

UPF-Nigeria holds 2-day women's educators workshop introducing Peace Clubs

Raphael Ogar Oko
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Abuja, Nigeria -- As part of efforts to have peace clubs introduced in Nigerian colleges of education, UPF-Nigeria held a two-day workshop for women educators.

“Establishment and Management of Peace Clubs in Colleges and Peace Councils in Communities in Nigeria” was the name of the workshop held on July 13 and 14, 2016, at the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) in the capital, Abuja.

UPF-Nigeria partnered with the association Women in Colleges of Education (WICE) to organize the special capacity-building workshop for women educators from over 45 colleges of education. Participants were nominated women educators who have been recommended to work as college Ambassadors for Peace to establish and manage college peace clubs and introduce peace education programs in their colleges as UPF liaison officers in their respective colleges.

The opening session featured welcoming remarks by Ambassador Babatunde Adegbesan, UPF-Nigeria director of partnership, and speeches from other VIPs, including the former executive secretary of the National Commission for Colleges of Education, the national president of Women in Colleges of Education, and UPF-Nigeria Secretary General Dr. Raphael Ogar Oko, as well as His Royal Highness Dr. Shaban Audu Nizazo III, Etsu of Kwali, who served as chair of the opening session. They all spoke positively of the initiative of peace clubs in colleges of education as a timely educational response to the challenges facing the nation.

The opening session ended with a call by the participants for UPF-Nigeria to establish a College of Peace Education and for the government to support the introduction of peace education in all teacher training colleges of education in the nation. The former executive secretary of the National Commission for Colleges of Education and the permanent secretary of the Federal Ministry of Petroleum Resources, who is the founder of Women in Colleges of Education, were honored by UPF as Ambassadors for Peace.

The workshop sessions featured the following presentations:

Presentation 1: “Introduction to the Universal Peace Federation”: the life of the Founders; the vision and mission of UPF; and programs and projects around the world. The presentation also featured a report on UPF-Nigeria’s activities. The presentation was given by UPF-Nigeria Secretary General Dr. Raphael Oko.

Presentation 2: “The Need for Peace Education in Nigeria,” by Dr. George C. