, interactions with most young adults who graduated from tertiary institutions have shown that a lot of them graduate without any substantial readiness for employment; as many are regrettably unemployable!

As a result, millions of young Nigerians are often left to grope and scavenge for anything to serve as a means of livelihood. Many have taken to drug trafficking, commercial sex work, ritual killing, kidnapping, robbery and all manner of vices in attempts to make ends meet. Some drop out of schools because their parents are not able to afford the high cost of educating them.

Since the goal of Catholic education is to bring light to liberate man and guarantee hope, it is envisaged that equipping young people and women with knowledge of innovations and skills and empowering them to start off as entrepreneurs (job-providers, not job-seekers), they will be able to position themselves for sustainable living. Going forward, they will help to support their families and others, add value to the economic status of the society thereby contributing to a resilient community. According to Mahmoud Rabie (2023), "Creativity and innovations are crucial to quality education."

Problem Statement

The present-day Nigerian society is plagued by mass unemployment, underemployment, illiteracy, and social maladjustment which gives birth to social disorder, youth restiveness, child and women abuse, among others. These problems are readily caused by the absence of engagement of young people innovatively, productively and gainfully by the family and society.

In his encyclical "*Familiaris Consortio*" (1981, no 36), Saint Pope John Paul 11 stated that "The task of giving education is rooted in the primary vocation of married couples to participate in God's creative activity: by begetting in love and for love a new person who has within himself or herself the vocation to growth and development, parents by that very fact take on the task of helping that person effectively to live a fully human life". As the Second Vatican Council recalled, "since parents have conferred life on their children, they have a most solemn obligation to educate their offspring. Hence, parents must be

acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. Their role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it.”

Following parents in the education of the young people and women are the teachers. Regrettably, it is noticed that teachers can not do much in salvaging the fallen standards of education because the government has failed in its basic responsibility to provide the enabling environment and conditions for the sound and holistic education to thrive. Confronted with these problems, the Education Unit of the Church and Society department of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) sets out to proffer ways of engaging the youths and women meaningfully in the marketplace of gainful self-employment.

Programme Goal

The goal of creating innovations and skills development in Catholic schools in Nigeria is to institutionalize the means to work-related self-development (skill) and self-realization (performance) for sustainable self-reliance (quality life).

Strategic Objectives

- 1) To institute mechanisms at local school level that enable pupils and students including seminarians to become aware and adapt to a rapidly-changing world of work. At the end of their stay in Catholic schools, learners, students and trainees should be able to compete confidently with their peers in other parts of the world.
- 2) To equip young Nigerians with innovative skills for self-development, inventions and self-reliance. Learners should be able to demonstrate innovative prowess through creativity or adaptability.
- 3) To implement activities that engender inquisitiveness for creative learning in pupils and students. Additionally, they are to develop passion for Creativity, Enterprise, Invention, Learning, Investment and Management (CEILIM).

4) To equip and motivate learners to move from theory to practice. While in primary, secondary, technical/vocational or tertiary educational institutions, learners and trainees should be able to produce things that they can proudly showcase and generate income from.

5) To cultivate entrepreneurial mindsets by developing the skill and demonstrating ability to engage others with good business ideas, strategies, passion to execute tasks with minimal or no supervision.

Methodology

The learners will mostly be taught through hands-on experience or work which involves actually doing a particular thing, rather than just talking about it or getting someone else to do it. Activities are to be locally-driven, targeted, relevant and impactful in affecting people's economic and financial status.

Strategies

1. Our schools should be owned by the communities within which they are located. This can come about by involving the local community in school programmes and events, awarding of scholarship to indigent students within the community and giving of priority to the employment of locals during recruitment of academic and non-academic staff.
2. Resource mobilization through involvement in the agricultural production of food, and livestock and employing teachers with double qualifications, especially at the NCE level. This will enable teachers to take more than one subject, thereby reducing the number of staff, but strengthening their welfare.
3. Empowerment of teachers in the form of reinforcements by

- the management in different ways. For instance, teachers can be assisted to further their education to improve their capacity.
4. The Church should engage the government as partners rather than as competitor in the development of education in Nigeria. This should dovetail to obtaining grants, instructional materials and other interventions for Catholic schools.
 5. Dioceses are to introduce a Parents Trust Fund (PTF) where parents pay in some money annually to take care of students' education in the event of the death of the school fee payer.
 6. Efforts should be taken towards having a unified curriculum for Catholic schools and the production of textbooks that reflect Catholic moral ethics.
 7. Strengthen collaborations between Catholic Education Board with the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) to promote Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) at the dioceses.
 8. Meaningful inclusion and engagement of young people in technology and innovations as promoted by the United Nations by providing guidance, and mentorship on STEM courses (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). This can support them in exploring career opportunities in technology, coding or generating income from the use of the internet through social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, X (Formerly Twitter), Tik-Tok and others.

Implementation framework

This project which involves training, supervision, empowerment, evaluation, etc. will last for a duration of five years in the first instance. The operational breakdown will be developed in the diocesan education year book.

Resource Mobilization

Resources to facilitate this project will be sourced from the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, local communities, Parent-Teachers Associations (PTAs), dioceses, government programmes on poverty alleviation and social safety nets and other funding agencies.

A context-specific mixed-system of revolving fund, mutual self-help groups and cooperative formations will be facilitated to provide ongoing training, business development facilitation, market intelligence and opportunity mapping for each cluster is advocated.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL)

Monitoring and evaluation of this programme will be carried out by trained supervisors of each Provincial Education Committee in collaboration with the Diocesan Education Commission and the Education Unit of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, Abuja. They will jointly visit all the dioceses at least once a year on assessment tour. In the course of the visit for assessment, all-round checks will be conducted and reports will be presented to the appropriate authorities including the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria.

Furthermore, dioceses will send in quarterly progress reports to the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria for review and evaluation of milestones achieved within the period.

Expected Outcomes

1. Pupils, students and trainees are knowledgeable of innovation and skills development
2. All Catholic schools have active Innovation and Entrepreneurship clubs
3. Majority of young people and women in Nigeria are small/large scale entrepreneurs, self-reliant and employers of labour thereby adding value to the economic status of the society.
4. Each diocese has at least one functional centre for innovation and skills development

5. Those trained and equipped will open new horizons in innovations through learning and research thereby broadening the scope of learning

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CHAPTER 5

FAMILY AND HUMAN LIFE COMMITTEE

CAPACITY STRENGTHENING AND EMPOWERMENT FOR SELF-RELIANCE AND RESILIENCE

Introduction

In order to create an action plan towards the subject-matter, the national secretary and diocesan coordinators of the Family and Human Life Unit of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria reflected on the the following pertinent questions: Who needs empowerment? What would be the nature of the empowerment?

To achieve these, they proposed a number of interventions in order to address the subject matter. The following needs empowerment:

- i. Widows: widowhood empowerment
- ii. Youths
- iii. Awaiting parents: parents who are married without children

- iv. Grand parents and the elderly
- v. Children
- vi. Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC)

Widowhood Empowerment

- i. To form them into a prayer league
- ii. To form them into a solidarity of mutual support for one another
- iii. To offer them economic supports and empowerment
- iv. To educate them on their dignity and potentials, rights and duties
- v. To assist them in seeking paralegal services and legal redress
- vi. To engage with them in public enlightenment on widowhood
- vii. Facilitate public advocacy for favourable government interventions and welfare schemes

Awaiting Parents

- i. To organise fertility awareness programmes
- ii. To educate them on the scientific methods of ethical family planning and natural fertility management technology
- iii. To teach on the dimensions and ways to cope with traditional and cultural pressures as they affect marriage
- iv. Facilitate collaboration and partnerships with experts for appropriate education in the proper language they understand
- v. Organize fertility enlightenment programmes for the target groups
- vi. Teach and guide them on the spirituality of marriage

