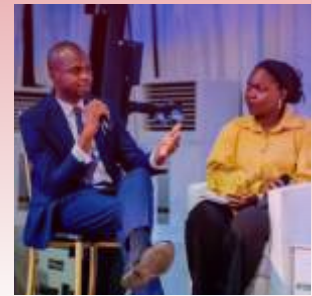


Restorative Justice for Africa's **IMPACT REPORT**

2020 - 2024



Rewriting Stories of Injustice

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5 Years in Numbers



18,560+

Justice impacted
Individuals
supported



800,000

Pro bono
hours
clocked



970+

Detained people
that have received
free legal services



400+

Beneficiaries of
Restorative Justice
clinics



348

Women
and girls
empowered



328

Cumulative years our
beneficiaries have
spent in detention



65+

Reintegration
and re-entry
support



15+

Correctional
facilities
engaged



2

Half-way home
supporting formerly
incarcerated people



1

Tech
product



1

Policy
Change

Executive Summary

This impact report takes you inside our work, captures the tangible fruits of our labour for the past four years and shares real-live impact from our beneficiaries. You will also see the institutions and entire communities who are now part of reimagining a society where justice is more accessible and people-centered.

In Nigeria alone...



70%

of incarcerated people are awaiting trial and,



1.4million

incarcerated people have unmet justice needs across Africa.

Over the past four years, here is how we are closing the justice gap...



900+

Indigent inmate defended



18,000+

Justice-impacted individuals supported across 7 States



People-Centered approach to crime and punishment



Reintegration Pathways through our halfway homes



Coalition with government institutions to address unjust incarceration



Trained magistrates on human rights and legal reforms



Our **Vision**

A fair and accountable Africa where everyone has equal access to justice regardless of their economic situation.



Our **Mission**

To close the justice and inequality gap for people behind bars through restorative justice, tech-enabled legal support and reintegration programs.

Sustainable Development Goals



End poverty in all its forms everywhere.



Reduced inequalities.



Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to Justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Our Beneficiaries



children in conflict with the law



Women



Victims of human rights violations



Wrongfully arrested/detained persons

A message from the Executive Director

As I write these words and reflect on how we began, I am filled with profound gratitude and hope. The vision for Restorative Justice for Africa (REJA Initiative) first took root in my heart many years ago, blossoming into reality in January 2020. What began as the dream of a 300-level law student, deeply troubled by the scars of human rights violations and uncertain about how to ignite reform in Nigeria's criminal justice system has now grown into a vibrant organisation promoting people-centered justice and driving systemic reform for justice-impacted individuals across Africa.



Africa is a continent defined by resilience, tradition, and community. Yet, for far too long, our criminal justice systems have been shaped by colonial legacies of punishment and retribution, leaving victims unheard and communities fractured. In the early days of our journey, REJA emerged as a response to these pains and injustices, especially for the unjustly incarcerated, forgotten in overcrowded prisons. We began by connecting them with volunteer lawyers who could provide legal representation and restore hope.

*Today, I am deeply proud of the transformation we have inspired. So far, REJA has supported over **14,000 people** with **free legal advice, representation, and reintegration support**. We have also advocated tirelessly for the integration of restorative justice approaches within courts, police stations, and correctional facilities, helping to decongest prisons and reduce reoffending by offering alternatives that restore dignity and build safer communities.*

This Impact Report is a tribute to our incredible team, paralegals, and volunteer lawyers whose commitment continues to breathe life into our mission. We are immensely grateful to our partners, **Echoing Green, Dovetail Impact Foundation, The Elevate Prize Foundation, Spaces for Change, Hiil Justice** and many others. To every supporter who believes in a fairer, more just Africa, your trust and partnership have been the strength behind our progress.

