



# AFRICA FAITH AND JUSTICE NETWORK NIGERIA

## ADVOCACY VISIT REPORT

**Venue:** Eze's Palace, Ndeaboh Autonomous Community, Anu-nri LGA, Enugu State

**Date:** 24th February 2025

**Led by:** African Faith and Justice Network (AFJN) in collaboration with NAPTIP and AFJN Trained Youth Advocates



### Introduction

The advocacy visit to Eze's Palace in Ndeaboh Autonomous Community was conducted as part of a strategic effort to engage traditional rulers in the fight against child early and forced marriage and domestic servitude. The meeting brought together AFJN representatives, NAPTIP officials, AFJN Youth Advocates, and the traditional ruler alongside his cabinet members to discuss community-driven approaches to child protection.

### Objectives of the Visit

1. **Foster Community Ownership and Strengthen Child Protection Systems** – Engage traditional rulers in taking ownership of efforts to end child early and forced marriage and domestic servitude by establishing and enforcing community-based child protection structures, including a monitoring and reporting system.
2. **Advocate for the Implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** – Introduce and seek the endorsement of the MOU as a formal agreement to regulate child placement in domestic service, ensuring accountability, child welfare, and protection within communities.
3. **Promote Cultural Reformation and Sustainable Alternatives** – Collaborate with traditional rulers to modify harmful cultural practices, raise awareness on children's rights, and support economic empowerment initiatives for vulnerable families to reduce reliance on child servitude and early marriage.

### Key Outcomes of the Meeting

The advocacy visit was highly successful and impactful, marking a historic step towards child protection in the community. The following key achievements were recorded:

1. **Adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** Ndeaboh Autonomous Community became the first community to adopt the use of an MOU to monitor and track domestic servitude cases.
2. **Traditional Ruler's Commitment:** The traditional ruler and his cabinet made significant commitments by granting all advocacy requests, including:
  - Issuing and enforcing community-based declarations prohibiting child early and forced marriage and domestic servitude.
  - Leading community sensitization efforts to educate families on the dangers of these harmful practices.



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- Adopting a Community-Based Child Monitoring System (CBCMS) to track and prevent child exploitation.
  - Collaborating with government agencies, religious leaders, and civil society organizations to ensure child protection.
  - Holding community dialogues and town hall meetings to prioritize education and skill development.
  - Distributing copies of the MOU across churches, villages, and organizations within the kingdom.
3. **Declaration of a State of Emergency:** The traditional ruler and his council declared a state of emergency on child early and forced marriage and domestic servitude in the community.
  4. **Appointment of a Gender Officer:** The community committed to appointing a Gender Officer to lead child protection activities and act as a referral pathway for reporting cases of abuse.
  5. **Presentation of the 'Ask' to the Traditional Rulers Council:** H.R.M Ezeogo Peter Ewah, Igwe Ikwo Noyo Ancient Kingdom, presented the appeal to traditional rulers, urging them to champion the fight against child early marriage and domestic servitude. The traditional prime minister, on behalf of the council, pledged full support and readiness to collaborate with AFJN, NAPTIP, government agencies, and religious groups in Enugu State.



## Conclusion

The advocacy visit to Ndeaboh Autonomous Community was a significant step in institutionalizing child protection measures at the traditional leadership level. With the adoption of the MOU, the commitment of the traditional ruler, and the strategic partnerships formed, this initiative lays a strong foundation for sustainable action against child early and forced marriage and domestic servitude in Enugu State.

## Next Steps

- Follow-up visits to monitor the implementation of the MOU and other commitments.
- Training and capacity building for community leaders and the newly appointed Gender Officer.
- Continued collaboration with the Traditional Rulers Council at the LGA and State levels.
- Expansion of the advocacy campaign to other communities within Enugu State.

This advocacy visit marks a significant milestone in the ongoing efforts to protect children from exploitative practices and create a future where every child is free, safe, and empowered to reach their full potential.

### Prepared by:

Peter Ewah Ikechukwu

Coordinator AFJN Trained Youth Advocate (The Agent of Change)

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025.



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