Youths and Programmes for Young People

We can empower young people through the following strategies:

- i. Education, nurturing and mentoring
- ii. Skills acquisition and intervention programmes
- iii. Spiritual direction
- iv. Guidance and counselling on appropriate career choice(s)
- v. Teach them the values of care for the elderly
- vi. Address the issues that surround peer pressure
- vii. Taking Christian core values to their space through media programmes
- viii. Parishes can support the young to grow their businesses. They can be supported and empowered to own shops and factories
- ix. Teach them business sense and money management

Parents

- i. Uphold and teach faith development and spirituality
- ii. Adopt and foster good parenting skills
- iii. Create and teach financial management skills
- iv. Engage them in programmes on roles and responsible parenting skills
- v. Education on intimacy in marriage
- vi. Organize marriage enrichment programmes

Grand-Parents and The Elderly

- i. Utilize those days for grandparents and the elderly as reflected in World Days calendar
- ii. Create functional structures to care for the elderly
- iii. Leverage written works of Pope Francis on the care of the elderly
- iv. We can establish structures or institutions in place for the elderly

- v. Educate parishioners on the care for the elderly
- vi. Proper enlightenment of parents on good parenting for the sake of old age
- vii. Communion for the sick. A practical approach of taking something to them. It may seem insignificant but may mean the world to them as many of them have been abandoned
- viii. Create and organise free health care programmes. Provide or help them access available palliatives. Guide them on financial management and guide them on proper hygiene
- ix. The Church can harness the experience and skills of the elderly and form them into consultancy groups

Children

- i. Training the trainers on the management of children
- ii. Create public awareness programmes on child Right acts and Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act
- iii. Organize programmes on moral development and mentoring
- iv. Target avenues of children where they can be taught age-appropriate sexuality education
- v. Organize bible study programmes and lively competitions. This can be done especially during holidays
- vi. Organize children into book clubs and reading groups
- vii. Engage them in faith formation
- viii. Educate them on the good and responsible use of social media
- ix. Expose them to good role models in their communities and the society as well



CHAPTER 6

HEALTH COMMITTEE

SUGGESTED STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE HEALTH UNIT

1. Social Medicine: Paying medical bills of the less privileged as well as educating the public most especially rural dwellers on simple first aid and simple empowerment ideas through financial support of philanthropists.
2. Ensure there is robust enrollment of mostly rural dwellers with the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) funds gotten from World AIDS Day (1st December) and World Health day (11th February).
3. Health unit collaborating with Education and FHL Units to screen new students in Catholic institutions and intending couples in parishes
4. More Priests and Religious should be trained as health practitioners especially medicine and surgery and nursing

- owing to the present attrition of health workers in the country
5. Dioceses should endeavour to venture in earnest into gerontology with old people's home built with personnel trained as it's a whole promising area in medicine in Nigeria.
 6. Diocesan hospitals investing in other businesses as Agriculture so as to employ especially poor indigent patients
 7. Charity funds by priests and religious to care for indigent patients and very sick priests while they are still alive
 8. Diocesan Health units should establish foundations so as to attract especially those foreign donors who don't donate to religious bodies
 9. National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) scheme applied from Diocese, Deanery and Parish levels so as to implement the FG health insurance policy
 10. Subsidizing cost of medications in Catholic hospitals
 11. Charity boxes should be placed in the hospitals
 12. There should be an increase in medical outreaches

Strategies to Make Hospitals Profitable and Sustainable

- Good management of human resources. This is the most vital aspect of any organizational development. It is becoming difficult to hire a resourceful, committed and dedicated staff in the midst of inflationary trend in the country.
- What is the policy of the Church on minimum wage? Welfare, motivation and staff retention?

- Provision of enabling health policies. In this regard, everything boards on policies, bye-laws and constitution. (both government and Church policies).
- Explore collaborations with other partners in the sector such as pharmaceutical companies and implementing organizations of health projects
- Proper administrative procedures. This entails adhering to organizational development process, participatory development framework (PADEF), base-line visioning, standard financial procedure, weekly, monthly and quarterly review meetings etc.
 - provision of state of art equipment, ranging from, diagnostics
 - laboratory, x-ray, scans, ECG, MRI, CT Scan, etc.

Comparative Analysis

- ✓ Since we do not exist in isolation, we must be conversant with the situations of other government and private facilities in our areas, these helps us to know what to do to be better
- ✓ Networking with donor agencies, including government, private sector partnership, international/national NGOs, philanthropists, etc. One of the keys to successful hospital business is collaboration/synergy/partnership with others who share with our faith and morals or business ethics.
- ✓ Explore accessing Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) of companies or corporate organization within your dioceses
- ✓ Institute a sustainable maintenance culture of infrastructure; that is does the Catholic health facility have a maintenance policy in place?
- ✓ Cooperation with others... Position your facility in such a way that you can meet the documentation demands of governments, donors, private investors, etc. This is a sure way to continue getting support for development and sustenance. We must also realize that in healthcare management, no one individual or institution can do it all, even the government,

who still have to partner with private and individuals, are still not able to meet with all the demands of healthcare.

Quality assurance

It is highly encouraged to conduct a quarterly quality assurance integrated support supervision for a better repositioning. As often as possible, frequently go back to the drawing board for a better result. Leave no one behind and carry everybody along.



CHAPTER 7

JUSTICE DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE COMMISSION

Rationale

Poverty is largely man-made, it is the failure of human institutions to meet the fundamental needs of humanity. It reflects the inadequacies of government institutions and their spending, the failure of government policies and their adherence to the welfare of the people. In Nigeria, for example, many people are frustrated and rendered poor and this is reflected in the level of hunger, destitution and malnutrition seen across the land. In the Nigerian Poverty Map, over 130 million (more than 60% of the population) are trapped in multi-dimensional poverty which makes it the country with the highest concentration of poor people in the world. There is an infant mortality rate of 54.740 per 1000 births which ranks the country only behind Congo DR and Pakistan.

To make the foregoing more abysmal, the country has a booming youth population, among whom are women, who roam the streets without work to earn a living. About 70% of the population is between

15-35 years and, according to the National Bureau of Statistics, the unemployment rate is over 42%. The consequences have been dire for the country since they have not been able to tap from the rich natural resources and the human ingenuity to get the nation running by engaging the hands of the youth.

More families keep falling into poverty as a result and the frustration has continued to rear its ugly head in the increasing rate of crime in the country. More women and children continue to suffer all forms of abuse and violence either from their spouses or caregivers with children dropping out of school or not having the opportunity to have an education. If this trend is not dealt with the country will lose its capacity to reach its full potential and the citizens, many of them Christians will continue to languish in the most dehumanizing conditions.

Having established the fact that poverty is a human creation and it has to take a deliberate human intervention to alleviate or eradicate it, the Church is stepping in. Also, given the failure of governance in Nigeria, the Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) as a unit of the Department of Church and Society of the Church are getting more involved by way of advocacy and capacity building. The strategy is hinged on building the entrepreneurial capacity of the communities and advocating for opportunities for young people, especially women, it plans to hold the government accountable for the economic woes of the country.

Problem Statement

As a result of the failure of government and in congruence with the mandate given to the Church by Jesus Christ in Jn 10:10, it is the duty of the Church to provide for the needs of the community. Usually, the Church through its agencies has been meeting the humanitarian needs of the people but considering the prevailing socioeconomic situation it has become inadequate. The Church in Nigeria has been overwhelmed

with the dire humanitarian needs of Nigerians. Even the grants from foreign donors have been shrinking over the years.

It has, therefore, become incumbent that she drives the mission of community resilience through the self-reliance of not only parishioners but the average Nigerian. She is also required to relook at her income generation strategies and the mode with which they reach out to the needs of her adherents. The JDPC on this note, has a line of intervention strategies that speaks to economic, community, education and political empowerment.

The intervention involves capacity building of local JDPCs in means and approaches for entrepreneurship, resource mapping of diocesan comparative advantage, basic education support as a means of teaching people 'how to fish' and building community resilience through peacebuilding and conflict resolution. The approach used ranges from advocacy, workshops, Focus Group Discussions and the formation of cluster groups for sustainability.

It is hoped that in the nearest future, the Church will be more entrepreneurial; able to generate revenue beyond the offertory and collection boxes and can complement the government more as a creator of employment in Nigeria. It is also hoped that more entrepreneurial capacity-building structures will be established to create entrepreneurs who can create employment for other Nigerians.

Programme Goal

Church-driven entrepreneurial initiative for personal and community resilience

Strategic Objectives (3-5 years)

1. To facilitate economic empowerment programmes across the

dioceses and provinces

- a. To support the establishment and development of skills acquisition centres.
- b. Providing individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to establish and grow their business as well as to find their way around the complexities of the economic systems, can enhance their capacity to create sustainable livelihoods.
- c. To increase access to financial services for local start-ups and farmers linked to the Church interventions. Ensuring that individuals and communities have access to affordable financial services such as credits, savings and insurance, can help them manage their resources, invest in their businesses and mitigate risks.
- d. To support market linkages for trained entrepreneurs and farmers linked to the Church interventions. Facilitating access to the market and creating linkages between producers and consumers (by sometimes being refiners of excess produce) can help individuals and communities increase their incomes and improve their living conditions.

2. To Enhance educational empowerment schemes for Dioceses and provinces.

- a. To facilitate programs on education quality improvement for Catholic and public schools. Improving the standard of learning and the quality of education by challenging learning towards entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency builds independent minds in youth and a future that is industrious and self-reliant.
- b. To encouraged school enrolment for children of school age in Dioceses.
- c. Encouraging indigent children to acquire education opens up opportunities for ordinary citizens and helps to create an economically viable society.

3. To improve intra- and inter-communal relationships in communities

around the country.

- a. To ensure the establishment of JDPCs in parishes across the country.
- b. It is the goal of the Vatican that wherever there is a parish, a unit of Justice and Peace must be situated. This ensures that the Church mainstreams her activities with the communities around it according to the principles of the Social Teachings.
- c. To build the capacity of JDPCs and communities on the tenets of peacebuilding and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).
- d. Facilitating peaceful coexistence and engendering cohesion among individuals in communities regardless of their identities can aid diffusion and innovation in the communities and can increase the for people to become self-reliant through cooperation.

4. To increase political participation and advocacy of Diocesan units.

- a. To increase engagement between local Church units and relevant government outfits.
- b. Regular engagement between the Church and duty bearers in areas of social welfare especially employment generation and entrepreneurship is capable of opening possible opportunities for the government support for Church initiatives. It can also allow the Church to make parishioners beneficiaries of government training programs.
- c. To support regular town hall meetings by JDPCs and communities.
- d. Regular advocacy engagement with communities will create opportunities for the Church to seek better approaches to meet the needs of people regardless of their identities. It can also engender peaceful coexistence and cooperation which has the potential to boost self-reliance and entrepreneurship.
- e. To support political and leadership education for schools and potential politicians within the church.
- f. A reorientation of political leadership in light of improved

productivity and improved human ingenuity through homilies, catechesis and formal learning is key to grooming homegrown leaders with the vision that is coterminous with the Catholic Social Teachings.

Methodology (Activities)

- Carry out advocacy visits to Local Ordinaries to get their buy-in and support.
- Organise workshops on Resource Mobilisation in the light of entrepreneurial development.
- Carry out surveys on investment potentials available in dioceses.
- Organise capacity building sessions for diocesan JDPCs and other Church and Society units on the Economics of Banking and Investments.
- Support market linkages for local products in dioceses.
- Support regular town hall meetings between JDPCs and local communities on local economic opportunities.
- Support regular advocacy visits by JDPCs to relevant state agencies on economic empowerment for citizens.
- Foster inter-diocesan investment dialogues/summits
- Encourage the review of Catechesis to accommodate political leadership, entrepreneurship and self-reliance.

Expected Outcomes

1. At least 50 Local Ordinaries support the interventions.
2. 60,000 people reached both by training and start-ups or church-based entrepreneurial employment
3. At least 3 inter-diocesan investments carried with business structures established.
4. At least 600 parish JDPCs have businesses established
5. At least 3 Church Microfinance banks established.

Implementation Framework (Timeframe)

- Grant applications and approvals
- Advocacy visits to Local Ordinaries and other stakeholders
- Resource and capability mapping of dioceses
- Capacity building and training
- Inter-diocesan investment dialogues/summits
- Establishment of needed infrastructures

Resource Mobilization

- ✓ Resources will be required for the intervention to be carried out. The end game of the intervention is that the Nigerian Church should be able to source funds internally rather than look for foreign donors. In the onset, however, funding would come from overseas donors.
- ✓ Moreover, Caritas Nigeria through her thematic areas on Humanitarian, Agriculture and Livelihoods, has agricultural entrepreneurship interventions currently ongoing in the Northeast and Ekiti State. The Good Governance Unit is also working with CAFOD on an environmental governance project which allows us to interact robustly with Church partners and community stakeholders and by so doing mobilise for self-reliance and entrepreneurship. Other projects on educational governance and civic engagement which we hope to tailor along the theme are being proposed.
- ✓ Furthermore, it is expected that as a fallout of our Lenten Guide for 2024 dioceses will be enlightened to adopt more creative approaches to resource mobilization and use liturgical channels to pass messages of entrepreneurship and self-reliance to their adherents.
- ✓ The Resource Mobilisation team of Caritas Nigeria is on hand to give the needed support where needed if Dioceses need to

locally mobilise support for the project.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning (MEAL)

Some diocesan JDPCs are equipped to monitor the projects in their dioceses, especially for those projects they sought and got funding for. For those who do not have the capacity for projects to align with the goal, the Good Governance Unit will provide the capacity and monitor projects there. However, projects implemented by the Good Governance Unit of Caritas Nigeria will be monitored by them and evaluated by the funding partners.

Moreover, for the sake of sustainability, provincial Church and Society meetings will be held to further turn key projects that aggregate the interests of the Dioceses within the Province in the case where external funding is no longer there.



CHAPTER 8

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS COMMITTEE

CAPACITY STRENGTHENING FOR SELF-RELIANCE & COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Introduction / Rationale

Following its establishment in September 2023 by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), the Migrants and Refugees (M & R) Unit participated for the first time in the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Church and Society Department of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria. Part of the mandate of the Unit is to help the Church develop prompt and effective responses to the various challenges posed by contemporary migration in the Nigerian context. This task was captured in the sub-theme of the Unit at the AGM, *“The Preventive and Remedial Value of Economic Empowerment in the Migration and Refugees Crisis in Nigeria.”* The resolutions reached at the unit's discussion session during the AGM are presented below.

Problem Statement

Migration is one of the most discussed topics in the world today. Whether within national borders or across international borders, human mobility is higher today than it has ever been in recorded human history. Considering its drivers, migration can either be voluntary or involuntary (forced). When people freely leave their natural abode for another destination, they engage in voluntary migration. Involuntary migration happens when people are forced to relocate from their ancestral or normal places of abode. In both types of migration, the underlying factors are usually the quest for better life, escape from danger, personal safety and survival.

