



# AFRICA FAITH AND JUSTICE NETWORK NIGERIA

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

### Advocacy Visit and Community Sensitization on Ending Child Early Marriage and Domestic Servitude

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025

Location: Ifitedunu Community & Awkuzu Market, Oyi LGA, Anambra State

Lead Organization: African Faith and Justice Network (AFJN)

Team Lead: Rev. Sr. Theresa Anyabuikie

### 1. Background and Purpose of the Visit

The African Faith and Justice Network (AFJN) conducted a community engagement and advocacy visit to **HRM Igwe Dr. Emeka Ilouno JP**, the Traditional Ruler of **Ifitedunu Community, Oyi LGA, Anambra State**, as part of ongoing efforts to address **child early and forced marriage and domestic servitude**.

The visit aimed to:

- Engage the traditional institution on its leadership role in child protection.
- Present AFJN's request for collaboration.
- Introduce a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** and **Community-Based Child Monitoring System (CBCMS)** for review, adoption, and implementation.
- Sensitize community members on the harmful impacts of child early marriage and domestic servitude.

### 2. Advocacy Engagement with the Traditional Ruler



Upon arrival, **HRM Igwe Dr. Emeka Ilouno JP** warmly received the AFJN team and **mobilized women from across Ifitedunu Community**, demonstrating strong leadership and commitment to child protection.

A **separate strategic discussion** was held with the Traditional Ruler, during which the team:

- Presented AFJN's advocacy objectives.
- Submitted the **MoU template** for regulating child placement and preventing exploitation.
- Explained the proposed **Community-Based Child Monitoring System (CBCMS)**.

In response, HRM Igwe Dr. Emeka Ilouno JP publicly pledged his commitment to ending



**child early marriage and domestic servitude** in Ifitedunu Community. As a symbolic gesture of support and encouragement, the Igwe generously distributed **tubers of yam** to every participant present at the meeting.

### 3. Community Sensitization in Ifitedunu



Following the engagement with the Traditional Ruler, the AFJN team conducted a **community sensitization session**, educating participants on:

- The dangers of child early marriage and domestic servitude.
- The long-term impact on children's health, education, and dignity.
- The role of parents, women leaders, and traditional institutions in child protection.

Community members actively participated, asking questions and expressing willingness to support initiatives aimed at safeguarding children.

### 4. Market Outreach and Sensitization at Awkuzu Market



As part of the engagement activities, the team led by Rev. Sr. Theresa Anyabuikie carried out a **market sensitization and outreach** at Awkuzu Market.

During the outreach, market women shared **disturbing firsthand information**, including:

- That **many children in domestic servitude are minors brought from Abakaliki, Ebonyi State**, and are widespread across Anambra State.
- Calls for **urgent intervention by both Ebonyi and Anambra State Governments** to stop child trafficking and exploitation.
- Emotional testimonies of encountering **children as young as 10 years old selling pure water late at night**, exposed to abuse, rape, and sexual exploitation.



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Reports that many of these children have **no access to reporting mechanisms**, no protection, and no safe spaces.

Participants expressed deep frustration over societal and government inaction and emphasized that **children are being used as cheap labor and sex objects due to poverty and lack of protection**.

## 5. Community Response and Appreciation

The market women and community members **commended AFJN** for bringing attention to the issue and strongly appealed to:

- The **Traditional Rulers Council**
- **Ebonyi and Anambra State Governments**
- Law enforcement and child protection agencies

They called for urgent and coordinated action to end child early marriage and domestic servitude.

## 6. Key Outcomes of the Engagement

- Secured commitment from **HRM Igwe Dr. Emeka Ilouno JP** to champion the fight against child early marriage and domestic servitude.
- Submission of **MoU and CBCMS framework** for review and adoption.
- Increased community awareness and dialogue on child protection.
- Documentation of critical field evidence on child trafficking and exploitation routes.
- Strengthened trust between AFJN, traditional institutions, and grassroots women.

## 7. Appeal to the Traditional Rulers Council

AFJN formally presented an appeal to the **Traditional Rulers Council** calling for:

- Community declarations banning child early and forced marriage and domestic servitude.
- Support for CBCMS implementation.
- Enforcement of child protection laws through traditional structures.
- Endorsement of MoUs regulating domestic child placement.
- Regular community dialogues promoting education and skills over exploitation.

## 8. Conclusion and Way Forward

The advocacy visits to Ifitedunu Community and Awkuzu Market reaffirmed the **critical role of traditional leadership and grassroots women** in ending harmful practices. The commitment demonstrated by **HRM Igwe Dr. Emeka Ilouno JP**, combined with the voices



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of market women, provides a strong foundation for sustained advocacy, policy engagement, and community-driven child protection mechanisms.

AFJN remains committed to working closely with traditional rulers, government agencies, and community structures to ensure **every child is protected, educated, and empowered.**