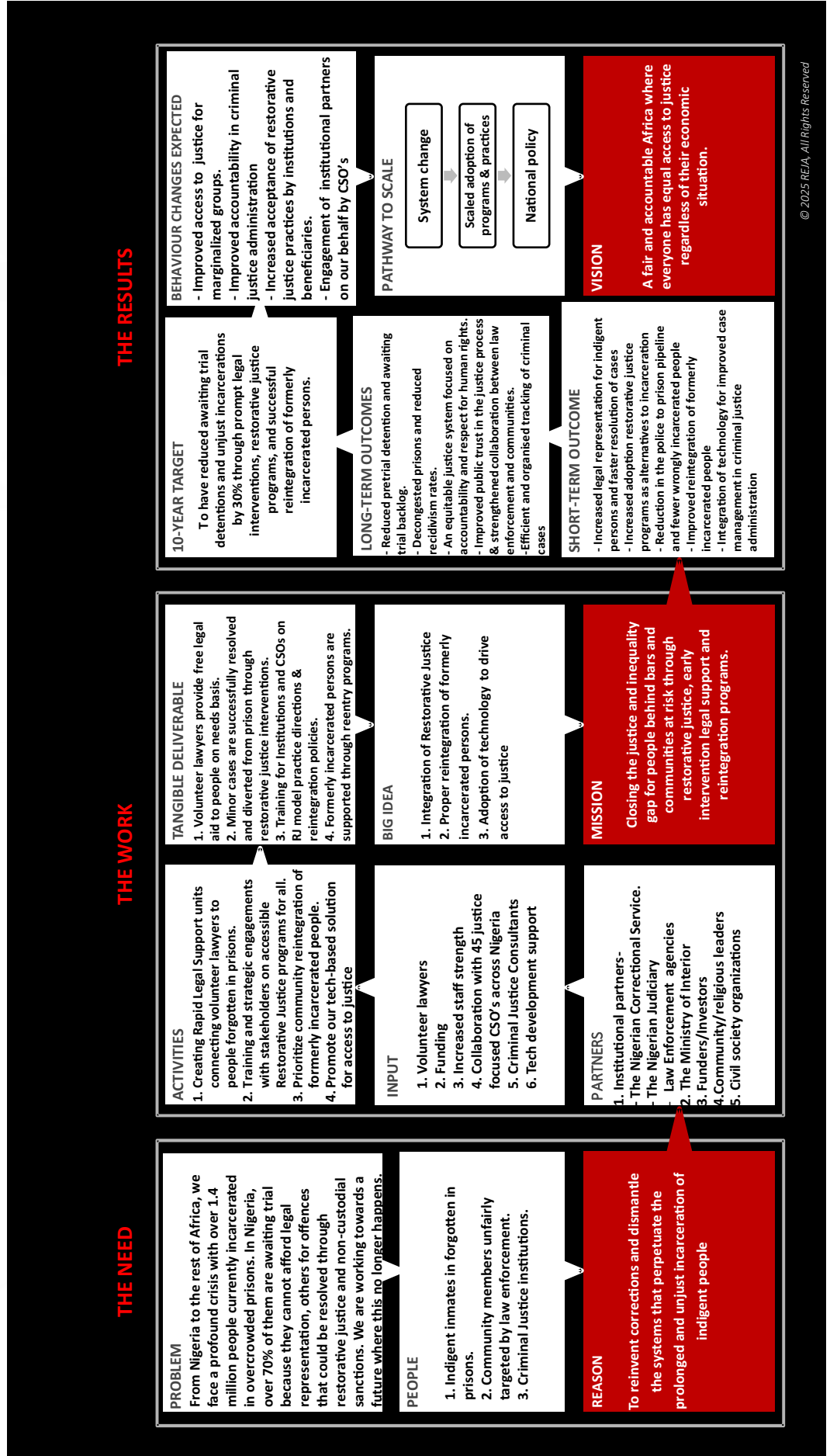


As we look ahead, our vision remains unwavering: to build a continent where everyone has equal access to justice regardless of background. In the years ahead, we aim to expand our Access to Justice programs to reach more vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities; strengthen our reintegration efforts; deepen our advocacy for juvenile justice reforms; and leverage technology to amplify our impact across underserved communities.

Once again, thank you for believing in our mission and walking this path with us.

Osariemen Grace Shobanke,
On behalf of the REJA team.

Theory of Change



Our Programs (Key Impact Areas)

Access To Justice Program

Our Access to Justice Program provides free legal representation to indigent persons who cannot afford a lawyer, helping them secure fair hearings and freedom from prolonged detention. Through this program, we work to reduce prison overcrowding, promote human rights, and ensure that justice is not limited by financial status.

Out of 970 powerful stories from this program, we have selected a few to share — each one a testament to hope, second chances, and the impact of accessible justice.



