



**Report on Campaign against Electoral Violence – 2007
Delta State**

**With the collaboration of
Environmental and Rural Medication Centre**



CAMPAIGN AGAINST ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA PROJECT

INTRODUCTION

To actualize the aim and objectives of the Campaign Against Electoral Violence in Nigeria (CAEVIN), a methodology/strategy meeting was held on January 16th, and 17th, 2007 at Hamonia Hotel, Abuja to introduce the project concept to relevant stakeholders which Environmental and Rural Medication Centre (ENVIRUMEDIC) was one of them.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project objectives include –

- To influence public attitude and behaviours against electoral violence through the use of anti-violence message (NO TO ELECTION VIOLENCE . . VOTE AGAINST VIOLENCE POLITICIANS).
- To encourage and empower men, women and youth to organize and avoid electoral violence in Ogame of Ekurede-Itsekiri, and Oko-Anala communities of Warri South and Oshimili South LGA of Delta State.

PROJECT TAKE-OFF

Immediately after the methodology/strategy meeting which led to the partnership between ActionAid/University of Oxford and ENVIRUMEDIC, the partner organization coordinated the campaign activities in Delta State. First and foremost, Field Officers were recruited such as the site coordinators and 4(four) journaling to take records of all electoral violence, religious and communities conflicts. This is to cover events six months before the election till after the lection period.

SURVEY OF PROJECT SITE:

Day 1 & Day 2: January 21st and 22nd, 2007

On January 21st and 22nd, out site coordinators were in Asaba for briefing as to highlight on the survey locations and be conversant with the field work itinerary.

Day 3: January 23rd, 2007

On January 23rd, 2007 one of the coordinators, Solomon Eneferi was in Asaba to meet the PSI team with the aim of locating the enumerated households in Oko-Anala and Obi-

Anyima. The team visited Oko-Anala but the exercise was marred by the community, which demanded for a clearance from the chairman of the Local Government Council. In order to keep the exercise going, the team proceeded to Obi-Anyima in the Ika South Local Government Area. At Obi-Ayinma, we had a meeting with one Chief Chinme from Anyinma Abavo who introduced the team to the natives. Chief Chinme introduced Mr. Oyiokwu Nick Uche and he was recruited as one of the journaling.

Day 4 and Day 5: January 24th and 25th, 2007

In the same vein, the team visited Warri and was received by the State Coordinator which also acted in the capacity of a site coordinator. Both the treatment and control area was surveyed. Mr. Aboyowa Oghomienor and Miss Ogunli Yemi were appointed journaling for Ogiame Primary School and Federal Government College respectively. To be precise, on January 24th, 2007 ENVIRUMEDIC and PSI officials were in Ogiame Primary School for interview, which was very successful. Also, on January 25th, 2007 the team was in Federal Government College, Warri for the same interview process.

Day 5: January 26th, 2007

On January 26th 2007, the team left for Asaba as one of the Chiefs in Oko-Anala invited the PSI supervisor, but could not go ahead from their exercise as no response was received from their office in Lagos. Between 26th and 31st, January 2007, no message was received from Lagos; as such we could not reach Oko-Anala as to know the location and appoint a journaling. But later, we were granted access to the community to carry out the survey and journaling appointed in a person of Mr. Chika.

A quite numbers of the population were reached. This is as a result of our state/site coordinators been fully involved in the whole processes of the survey.

The methodology used to identify various characteristics of the campaign locations. Firstly, at Oko-Anala, from our enquiry we were told of the violence nature of the youths. The same thing for Ogiame in Ekurude-Itsekiri. We decided to apply officially to the Nigerian Police Force in 'A' Division Warri for anti-Riot Police, which was granted. We also applied to the Local Education Authority to enable us use the Primary School, because there was no other space around for the activity which was also granted. At Asaba the same was done. The youths were not left behind, we also accorded them their respect to win their support, which was equally achieved.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT AREAS

Oko-Anala

Oko-Anala is a rural community based in Asaba area of Shimi South Local Government Area of Delta State. The community is bounded in the North by Asaba urban, in the East by the River Niger and Onitsha of Anambra State while in the South by thick forest that mounted at the River Niger. In other words, it is surrounded by the River. The community is a clustered settlement. The community has one major link road connecting Asaba the State Capital. The access road is un-tarred, rough and rugged during raining season. Also, the community is surrounded by small hamlets and linear along the earth road.

