SHINING A LIGHT ON CHILD DOMESTIC SLAVERY: "OMO-ODO"

SPOTLIGHT ON AFRUCA
JUNE 2018 EDITION
OMO ODO IS THE TERM USED FOR CHILD DOMESTIC SLAVES IN NIGERIA
“SAY NO TO OMO ODO”

TO REPORT A CONCERN PLEASE CALL THE CONFIDENTIAL UK MODERN SLAVERY HELPLINE 0800 012 1700

TO DISCUSS MODERN SLAVERY IN YOUR COMMUNITY CONTACT AFUCOA ON 0207 704 2261 OR EMAIL INFO@AFUCOA.ORG
Dear Friends and Supporters,

It is really disconcerting that 17 years after I established AFRUCA in May 2001 as a result of the trafficking and abuse of children like Victoria Climbie, the issue of child trafficking and modern slavery is still largely with us. Rather than abating, we are seeing many more cases of children who are trafficked into the UK to be used as slaves.

Having delivered an anti-trafficking project for many years at AFRUCA, we note the disproportional representation of victims of modern slavery from Nigeria. Not only that, most of our users are trafficked for domestic slavery and most of these are of Nigerian origin. Our experiences at AFRUCA mirror national trends. According to National Crime Agency statistics which are released every quarter, Nigerian adults and children form the highest number of victims of trafficking into the UK for domestic slavery.

This concern led us to form a partnership with other UK charities like Salvation Army and the UK Home Office to deliver a Modern Slavery campaign targeting the Nigerian community. As part of our activities in this regard, we launched and delivered a six month project on Domestic Slavery from December 2017 to June 2018. This newsletter captures the work we did within that period, highlighting our achievements and progress made in raising awareness about the evil of using children as domestic slaves.

As part of this project our Ambassadors and Champions delivered over 50 community activities in churches, mosques, community events, town halls and markets. We took part in more than 10 media programmes and made excellent use for social media platforms reaching nearly 60,000 people. In terms of outreach and impact, in our view this project was a resounding success.

We are grateful to all those who gave their time and efforts to ensure this project is successful and to the Home Office for the grant to deliver this project.

Enjoy Reading!

Debbie Ariyo OBE
Founder/CEO AFRUCA

Home Office
This Project was held in partnership with the Home Office
Nigeria tops the list of potential victims of human trafficking from Africa into the UK in 2017, according to figures released by the UK National Crime Agency responsible for collating data on criminal activities in the country. 264 Nigerian adults and children were referred to agencies as potential victims of human trafficking and modern slavery.

Out of these:
- 86 individuals – both adults and children were referred as victims of domestic servitude/slavery. This is the highest number of figures for any country.
- 133 individuals were referred as victims of sexual exploitation.
- 23 people were referred as victims of labour exploitation.

These figures are those who are reported or referred to different agencies. As with any form of clandestine activities, it is very likely that the true figures of victims are much higher because many are still caught up in their trafficking situations without a means of escape.

In the year to May 2018, AFRUCA supported over 50 children and young people who were trafficked for different forms of slavery, especially domestic slavery. Since our inception, we have worked with over 450 victims of human trafficking from Africa, mainly Nigeria, into the UK. Many of them had spent so many years locked up in people’s homes as slaves before escaping or being rescued. Others were trafficked for sexual slavery, being moved from country to country before arriving in the UK to be used for sex.

Some of these young people were made to undergo terrible juju rites and oaths rituals before embarking on their trafficking ordeal. Some also suffered terribly en-route to Europe, being made to travel through the desert into Libya before crossing the Mediterranean sea into Italy and finally to the UK.

Our work at AFRUCA over the past 17 years has largely involved campaigning against this terrible phenomenon. AFRUCA continues to advocate on this issue at the highest level of government in the UK and in Nigeria. In April 2018, the Director-General of NAPTIP – the Nigerian Anti-trafficking Agency visited AFRUCA Office in London to discuss joint-working. We hope that by working more closely together, we can held to address the issue of in order to help protect children from abuse and exploitation.

There have been a number of prosecutions and convictions of Nigerian nationals in the UK human trafficking for domestic slavery. In 2017, a Nigerian woman was jailed for 5 years for bringing a child into the UK and exploiting her for eight years as a domestic slave. In 2010, a Nigerian pastor was jailed for 11 years here in London for trafficking children and exploiting and abusing them. One of the young people she abused who we supported at AFRUCA recounted a story in which she forgot to bring a piece of frozen fish out of the freezer. The woman was so incensed she used the fish to beat her until she fell unconscious.

The trafficking of children for domestic slavery in the UK is an epidemic most notable amongst the Nigerian Diaspora. This group has the highest number of children trafficked into this country for both domestic slavery and sexual exploitation. We have the third largest number of victims of human trafficking in the UK – more than any other country in the world. What is the reason for this anomaly?

The evil culture of using children as domestic helps in Nigeria is a contributory factor. The culture of “omo-odo” – children living with relatives is very common. This practice, meant as a safety net for poor families has been bastardised and has instead become an avenue for child abuse and exploitation. Many people feel it is right to import this practice into the UK since it is normal in Nigeria. Many people do not see anything wrong with this practice and are unlikely to report cases to the UK authorities. Sadly, many children have also been failed by the authorities because of their own belief that using children as domestic servants is a cultural practice which should be left alone in the interest of race relations. This “cultural relativism” means that many children who run away from their traffickers and who report to the police are returned to their abusers – only for them to experience a worst form of abuse for daring to run away.

The outcomes for many of these young people are always dire. Most people in Nigeria will be shocked to find out there are young people here in the UK who cannot read or write – yet they have been in the country for five, eight, ten years. This is because their trafficker has refused to send them to school, preferring to use and abuse them as slaves locked up in the house doing manual labour. Ironically, for many of these young people, the key reason they were brought into the country was to have a better life and a good education.

The Nigerian government needs to address this terrible issue of domestic servitude or slavery, if we are to protect many children from exploitation, abuse and harm. It is neither morally nor legally right to have hundreds of thousands of children in culturally accepted and acceptable slavery in this 21st century – and for no one to see anything wrong with it. Almost all households in the south-western part of Nigeria have children used as servants – class and religion are no barrier. These poor children experience the worst forms of abuses imaginable. There are often stories in the Nigerian media about a child being beaten to death or having hot water poured on them or being harmed in other ways – because they are a domestic servant. This evil just has to stop.

The onus is on the Nigerian government to declare a zero-tolerance of child abuse and the use of children as domestic slaves. AFRUCA calls on the government to completely ban this practice with a jail term enough to deter others. The current law that allows parents to give up their children if they are over 12 years old does not help. There can be no excuses for using children as slaves in this 21st century.

Debbie Ariyo OBE is CEO of AFRUCA, a UK-based charity promoting the rights and welfare of children.
Putting an End to Omo-Odo: Child Domestic Slavery in the UK

AFRUCA is committed to working with others to help put an end to the scourge of child domestic slavery. In December 2017, AFRUCA received a grant from the Home Office to help address the growing problem of child trafficking for domestic slavery in England.

At AFRUCA, our experience of working with victims of trafficking at AFRUCA mirrors statistics provided by the National Crime Agency where Nigeria has remained consistently within the top five source countries with the highest numbers of potential victims of trafficking into the country.

With this grant, AFRUCA engaged in a series of community activities from December 2017 till June 2018 specifically in the Nigerian community in both London and Manchester to address the issue of domestic slavery, the terrible impact on victims, including children and how to improve protection and safeguarding. As part of this project, AFRUCA recruited and trained a team of Anti-Slavery Ambassadors and Champions, to reach thousands of Nigerians in London and Manchester to help propagate the anti-slavery message and create a ripple effect of change in the best interests of victims.

Since its inception in 2001, AFRUCA has worked with over 450 children and young people who were trafficked into the UK. More than 60% of these were trafficked for domestic slavery and most are of Nigerian origin. Victims experience terrible suffering ranging from physical abuse, different forms of emotional abuse, neglect and even sexual assault. Most victims worked with by AFRUCA display different types of long term mental health problems including posttraumatic stress disorder and long term physical health problems. Most of our users were denied access to education, which ironically is the main reason they were deceived into coming to the UK by their traffickers.

The growing phenomenon of human trafficking involving Nigerian nationals in the UK is disconcerting especially viewed in relation to recent accounts coming out of Libya where Africans including Nigerians are being openly traded as slaves.

According to Debbie Ariyo OBE, CEO of AFRUCA, “the terrible experiences of children and young people who have been through domestic slavery in the UK are a driving force for us in launching this programme. It cannot be right that children are enslaved and exploited this way in the 21st century. With this project, we hope we can help to bring an end to this practice.”

Former Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability, Victoria Atkins, who approved the AFRUCA grant said: “Modern slavery is an abhorrent crime that affects individuals and communities across the globe, and this Government is absolutely committed to stamping it out.

“We are taking strong action to tackle all forms of slavery. This includes introducing the Modern Slavery Act, which gives law enforcement agencies the tools to tackle the issue, including a maximum life sentences for perpetrators and enhanced protection for victims.

“But legislation alone cannot eliminate this scourge. The work of charities like AFRUCA to support and advocate for the rights of victims – particularly children, who are among the most vulnerable in our society – is absolutely vital. I am delighted that Home Office funding is helping AFRUCA expand its excellent work, and I look forward to seeing the results of this new project to raise awareness of the issue of domestic servitude in the UK’s major cities.”
Meet AFRUCA Anti-Slavery Ambassadors

Our Anti Modern Slavery Ambassadors were inducted in March 2018. As respected members of the Nigerian diaspora in the UK, their role was to use their positions to help draw attention to the issue of Modern Slavery and AFRUCA’s work. Meet our Anti-Slavery Ambassadors below!

AFRUCA Anti-Slavery Ambassadors at their Induction on 3 March 2018

Name: Councillor Olu Babatola  
Position: Former Mayor, Royal Borough of Greenwich  
What Activities Did You Do As Ambassador:  
I organised a Town Hall Meeting, Held a Market Walk, Took part in conferences and community events on behalf of AFRUCA, Appeared on Radio, TV and Newspapers and Held High-Level Meetings with officials on Modern Slavery.

Name: Roseline Sanni  
Position: Actress and Producer  
What Activities Did You Do As Ambassador:  
I organised a meeting targeting the Nigerian movie sector, Held screenings of my movie: “In A Strange Land” in London, Manchester and Rochdale, Appeared on Radio, TV and Newspapers, Took part in High Level meetings with officials on Modern Slavery, attended community events on behalf of AFRUCA.
Name: Bilikisu Savage
Position: Civil Servant and Magistrate
What Activities Did You Do As Ambassador:
I worked with AFRUCA to organise training events targeting the Muslim community in London and Manchester, Took part in media activities, attended community events on behalf of AFRUCA and supported other Ambassadors in their roles too.

Name: Rev Jide McQualey
Position: Priest and Human Rights Campaigner
What Activities Did You Do As Ambassador:
I attended media programmes, Took part in community events and supported other Ambassadors in their roles too.

Name: Ronke Alli
Position: Vice Chair, Central Association of Nigerians in the UK
What Activities Did You Do As Ambassador:
I worked with others at CANUK to organise a major event where Modern Slavery was chosen as theme and guests made a declaration to work together to fight modern slavery. I attended media events and high level meetings on behalf of AFRUCA.

Name: Seye Aina
Position: President, British Nigeria Law Forum
What Activities Did You Do As Ambassador:
I jointly organised the BNLF’s London Legal Walk participation to help draw to Modern Slavery and raise funds for AFRUCA. I took part in high-level meetings on behalf of AFRUCA.

Name: Councillor Sade Etti
Position: Former Speaker, London Borough of Hackney
What Activities Did You Do As Ambassador:
I organised a Market Walk for AFRUCA, Took part in various forums and provided opportunities to speak to local audiences about Modern Slavery.
Our campaign took place from December 2017 to June 2018. We utilised a combination of volunteering involving Anti-Slavery Champions and Ambassadors, community engagement activities including events held in faith and community settings, community radio and TV broadcasts as well as social media, especially Facebook. During this period, we directly reached over 60,000 people via social media (Facebook) live videos and boosted adverts and at various community based events and activities held in London, Manchester and Rochdale by our team of 35 Champions and Ambassadors.

We reached the highest number of audience via our boosted Facebook posts. Also, three of our champions held highly successful live video discussions which generated a lot of interest and combined views of over 3300. We held the most number of activities in all categories in London directly reaching over 6000 people and in Manchester/Rochdale we were able to directly reach over 220 audiences.

A preliminary analysis of our campaign activities showed that most members of the audiences have gain new knowledge about domestic slavery and it can impact negatively on victims and that many people are now aware of how to refer cases they come across.

Social Media Campaign

Our Anti-Slavery campaign generated a lot of traffic on social media through our adverts and live discussions presented by opinion formers who are also our Champions. We reached over 60,000 views on different platforms, helping to ensure as many people as possible gained new knowledge about modern slavery in the UK. Due to its overwhelming success, it is clear that we need to make more regular use of social media as a core part of our awareness raising work at AFRUCA.
AFRUCA Team Out And About

Our campaign would not have been so successful without the dedication of our team of 25 Anti-Slavery champions in both London and Greater Manchester. Between them, they delivered 25 training sessions in various faith and community settings, reaching thousands of people and helping to propagate the Anti-Slavery message.
Domestic slavery is a hidden crime which occurs inside the home. Victims are usually always invisible to the outside world. However, there are many instances where people will come across victims. It is important to be able to spot the signs of domestic slavery and be able to report and refer victims to the right help and support.

**Domestic Servitude**

*Being held within a house against their will and forced to work long hours in unacceptable conditions*

**Spot the Signs**

1. Do they ever leave the house on their own?
2. Do they work in excess of normal working hours? Or are they on call 24 hours a day?
3. Do they seem afraid or anxious?
4. What conditions are they living in? How are they treated?
5. Can they freely contact their friends or family?
6. Have their passport or documents been taken away?

In A Strange Land: Movie on Domestic Slavery

AFRUCA collaborated with the producer of the Nollywood movie: In A Strange Land" which focused on the trafficking of a young woman for domestic slavery in the UK. The movie sent a powerful message about the devastating impact of this phenomenon on victims. We held three screenings of this movie in London, Manchester and Rochdale to help raise awareness of the issue using a popular medium. Altogether, over 200 audiences participated in the screenings.
Photos from Film Screening Events

Panel Discussion after Screening of “In A Strange Land” at Methodist Central Hall in Manchester

Screening of In A Strange Land at Amba Hotel, London

Screening of In A Strange Land at St Chad’s Church, Rochdale

AFRUCa Ambassador Roseline Sanni-Ajose, Actress and Producer of “In A Strange Land”
AFRUCA Modern Slavery Week in Manchester: 30th April - 5th May 2018

This is the first time that the issue of domestic slavery has been raised in greater Manchester and AFRUCA made a lot of inroads in reaching different segments of the Nigerian community. All in all, we reached over 1000 people through the different activities, social media, film screening and other community initiatives.
AFRUCA Ambassadors, Champions and Supporters were in Woolwich Town Centre to talk to residents about domestic slavery and how to help spot the signs to protect victims. We spoke one-on-one with over 100 residents.
Our Ambassador, the former Mayor of Royal Greenwich, Councillor Olu Babatola hosted a major community event titled: “Domestic Slavery: Myth or Reality” on 8 June at Woolwich Town Hall. Various officials from neighbouring local authorities, churches, community organisations and members of the general public engaged in the conversation, committing to do more in their communities.
You are invited to a special event to celebrate our achievements as part of our recent Modern Slavery project.

AFRICA MODERN SLAVERY PROJECT

Say No to "Omo-oba"

PROJECT COMPLETION AND REUNION

SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 2018
5:00PM PROMPT

Amba Hotel
Strand, London WC2N 5HX

• RSVP AFRUCA Office: 02077042261 or info@afruca.org
AFRUCAS Work to Tackle Modern Slavery and Child Trafficking in the UK

Child trafficking is a form of Modern Slavery. AFRUCA is recognised as a leading organisation working with victims of trafficking in the UK and is the only organisation to provide specialist support exclusively for victims of African descent. We work with young Africans aged 12-25 who have been victims of child trafficking, and have supported over 300 children and young people in the past six years. With our specialist knowledge and experience in the area of child trafficking, and links with African communities countrywide, we fill a vital gap in services. We understand key cultural issues, such as witchcraft and juju, and are regularly involved in providing awareness sessions and trainings to educate key stakeholders and communities on this horrific crime. We work holistically, from individual support to input into national policies, to prevent the trafficking of children and young people into the UK, protect their rights when here and promote their wellbeing moving forward.

WHAT WE DO

- Our dedicated Victim Support Workers provide emotional and practical support, and assist in navigating the legal and social service systems. They also provide a referral service aimed at helping clients access legal advice, health, education, housing, social care services and welfare benefits.

- Regular opportunities for young people to come together and provide peer support, such as our Survivors Forum and Summer Residential Programme, which give young people an opportunity to socialise, learn new skills and work together to improve their self-esteem, confidence and skills.

- Provide therapeutic services through our dedicated psychotherapists in London and Manchester, who provides one-to-one sessions to young people. We provide young people with a safe place to work towards resilience and empowerment.

- Advocate on behalf of young victims for improved access to services and quality protection to prevent re-trafficking or further denial of rights. We work closely with crime prevention agencies, social services and legal experts in the investigation of cases, often acting as an expert witness in immigration and criminal cases.

- Actively contribute to policies and best practices to counter human trafficking and protect victims. We regularly present at various national and regional conferences, and are members of key working groups.

- Community engagement and awareness to help improve knowledge and understanding of human trafficking and how to help protect and identify victims. We work with African communities to enhance their understanding of trafficking in their communities, while also training statutory agencies on issues which affect African victims.

- We produce Country Expert reports requested by Statutory agencies and Solicitors in relevant cases relating to Trafficking, Exploitation and Domestic Servitude

- International Responses to human trafficking and modern slavery, in partnership with others including NAPTIP – The Nigerian government anti-trafficking agency.
OMO ODO is the term used for child domestic slaves in Nigeria.

"SAY NO TO OMO ODO"

To report a concern please call the confidential UK modern slavery helpline 0800 012 1700.

To discuss modern slavery in your community contact AFUCA on 0207 704 2261 or email info@afuca.org.
AFRUCA Head Office:
Unit 3D/F Leroy House
436 Essex Road
London N1 3QP

Tel: 0207 704 2261
Fax: 0207 704 2266

AFRUCA Centre for African Children and Families:
Phoenix Mill
20 Piercy Street
Ancoats
Manchester M4 7HY

Tel: 0161 205 9274
Fax: 0161 205 2156

Email: info@afruca.org
Website: www.afruca.org