□ From Behind Bars To Freedom

In May 2022, Solomon (pseudonym) found himself on the wrong side of the law in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. What began as a routine sale of black-market fuel turned into a nightmare when a police officer forcibly confiscated his belongings. Solomon was arrested and endured five brutal days in a police cell, beaten and threatened by officers. Solomon was transferred to Keffi Correctional Centre, forgotten and alone. That changed in January 2023 when REJA met him and looked into his case. REJA fought for his freedom and after nearly a year behind bars, Solomon walked free. REJA also supported him financially to reunite with his family.



□ Justice Delayed, Justice Denied

Jude (Pseudonym) was a young man who worked tirelessly at a palm oil mill in Benin City. Due to the poor conditions of service, Mr Jude notified his employer of his intention to resign in the middle of April 2022 and requested half of his wages for work done. He was however met with hostility. Not long afterwards, his former employer made good his threats and arrested him. He was then charged at Ehor Magistrates' Court, Benin-City, Edo State for breach of public peace, and was remanded in custody.



Though the maximum sentence for his alleged offense was just one month, Jude found himself trapped in custody for three months. Unable to afford legal representation or meet the bail conditions, he languished behind bars, forgotten. We took up his case and finally, on May 4, 2023, after more than a year of unjust suffering, Jude was discharged. We continue to advocate for reforms in the criminal justice system to prevent unjust situations like Jude's case from happening again.

❑ Trapped by Injustice, David's fight for freedom

Falsely accused of stealing, David (pseudonym) found himself at the mercy of a broken system. Despite an express order from the DPO for his release, a rebellious officer ignored it and had him arraigned at the Upper Area Court in Nasarawa State. For two agonizing months, David languished in Keffi Correctional Centre, helpless and forgotten, until REJA intervened. Our legal team took up his case, fought for his freedom, and secured his release. But freedom alone wasn't enough. REJA provided him with essential supplies and transport back to his village, helping him rebuild his life.



❑ Mr. Bola's Story

In 2022, Mr. Bola (pseudonym) was wrongly accused of stealing and conspiracy. Despite his profession of innocence, he languished in prison for two agonizing years. But then, a ray of hope emerged, Our volunteer lawyer, Peter Ogbu, took up his case and fought tirelessly for his freedom.



After multiple court sessions with the prosecution’s witnesses absent, the court struck out the charges. Mr. Bola’s story is a stark reminder of the countless individuals trapped in Nigeria’s correctional centers, their cases stalled due to lack of legal representation.



A Win for Justice

The journey to freedom for Efosa (Pseudonym) and his brother began on November 20, 2024, when our Volunteer Peter Chukwu Ogbu, Esq., visited the Juvenile Home in Ugbekun, Upper Sakponba, Benin City. There, he met with five unrepresented children including Efosa and his brother and took up their cases. Just eight days later, REJA appeared in court on behalf of the minor and his brother, securing their release due to lack of diligent prosecution and disinterest from the complainant.



□ From Despair To New Beginnings: Daniel's Journey To Freedom

During a police raid at a furniture market, Daniel (pseudonym) was arrested and accused of belonging to a criminal gang. In court, he was coerced into pleading guilty, and the judge adjourned sentencing for two months.



Daniel was remanded in a correctional center and endured harsh conditions, even contracting scabies. With the expertise of our head of legal, Mr. Chibueze Maduka, Daniel's sentence was reduced to community service. Now free, Daniel is ready to leave the past behind and build a brighter future.

Restorative Justice Program

Our Restorative Justice Program promotes healing-centered approaches to justice that focus on accountability, reconciliation, and repair rather than punishment. Through advocacy, capacity building, and dialogue with key justice stakeholders, we work to integrate restorative justice practices into Nigeria's criminal justice system — giving victims a voice, helping offenders take responsibility, and restoring balance within communities. Here are a few of our interventions.



Restorative Justice In Action

Mike (pseudonym) was a teenage boy from a small community in Abia State who had gained notoriety for his destructive behavior, which included theft, burglary, and arson. The community, fed up with his actions, decided to take action and had him arrested and detained indefinitely. This was where our team met Mike.



We facilitated a restorative justice process that brought together Mike, his family, the victims of his crimes, and community leaders.



Through open and honest dialogue, the parties discussed the harm caused by Mike's actions and its impact on the community, ways to repair the harm and restore balance and opportunities for Mike to take responsibility, make amends, and change his behavior. The intervention was successful, Mike took responsibility for his actions, changed his ways and became a useful member of the community.

Amara's Second Chance

Born into hardship and left in the care of her mother's friend, 14-year-old Amara (pseudonym) was sent to Lagos to work as a domestic staff. Her guardian's mistreatment left her desperate.

One day, she took the guardian's child out without permission, intending to run away. Exhausted and stranded, she approached a passerby, claiming the child was her sibling. Taken in by a kind stranger, Amara eventually confessed that she had planned to harm the child out of frustration but couldn't go through with it. Alarmed, her host alerted the police, and Amara was sent to a juvenile facility. Amara expressed deep remorse when we met her during a routine visit. Believing in her potential for change, we fought for a resolution rooted in compassion, not punishment.



Today, Amara has been given a second chance, a chance to rebuild, learn, and dream again. Her story proves that even in our darkest moments, redemption is always possible.

From Shame to Restoration, Martin's story

Martin (Pseudonym), a 19-year-old young man, had his life turned upside down when he was accused of stealing ₦220,000 from his boss. Arrest, court charges, and remand followed, leaving Martin feeling hopeless. Hope came calling when our volunteer Ms. Precious during a visit to the correctional centre, met Martin and took up his case. After securing his bail, our volunteer, Precious, facilitated a victim-offender mediation between Martin and his boss.



In a display of accountability, Martin took responsibility for his actions and promised to repay the amount he took. Together, the parties came up with an agreement for repaying the stolen amount.

Reintegration And Rehabilitation Programs

The Restored Voices Shelter was born out of a need to provide a place for persons who were recently released from correctional facilities but had no place to go or live far away. With no family, friends, or support system, their journey to reintegration becomes more daunting. Recognizing this pressing need, we conceptualized the halfway home project in Nassarawa State.



The pilot phase of the halfway home project began with Mr. D, for whom we rented and furnished a room for one year, equipping it with essential household items. Beyond providing shelter, we invested time in his rehabilitation, helping him transition from a mindset of resentment to one of restoration. Through counseling, education, and mentorship, Mr. D gradually reintegrated into society and is now employed as a security officer.

The vision is to establish a facility that would serve as a rehabilitation, resettlement, and reintegration centre for ex-inmates facing similar challenges. We also want to set up a water purification plant and a bakery to create employment opportunities for the ex-inmates. We plan to construct additional hostels and training halls as we get more funding to create more rehabilitation programs.



Outreaches

We regularly organize outreaches to correctional facilities across Nigeria, creating opportunities to provide essential supplies to inmates and facilitate healing circles. Through these sessions, we help them reflect on their experiences, take responsibility for their actions, and build the skills and mindset needed to make better choices for the future.

Keffi Correctional Centre Outreach

Our Abuja team in collaboration with Compos Mentis Law Firm organized an outreach to the inmates of the Medium/Maximum Security Correctional Centre, Keffi, Nassarawa State. Our team took toiletries and other provisions and they also conducted interviews to identify indigent inmates in need of legal representation. We paid the fines of four inmates and interviewed 12 inmates who were in prison for petty offenses and had no access to legal representation.



□ Outreach To Idi-araba Girls Correctional Centre

Our team organised an outreach at the Special Correctional Centre for girls, Idi-Araba to kickstart our 'safe period' project. The project was geared towards educating young girls on basic menstrual hygiene management while training them on how to make reusable sanitary pads for their use.

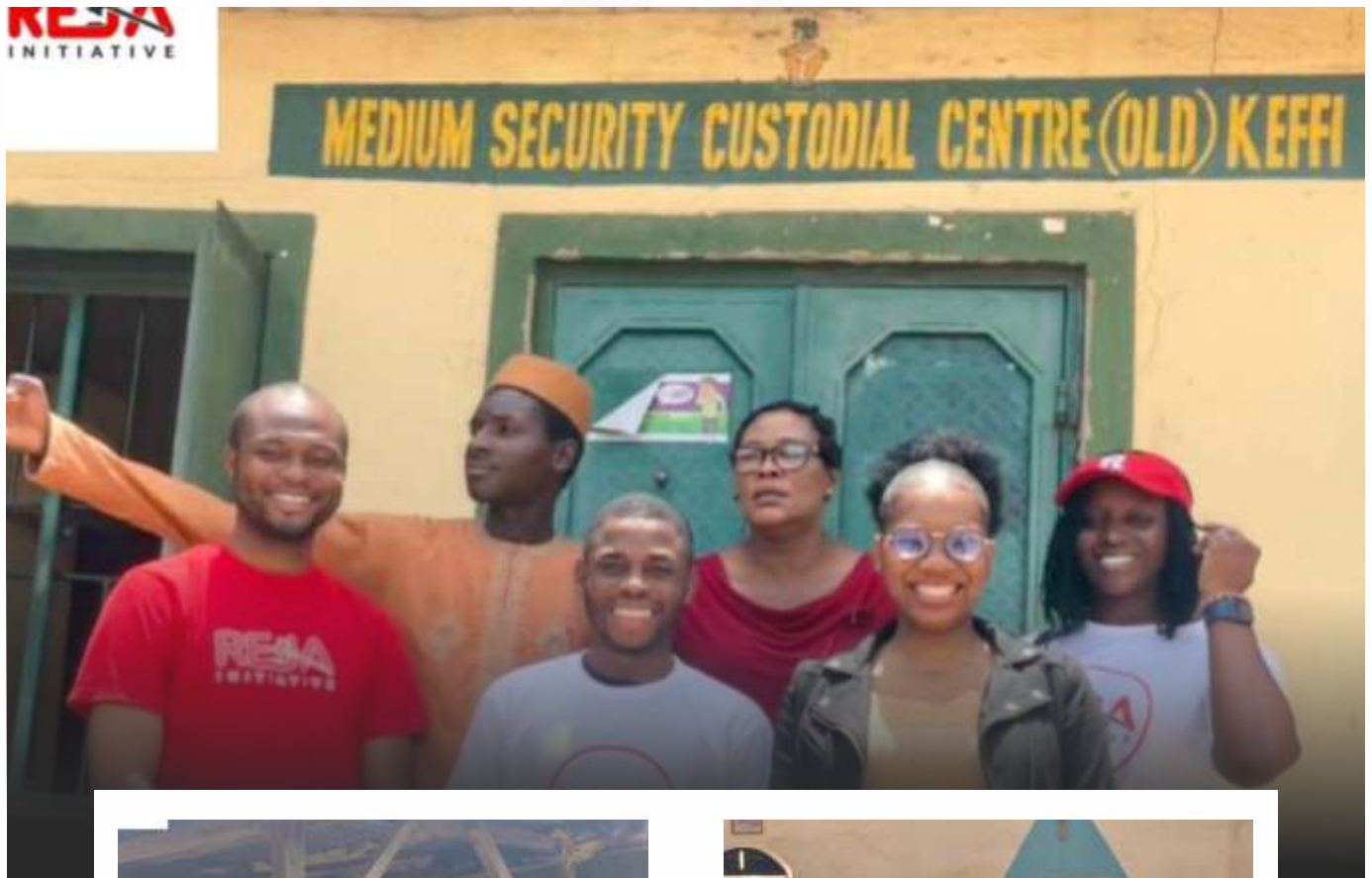


□ Outreach to Afara Correctional Facility, Umuahia



Empowering Women Behind Bars

On April 5th 2024, our team visited the old Keffi correctional centre to empower the female inmates. Our outreach initiative focused on providing holistic support. We believe everyone deserves dignity and support, regardless of their circumstances. With your continued support, we can expand our outreach efforts to more correctional centres in Nigeria, transforming the lives of incarcerated men and women.



Stakeholder Engagements

Partnership with the Nigerian Correctional Service Unit



Partnership with the Lagos state Ministry of Justice

REJA entered into a partnership with the Restorative Justice Centre, Lagos, as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen restorative justice practices across Nigeria. Through this collaboration, both organisations aimed to share knowledge, build capacity, and implement joint initiatives that promote restorative justice as an effective alternative within the criminal justice system



Working Visit To The Chief Judge Of The Fct



As part of our concerted efforts to improve criminal justice administration across Nigeria, REJA paid a working visit to the Chief Judge of the FCT High Court, Honourable Justice Baba Yusuf, on 13th December 2022 in Abuja.

This strategic meeting was led by a member of our board of trustees, Emokiniovo Dafe-Akpedeye and our head of legal, Mr Chibueze Noel Maduka who had the opportunity to discuss procedures for implementing restorative justice practices within the Federal Capital Territory as provided by section 43 of the Nigerian correctional service Act 2019.

Courtesy Visit To The Chief Judge Of Edo State

Our team met with Hon. Justice D. I. Okungbowa, Chief Judge of Edo State on November 8, 2024. The meeting aimed to explore implementing restorative justice practices in the state, collaborating on rehabilitation and reintegration programs, and discussing non-custodial sentencing and policy reforms.