As Nigerians labour under the increasingly difficult socioeconomic and political situations in the country or due to adverse environmental conditions, the number of involuntary migrants continues to rise. In the desperation to flee the country or relocate, many fall prey to traffickers, while internally displaced people are left without the basic necessities of life. Migrants in these categories are often deprived, helpless, voiceless and vulnerable, suffering discrimination and exploitation alongside multi-dimensional poverty.

Strategic Goals

The strategic goals of the M & R Unit are presented in terms of immediate goals and long-term goals.

Short-term Objectives

- i. Institutionalize the Migrants and Refugees unit of the CBCN at the CSN
- ii. Articulate the nature and scope of the apostolate for migrants and refugees in the light of Catholic Social Teaching
- iii. Create awareness and increase publicity about the Migrants and Refugees Unit
- iv. Change the narrative on migration issues and the perception about, and attitude towards, migrants and refugees in the

country.

Long-term Objectives

- i. Contribute significantly to the efforts of the Nigerian Church to mitigate poverty in general.
- ii. Help to significantly reduce incidences of desperate migration or re-migration
- iii. Help to ameliorate the suffering of migrants and refugees through humanitarian interventions.
- iv. Promote social and economic empowerment in order to reduce the desperation to migrate.
- v. Receive, rehabilitate and reintegrate victims of trafficking and returnee migrants
- vi. Guide internal and returnee migrants on the path to economic self-reliance through the following:
 - a. Training or educational support
 - b. Vocational training and skills development
 - c. Job placement
 - d. Financial literacy and business development programmes

Strategic Objectives (3-5 years)

To progressively achieve its short- and medium-term strategic goals in the next three years (2024 – 2027), the Unit has articulated the following objectives:

- i. Establish collaborations with national and international organizations in the field of migration and refugees in the country
- ii. Create the opportunity to work with existing Church actors in the field of migration in Nigeria to streamline the apostolate while maintaining the principle of subsidiary.
- iii. Constitute and animate a team that will produce a national policy and implementation framework for all matters concerning migrants and refugees in Nigeria.

- iv. Establish internal administrative structures such as advisory groups and committees and volunteers for the functioning, growth and sustainability of the office.

Methodology (Activities)

- i. Familiarise with the any on-going programmes relating to migrants and refugees under the auspices of the CBCN / CSN through Caritas Nigeria.
- ii. Put in place basic and necessary physical and virtual office infrastructure
- iii. Represent the Nigerian Church in national and international meetings and programmes relating to migration
- iv. Undertake advocacy visits to development partners working in the field of migration in the country
- v. Work to set up units for migration and refugees in all dioceses
i n N i g e r i a ;
build capacity of diocesan coordinators and other pastoral agents through training programmes
- vi. Organize conferences, seminars and workshops on migrants and refugees to interface with Church and non-Church actors
- vii. Create a directory of Church actors and their activities in the field of migration and refugees in Nigeria
- viii. Organize / facilitate the celebration of the annual World Day of Migrants and Refugees, International Migrants Day and similar events
- ix. Organize / facilitate fundraising and approved collection campaigns for people in distress
- x. Conduct research on migration trends and themes in Nigeria and around the world

Expected Outcomes

1. Foundations are laid for a credible, competent, effective and sustainable office
2. The Unit has institutional capacity to handle issues related to

migration

3. The Unit has competence in following migration trends in and from the country
4. The CBCN publishes official documents such as an indigenous pastoral plan for migrants and refugees in accordance with the expectation of the Migrants and Refugees section of the Vatican Dicastery for Promotion of Integral Human Development
5. The Unit is able to make inputs into migration management and governance in Nigeria
6. The Unit has developed capacity to handle projects with extensive positive socioeconomic impacts.

Resource Mobilization

At this foundational stage, the Unit will rely generally on the institutional resources of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria and Catholic Caritas Foundation of Nigeria. However, in the immediate future, the Unit will build up requisite capacity to be able to function more robustly. Furthermore, it will seek ways to mobilize financial and human resources to effectively carry out its activities. This includes but not limited to applying for grants, organizing fund-raising programmes and engaging in creative visibility and resource mobilization activities.