The ethnic group composition includes the Anionman which is the ancestral origin of the land. In search of livelihood, some members of the community are the Ibos popularly known as across the Niger people. They are migrants from the eastern part of Nigeria who could not afford the living condition of Asaba. Their main economic activities are agriculture, fishing, rubber tapping and petty trading. Few of them are civil servants who normally go to work in Asaba everyday. They are mainly civil servants and have access to mobility. The most commonly form of mobility is the motor-bike popularly known as 'Okada'. Their religion is Christianity while some still believe in the African traditional religion (ATR). They belong to the low class level. Their houses are built with the blocks and mud sand.

Historical Background

Oko-Anala is a rural community in Oshimili South LGA of Delta State. The community has a paramount ruler called the 'Okpara' popularly known as the Prime Minister who is in-charge of the general governance of the community.

Before the advent of democracy in 1999, the Oko-Anala community is known to be peaceful and loving people except the youths who are violence in certain occasions. These transcend into political thuggery and disturbance that were being sponsored by political chieftains. Since 1999, the people have been exercising their voting rights and they belong to various political parties of their choice. But the People Democratic Party (PDP) dominates the area.

In the past, issues of violence have occurred in Oko-Anala over councillorship positions. It occurred as a result of imposition of candidates on the people as against the wish of the people. And these led to protesting of the people to seek for their mandate protection.

History has it that during Presidential and Governorship elections, there are no case of violence apart from councillorship elections. From what we have observed in their elections, it is a proof of what history has for us.

However, outside the town, especially in Asaba there are cases of violence between political parties, religion (between Christians and Muslims) which occurred in Onitsha and extended into Asaba with quick intervention of the State Government which put it to a stop.

Obi-Anyima

Obi-Ayima is a small community in Abavo Area of Ika South LGA of Delta State. The community is bounded by Abavo in the South and in the North by the thick forest of Orhonigbe of Edo State. Obi-Anyima is a rural setting with no infrastructural facilities; no accessible roads, no water and life there is miserable. Most of their buildings are thatched roofs and mud houses. Their ethnic group composition is Ika people (Agbor). They are mainly agrarian community and tapping of rubber is one of their major activities. This community has been marginalized for a very long time.

The people of the community exercise their voting right normally and there are no incidence of political violence in the history of the community; except for some communal conflict on land matters. However, there are occurrences of political crisis, the Fulani herdsmen versus the farmers in Agbor, the headquarters of Ika South LGA.

At the State level, there are series of political violence resulting from exclusion of people from being party delegate, marginalization of party executive list, party nominations, party candidature which metamorphosed into rigging and imposition of candidates. This is a big syndrome in Delta State and the various LGAs.

Ogiam Primary School, Ekurede-Itsekiri

Ogiam Primary School is an enumeration area in Ekurede-Itsekiri community in Warri-South Local government area of Delta State. The community is bounded in the North by Ekurede-Urhobo, in the South by Okere community, in the West by the Nigeria Ports Authority, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Chevron Texaco and Ugbuwague community. Also, within the boundary area by the Federal Government College which is also a control area of this project.

Ekurede-Itsekiri is an urban settlement with tarred roads, electricity and pipe-borne water. The building structure carries the modern architectural designs. The ethnic group composition is 90% Itsekiris and 10% other tribes especially the Ibos. Their main economic activities are Industrial activities such as the oil and gas, shipping, trading and business. The social class could be classified as middle and low class.

In the past 10 years, there has been political violence ranging from communal clash, boundary adjustment, local government creation, ward creation, kingship hustle. The most recallable problem is 'who owns Warri' and that has been the problem between the Urhobos, the Itsekiris and the Ijaws. Because of the communal war, and political crisis, has led to proliferation of firearms which has accumulated and resulted to hostage taking. The crisis has crippled the economic activities of the area. The main contenders of political conflict are the individuals.

Federal Government College Area, Ekurede-Urhobo

The Federal Government College area is an enumeration area in Ekurede-Urhobo community in Warri south LGA of Delta State. The community is bounded in the North by Edjeba community, in the South by Ekurede-Itsekiri, in the East by Okere community. Within the community are the Shell Development Company (SPDC) and the Federal Government College.

Ekurede-Urhobo is an urban settlement with access roads, electricity and pipe borne water. The ethnic group composition comprises of the Urhobos, Itsekiri, Ibos, Hausa and the Yorubas.

The main economic activities are teaching, industrial activities include Shell Petroleum Development Co (SPDC, NPA, Chevron Texaco trading etc). The social classes can be classified as middle and low class. In the past 10 years, there has been relative peace in Ekurede-Urhobo except the crises that have rocked Warri as a whole, as it was discussed under Ekurede-Itsekiri area.

