

## **GREATER ACCESS TO DEFENSE AND JUSTICE- GADJET**

### **TRAINING OF LAW STUDENTS OF BAYERO UNIVERSITY KANO ON THE PRACTICE OF PUBLIC INTEREST LAWYERING AND LEGAL AID SERVICES IN KANO STATE**

**DATE: 30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2018; VENUE: BAYERO UNIVERSITY KANO; TIME: 10:00AM**

#### **BACKGROUND**

Rule of Law and Empowerment Initiative also known as Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN) is implementing the Greater Access to Defense and Justice (GADJET) project aimed at creating sustainable improvements to the criminal Justice system. In furtherance of this, the project established the Public Defender's Office (PDO) to provide free legal services for less privileged persons in Kano State.

The project also aims to increase the amount of pro-bono legal support offered by trained lawyers. It is in furtherance of this that PWAN in collaboration with the Network of University Legal Aid Institutions (NULAI) organized a one day training session for 120 students of the Bayero University Kano, Faculty of Law, on 'The Practice of Public Interest Lawyering and Legal Aid Services in Kano'.

#### **INTRODUCTORY SESSION**

The training session began with welcome remarks from PWAN and NULAI. The facilitators provided a brief overview of both organizations, and outlined the objective for the training. At the end of the workshop, students would be able to (1) Explain and discuss the nature, types and core values of public interest issues, (2) Explain and discuss the importance of and goal in engaging in public lawyering, (3) Explain and discuss the ethical and professional responsibilities of lawyers towards public interest lawyering and (4) Explain and discuss proposals to engage in public interest projects.

#### **Lesson 1: Nature and Core Values of Public Interest**

Students participated in a 'Stop Action Role Play'. The play portrayed a scenario where a group of young men and girls were harassed by police for being in possession of drugs considered illegal (codeine), in the presence of a King (Sarakin), Lawyer and Councilor. Students were able to stop the play at certain points, where they believed the scenario should have gone differently. The students agreed that the bystanders should have intervened in the scenario.

The students were split into groups of ten, and asked to list 3 public interest issues, and provide the importance, examples and core values for each. Based on their presentations, the following major public interest issues were selected (1) Public Nuisance, (2) Sexual and Domestic Violence, (3) Political Violence, (4) Child Rights, (5) Human Rights Education.

#### **Lesson 2: Pro bono as Ethics and Professional Responsibility of Lawyers**

In the next session, NULAI facilitated a discussion on the ethics and professional responsibility of lawyers. Students were asked to outline the social and economic cost resulting from lack of adequate representation for the underprivileged and underrepresented, and if they would or would not commit to



doing pro bono. Majority of the students agreed that pro bono is an integral part of being a lawyer, while a few others were against pro bono, for various reasons, one of which was the cost of legal education and practice.

### **Lesson 3: Public Interest Lawyering Proposals**

This session was facilitated by PWAN, and students were asked to develop public interest lawyering proposals, based on the public interest issues outline earlier. Each proposal was to comprise of Activities, Target Groups/ Target Community, Duration and Resources needed.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Students were advised to view pro bono and public interest lawyering as integral parts of being a lawyer.
- Not all resources needed for public interest lawyering have to be financial. Students were advised to think outside the box, and come up with ways they can impact their communities, that don't need financial requirements.
- Students were asked to be careful while developing proposals that address child abuse. They are not to use sweets, and other items food items to entice children, as this is usually a tactic employed by perpetrators of child abuse.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The students have been divided into 4 groups based on the public interest issues, and will participate in legal clinics over a four day period. Each legal clinic will be focused on a specific public interest issue, and carried out in the community where it is needed most.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Public Interest Issue</b>	<b>Community</b>
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> July 2018	Domestic Violence	Gwammaja
Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> July 2018	Child Abuse and Human Rights	Unguwa Uku
Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup> July 2018	Sexual Violence	Makwarari
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> July 2018	Traffic Violation	Bata Market

### **CONCLUSION**

The next training session will be held on the 21<sup>st</sup> July 2018, to be followed by another round of legal clinics in the following week. The training ended at 5 pm.