CHAPTER 9

CASE STUDY:

KATSINA ALA DIOCESE'S EFFORTS TOWARDS SELF-RELIANCE

Introduction

There is no gainsaying that the concept of self-reliance is positioned centrally within the discourse of community development and is linked to similar terminologies such as self-help, mutual-help, indigenous participation and rural development. Self-reliance encourages the need for people to improve their living conditions using home initiatives and resources at their disposal in a participatory approach that encourages inputs of all stakeholders to identify relevant methods to promote development, growth and sustainability in communities. This concept is being given great attention and considered as a new blueprint for community development.

The Katsina Ala case study began in October, 2022, with a self-assessment of the new Diocese at the request of the newly ordained Bishop, Most Rev. Isaac Dugu. A team from Caritas Nigeria

comprising of personnel that cuts across different key areas such as communications & business development, institutional capacity strengthening, and research, was deployed to support the diocese in conducting a self-assessment using the Caritas Internationalis Management Standard (CIMS and the Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) tools. The purpose of this self-assessment was to enable them to take a deep dive into their diocese to identify the resources available, both human and material (schools, health facilities, equipment, landed property, farms and farmlands, markets, abandoned projects, the strength and weaknesses and opportunities for growth.

Through a mixed methodology of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focused Group Discussions (FGDs), meetings and training, the team was able to support the diocese to identify initiatives that they could embark on, analyze the results, rank and prioritize the different initiatives with timelines to deliver on them. They were also able to identify areas that the diocese will require capacity building, systems strengthening and collaborations on, and were provided subsequent trainings in the areas of strategic planning, resource mobilization, asset management, financial management, sustainability planning, human resource management, advocacy, governance, and accountability.

ACTIONS & PROJECTS TAKEN TOWARDS SELF-RELIANCE

S/N	ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IMPLEMENTED
1.	Self-reliance Committee established
2.	Investments made in agri-business and equipment
3.	Investments have been made in climate-smart agriculture and mechanized farming to improve yield for sustainability
4.	Several collaborations with the government to acquire and or utilize landed properties for investments
5.	Diocesan farmlands have been properly secured and utilized
6.	Establishment of a bakery
7.	Creation of employment for young people and women

A SYNOPSIS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS (2023 – 2028) TOWARD SELF- RELIANCE

Goal: Enhanced capacity of the Diocese to engage in diverse business ventures for sustainability

- Register a company with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) to facilitate smooth running of the businesses
- Secure all Diocesan landed properties and assets
- Establish a rice milling and processing factory
- Establish fishery business
- Establish a juice processing factory where oranges, tomatoes, and mangoes can be made into different finished products
- Establish a yam processing factory
- Poultry feeds and fish factory
- Establish partnerships and collaborations with relevant entities both locally and internationally to explore larger markets for the produce
- More young people, men and women are gainfully employed by the Dioceses

EPILOGUE

Poverty and destitution are among the most pressing problems in Nigeria today with implications for personal dignity, community life and national security. Poverty debases the inherent dignity of persons. There is urgent need for concerted efforts by all concerned citizens and groups to intervene in decisive ways to stem the tide and restore a sense of worth to all persons of concern. Thus, in addition to the traditional pastoral care that they access from the Church and its ministers, millions of Nigeria's poor are looking up to the Catholic Church for a helping hand towards self-efficacy.

Accordingly, by providing individuals and communities with the tools and resources they need to break free from the shackles of poverty, the Church will be transforming lives and contributing to the broader imperative for social justice and sustainable development. This handbook was developed from the robust discussions at plenary and during syndicate sessions of the 2023 AGM of the Church and Society department of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria. The event provided the auspicious opportunity to ventilate the issues, harvest insights, and craft actionable options for inclusive community resilience against poverty and its tart fruits.

The time to begin a national mobilization for economic empowerment of people, families and communities is NOW!

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