CAMPAIGN DESCRIPTION

In the campaign trail, the following are the team members –

1. Onojeta Samuel
2. Abebe Emmanuel
3. Ukoko Daniel

4. Idegbe Dorcas
5. Asigheghw T. A.
6. Belinda Money
7. Cyril O. Inegbedion
8. Elohor U. Akopbome
9. Happy Arah
10. Olisa Philo
11. Enegide Lucky
12. Osanebi Power
13. Anwuta Juliana
14. Itoghor, M. O.
15. Esemuede, F. E.
16. Edozie Chike
17. Eneferi Solomon
18. Osiebe Anthony
19. Osakwe Nathaniel
20. Enwoma Ofomi
21. Emonu Lucky
22. Frank Akporherhe

Any campaign; political, social or otherwise in Warri cannot be carried out without police involvement. As such the Divisional Police Officer attached to 'B' Division of the Nigeria Police Force, Okumagba Avenue, Warri was contacted; five police officers were allotted for the campaign at Ogiame Primary School, on the February 22, 2007. Ogiame Primary School 1 & 2 authorities which are accommodated in the same compound did not help matters after securing police protection. Both authorities insisted that permission must be sought from the education secretary at the local government authority, Warri.

The campaign went on smoothly and both the men and women, old and young and especially the youths appreciated our presence. The local authorities were the inhabitants of the community. Also, the audiences for the town meeting/popular theatre were the inhabitant of the location which was attached by the campaign jiggles, dances of the team and campaign materials.

At the campaign ground in Ogiame Primary School, three notable characters spoke. These include the State Coordinator, the theatre team leader and a woman from the community

who used the opportunity to address the audience and encourage us to extend to other areas.

However, there were no symptoms of latent violence during the campaign. The youths who we suspected that made the team to go for police back up end up in supporting the campaign.

Similar things were also done in Asaba area. We anticipated problem from Oko-Anala but the reverse was the case. An application was also made to 'A' Division of the Nigeria Police Force, Asaba, to enable the campaign team enter the community. Divisional Police Officer here did not foresee any problem at Oko-Anala as the people appeared peaceful.

Taking his advice, the team drove to Oko-Anala, there the campaign team met with the king and secretary general of the community. After explaining the objectives of the campaign, T-shirts, face-cap and other campaign materials were presented to them and their households. Both granted the team permission to carry on the campaign.

The team danced from the beginning of the village to the end with jingles and dancers displaying their talents which attracted the whole community and their visitors. The state coordinator, the king and the secretary general did the talking. Other chiefs from the community also supported the efforts that saw the exercise a success.

FINDINGS/LESSONS:

From the whole activities, it was discovered that the local communities lacks information on violence.

- they believe thuggery is a pride but un-known to them it is a time-bomb.
- The communities appreciated and commended our efforts for the programme.

According to Esther Jolomi, 42 years has this to say "We thought it was a political sponsored programme that is why we never took it serious. But when we look carefully and the message that was coming from your people we begin to discover the truth. You people suppose extend it to everywhere, not only this area".

Secondly, the programme was under-budgeted, therefore marred the duration of the coverage.

Up till the period of writing this report, no report has been received from all the appointed journaling. We expect their report at the end of the election.

CAMPAIGN AUTO-EVALUATION

Perceived success

The campaign was a huge success having maximum support from the two locations.

Perceived challenges/problem

The major problem that could have marred the campaign was stipend/per-diem payment to participants. Though the campaign was not political, participants were mindful of the note involve in campaigns in Warri and outside Warri, coupled with the fact that the little stipend/per-diem cannot compensate for the risk. Ogiame Primary School area is actually 'no go area' for most Deltans. From the video clip we could notice the rush-in by Ekurede Itsekiri youths who never rated the campaign good. The youth leader and his executives, who were contacted earlier, were very helpful in controlling the youths. The rush-in gave the participants shock before the campaign and the drama act. The pressed for more money than what we bargained before the campaign. However, happily the team concluded the campaign as planned, although the second day running of the campaign at Oko-Anala could not take place due to lack of finance.

RECOMMENDATION

Though the campaign went on smoothly after the few problems encountered in Warri, the main issue that came up during the recruitment/training of characters for the drama and other participants was payment of stipends/per-diem. Not every body is interested in non-governmental activities; and because of the short time for preparation, getting people with people-oriented interest was not possible. We recommend that where special skills are required in any programme, there should be enough time notice; this will influence payment of stipends given the limited fund. One funny thing about local communities is that once people are needed for a short service, the organisation involved must have received millions of naira for the service and those recruited are always forced to accept kobo. Apart from the time frame, enough funds should be allocated given the peculiarity of certain communities in Nigeria and the campaign should be extended to other areas..

The T-shirt and face caps made available were not enough. Apart from the drama and jingle played during the campaign, the message on T-shirts and caps stay longer with the people. The materials remind them of the importance of the campaign.