Our proposal included using restorative justice to resolve minor cases and organizing a capacity building workshop for judicial officers in the State. The Chief Judge expressed support for these initiatives.



International, Regional And National Engagements

High Level Political Forum At The United Nations, New York, US

Our Executive Director, Osariemen Omoruyi-Shobanke attended the 4th High-Level Political Forum at the United Nations headquarters in New York, USA in August 2023. This event provided a global platform to advocate for the integration of Restorative Justice into Nigeria's Criminal Justice System.



Executive Director Of REJA Attends 4th High Level Political Forum At The United Nations- Makes Strong Case For Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice World Conference

Our Executive Director, Osariemen Omoruyi-Shobanke spoke at the Restorative Justice World Conference which took place on 22nd of August 2020 on the topic; effective sustainability of Restorative Justice in Nigeria. She was joined by other renowned experts on restorative Justice from across the globe.



Nigerian Bar Association Spidel Conference



Our Executive Director was invited as a panelist to speak on the Implementation of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act at the 2019 conference of the Nigerian Bar Association Session on Public Interest and Development Law (SPIDEL) that held from 5-9 November, 2019. She highlighted the sweeping reforms that the NCS Act introduced especially with regards to Restorative Justice and equally raised concerns about certain provisions of the Act that may pose a challenge to its implementation.

Regional Conference Of Sub-saharan African Criminal Justice Stakeholders



REJA's head of Legal, Chibueze Maduka was one of the panelists at the regional conference of sub-Saharan African Criminal Justice Stakeholders in Abuja, Nigeria which took place on November 1st – 3rd, 2022. He discussed Restorative Justice in Criminal Proceedings and made a strong case for restorative justice which must have a people-centered approach that both repairs the harm caused and restores the affected relationship.

2nd Regional Conference on the Administration of Criminal Justice in Nigeria

REJA participated in the Regional Conference on the Administration of Criminal Justice in Nigeria where we joined a critical discussion on reintegration and recidivism. Our team shared expert insights and innovative solutions aimed at reforming the justice system, supporting successful reintegration of offenders, and reducing recidivism rates.

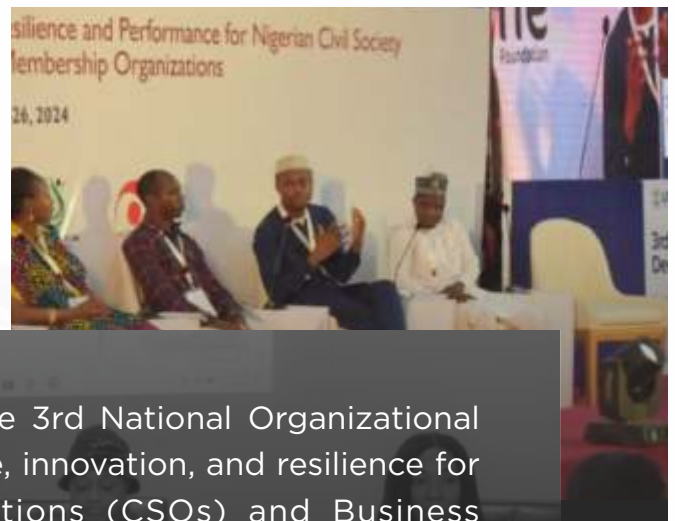


Restorative Justice Week Lagos

Our Executive Director, Osariemen Omoruyi-Shobanke was a panelist at the Restorative Justice Week 2023 organised by the Restorative Justice Centre of the Lagos State Ministry of Justice. She emphasized the crucial role of accountability in the restorative justice process.



Sharing Insights: REJA at the 3rd National Organizational Summit



We participated as panelists at the 3rd National Organizational Summit, focused on driving change, innovation, and resilience for Nigerian Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Business Membership Organizations (BMOs).

Lagos State Ministry of Justice Conference

Trending

Lagos Attorney-General hails community-based sentence

NAN 6 days ago 0 231 3 minutes read

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Stakeholders seek scheme for community service officers

By Festus Oluwalana

Stakeholders have gathered to discuss the need for a scheme for community service officers in Lagos State.

The Lagos State Ministry of Justice has organized a meeting to discuss the need for a scheme for community service officers in Lagos State.

The meeting was held at the Lagos State Ministry of Justice, Lagos.

The meeting was attended by the Lagos State Attorney-General, Festus Oluwalana, and other stakeholders.

The meeting was held on Monday, 26th June 2024.

Experts offer insight on future of judiciary, energy repo

By Festus Oluwalana

Experts have offered their views on the future of the judiciary and the energy sector.

The meeting was held at the Lagos State Ministry of Justice, Lagos.

The meeting was attended by the Lagos State Attorney-General, Festus Oluwalana, and other experts.

The meeting was held on Monday, 26th June 2024.

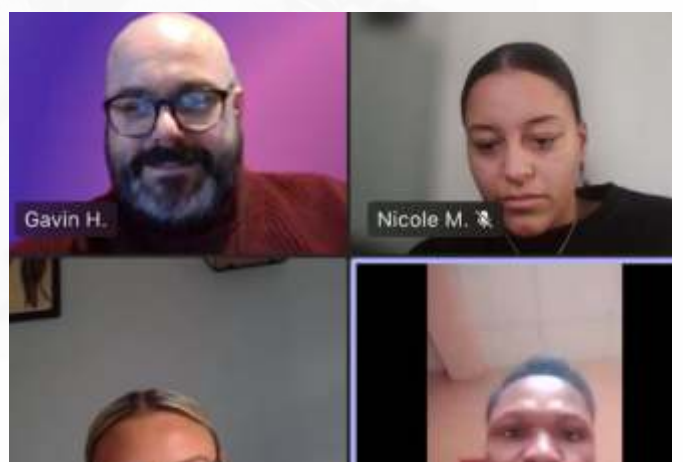
Our Executive Director, Osariemen Omoruyi-Shobanke was a panelist at the Lagos State Ministry of Justice Conference on enhancing the Community Service Unit and strengthening justice delivery within Lagos State, Nigeria. REJA has worked closely with the Lagos State CSU since 2022 on promoting safer communities.



Capacity Development And Trainings

We have participated in capacity development courses over the years to further strengthen our understanding of Restorative Justice and how it can be applied in the Nigerian context.

REJA team trained by UK based organization (REMEDI)





The REJA team completed a specialized training program on Restorative Justice, Facilitation, and Victim Support, courtesy of Remedi, a UK-based nonprofit organization. This comprehensive training equipped our team members with in-depth knowledge and practical skills to effectively apply restorative justice principles, further enhancing our mission to promote healing, accountability, and justice.

Training Police Officers on Restorative Justice

In commemoration of Restorative Justice week 2022, our team organized a training on restorative policing for police officers that held concurrently in two states across Nigeria (Lagos State and Nassarawa). This training aimed to equip police officers on restorative policing in order to prevent cases that can be settled amicably from entering the court system.



Sensitization Program For Magistrates In The Fct

We partnered with Spaces for change and the Action Group on Free Civic Space in September 2023 to organize a sensitization program for magistrates in the FCT on recognizing the contemporary indices of human rights violations and shrinkage of the civic space in their courts.



Our goal is to nurture a judicial environment that not only acknowledges but actively safeguards human rights principles while promoting a thriving civic space. Together, we are committed to protecting the civic space and protecting the human rights of citizens.



□ Sensitization Program At Baze University



1-day sensitization program at Faculty of Law, Baze University in commemoration of Restorative Justice Week 2023.

□ Capacity Building Training For Magistrates In Ogun State

REJA organised a training for magistrates in Ogun State, Nigeria on protecting the civic space through their courts. The training helped the magistrates identify the dangers of a closed civic space, the plight of arrested protesters and the critical roles they play in ensuring civic freedom. This project was done in partnership with the Action Group on Free Civic Space, Spaces for Change and the Fund for Global Human Rights.



Awards And Recognitions

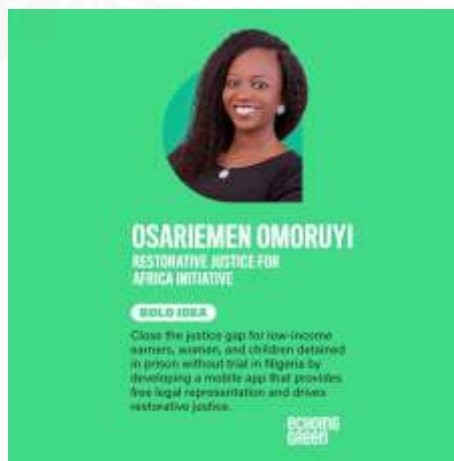
We are truly grateful for the recognition we have received for the work we do. Each acknowledgment serves as both encouragement and a reminder that there is still so much more we can accomplish. Beyond motivation, this recognition has also given us valuable visibility, allowing more people to learn about our mission, connect with our work, and join us in creating lasting impact.



Fellowships

We have had the incredible privilege of being part of some of the world's most impactful fellowships. These experiences have sharpened our mission, brought greater clarity to our "why," and helped define our thematic areas and program priorities. They have also opened doors to valuable knowledge and resources we might not have otherwise accessed. Along the way, we have built meaningful relationships and formed strategic collaborations that continue to shape our work. We are deeply grateful to have been chosen for these fellowships.

Echoing Green Fellowship



Dovetail Impact Fellowship



Mandela Washington Fellowship 2022



Justice Accelerator Program 2024



United States Institute of Peace (Generation Change Fellowship)



Civic Tech Fellowship 2024



HIIL Fubu Hackathon

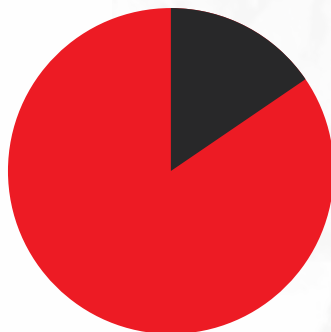


Cohort 4 Ge'da Digital Fellows



Trainings

With your support, we are equipping the next generation of justice defenders.



84%

of donations went directly to our programs,

16%

of donations powered administration.

Our Team



Team Members



Osariemen Omoruyi-Shobanke (Mrs) - Executive Director



Chibueze Maduka - Head of Legal



Eguono Olorunfemi (Mrs) - Operations Manager



Khadijah Gidado (Mrs) - Co-ordinator, Kano State



Gloria Osahenrumwen (Mrs) - Co-ordinator, Edo State



James Odi - Programs/Legal Officer



Eno Harrison - Legal Associate



Innocent Jonathan - Admin/Finance Officer



Hammed Moyosade - M & E Officer



Esther Adewusi - Junior Associate



Ruth Garuba - Junior Associate

Volunteers

Peter Ogbu, Ubose Olorunfemi, Peculiar Oluomachukwu, Joshua Braimoh, Gbemi Alana, Lilian Chukwu, Abigail Eigbejiale, Gift Ihaza, Sarah Umukoro, Greg Atalor, Treasure Osazuwa, Emmanuella Ejemai, Victoria Achilihu, Azeez, IsiakaObunike Love, Musa Dolapo Omiwole, Modupe Tolulope, Aminat Apena, Chiedozi Mba, Glitter Luka, Tomidiea Gillis, Victoria Bennet, Kathryn Esther, Adedeji Adebunsi Raphael, Adeyeri Tobi, Chisom, Jaleel Abolaji, Ojo Oluwaseun, Yinka, Efevbokhan Ofure, Ochanya Zoe, Abisoye Oriyomi, Anfani Deborah, Fayemi Anjoayaoluwa, Gift Igbikwe, Precious, Abisoye Emmanuel, Caleb Pamilerin Sobalaju,8

Board of Trustees

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Chinemenma Umeseaka
Felicitas Aigbogun-Brai

Partners & Donors



Next Steps

At the heart of REJA's mission is equitable access to justice. We want more people to easily access legal representation, restorative justice programs and reintegration services. Our key focus in the next few years will be to dismantle systemic barriers that prevent indigent, rural, and underserved communities from engaging with the justice system.

We intend to ensure access by expanding our legal aid networks to rural areas, conducting more legal outreaches, and creating awareness about community-based restorative justice clinics. We will also continue to champion legislative and policy reforms and focus on enacting and enforcing restorative justice frameworks, expanding non-custodial measures, and driving prison decongestion strategies grounded in data and human rights prioritization.

Partner With Us



There is still a lot of work to be done but not a lot of resources to do it. With your support, we can create a society where everyone has equal access to justice.

Let us work together to end cycles of unjust incarceration, promote dignity and accountability through restorative justice, and build systems where every person, regardless of their socioeconomic status can access justice, rebuild their life, and thrive.

The future of justice in Africa must be restorative, and the time to act is now. Join us. Be part of the movement. Be part of the change.

REJA INITIATIVE

Naira:
1482564640

USD:
1608884449

Restorative Justice for Africa
Access Bank



1306749602
Restorative Justice for Africa
Providus Bank





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