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### ***General Paralegal Questions***

**1. How many paralegals does your organization employ?**

ANS: Over 100. They operate from the Community Information Centres and Legal Aid Clinics located in the communities. Only 4 work directly in the organization.

**2. What are the qualifications required to become a paralegal?**

ANS High school qualification/WAEC/SSE.

**3. How do the paralegals keep track of their records (cases/clients)?**

They are taught filing and reporting systems. Every client has a file in the centre and reports are filed monthly in the organization. The stipends of the paralegals are based on their reports.

**4. Do the paralegals conduct mediations? If so, what does the mediation look like? During the mediation, is the paralegal a neutral/independent party or an advocate for a party?**

Mediation and other alternate dispute resolution mechanisms are adopted. The aim is to reduce litigation which is expensive in terms of money and time. The paralegal is a neutral party.

**5. Do the paralegals conduct sensitizations/community education? How are the topics of education chosen? Are the topics specific to the needs of the community?**

Yes sensitization and community outreach programmes are part of their duties. The topics are centrally chosen during the state team meetings and according to thematic issues of the day. E.G. during elections, topics are focused on civic education, if it is census they concentrate on information they need to participate.

**6. What is the relationship between the paralegals and lawyers? How many lawyers work for your organization? How often do paralegals refer cases to lawyers? How often do lawyers review and/or provide training of the paralegals?**

Lawyers work in the organization and we have partner lawyers who take our cases on pro bono basis. Cases that need to go to court such as rape or GBV cases are referred to the lawyers. This is very often. We have refresher courses yearly for our paralegals.

**7. How do paralegals engage with traditional authorities? Have they encountered resistance? If so, how did they overcome that resistance?**

No. They are actually nominated by their traditional rulers for training so when they return to the community they have their cooperation. The traditional rulers by the nature of their responsibilities preside over cases so they use the skills of the paralegals.

**8. What is the relationship of the paralegals with the police?**

They are introduced to the police in their communities once they graduate and the police know them and work with them. One of the outcomes of the scheme is that there has been a reduction in the number illegal arrests and detention of people in those communities. Paralegals are very good in releasing those arrested on bail at the least. They work hand in hand with the police.

**9. Do the paralegals have offices? What are the offices like? Who supplies the offices?**

Yes they have offices in the Community Information Centres. Some of them are traditional rulers palace secretaries and they operate for the Traditional rulers' palaces, others are faith based and have offices in their various churches.

**10. How do community members learn about the paralegals and the services they provide?**

There is always a sensitization rally to inform the communities. There are also sign boards in the front of the offices as well as fliers and posters which are widely distributed.

**11. Are the paralegals supervised? Who provides the supervision? How often are they reviewed?**

They report to the organization monthly and they attend quarterly team meetings where they exchange ideas and learn from each others' experiences. They are supervised by the Programme team in charge of our paralegal services. Evaluation workshops are held annually.

**12. How many cases does each paralegal handle at a time?**

It depends. Sometimes one case goes on for several months and new ones are registered daily.

**13. How are paralegals trained? How long is the initial training? Are there follow-up trainings? Who conducts the trainings?**

The paralegal training is a 2 weeks' intensive residential programme and there are annual refresher course and evaluation workshops. Resource persons are engaged from the Nigeria Bar Association and within the organisation.

**14. What are the biggest challenges your paralegals have faced?**

Customs and traditions are strong and difficult to change so these affect their work particularly in family law matters. Women are discriminated against most of the time.

**15. What have been the keys to success of your paralegal program?**

Constant training and retraining, Monitoring and Evaluation and the support of our funders and partner lawyers.

***Paralegals & GBV***

**16. Do you handle gender-based violence cases? What types of cases?**

Yes. Wife battery, rape.

**17. Do your paralegals have a standard protocol for GBV cases?**

There is no GBV law so we fall back on the criminal law and procedure which is not adequate for our purposes.

**18. Are paralegals trained specifically for GBV cases? Are they trained on the legal aspects or the psychological aspects of GBV?**

GBV is a component of the criminal law training

**19. How do you handle GBV cases? Are any of them too severe to mediate?**

The severe ones go to court but women are reluctant to take their husbands to court for the custom forbids it. In these cases they are mediated and they are made to pay the bills and compensation.

**20. If you mediate domestic violence cases, is reconciliation of the parties an option?**

A very strong option.

**21. What are your standard protocols for rape cases?**

These ones are always taken to court although victims and families are reluctant because of the stigma associated with rape.

**22. If you have a family dispute, do you mediate with both parties in the room?**

Of course after talking with them separately.

**23. What happens when a mediation breaks down?**

The case goes to court.

**24. What are the possible outcomes of a GBV mediation? Do they include maintenance payments, child support?**

Yes

**25. Do your paralegals participate in compromises outside of the court system? How are compromises, especially in rape and other criminal cases, viewed?**

No this is discouraged.

### *Paralegals & Land Issues*

**26. Do you handle land disputes and land inheritance issues? Between individuals or between communities?**

Yes

### *Sustainability of Paralegal Program*

**27. Who pays the paralegals and the trainers?**

From Program grants, in this case Henrich Boll Foundation

**28. What are your long-term funding goals for the paralegal program?**

Still developing the goals.

**29. Are there certain steps a paralegal must take to get paid?**

They must submit their monthly reports.

**30. Why do people use paralegals instead of other avenues of dispute resolution? (and vice versa)**

It is free, informal and less time consuming.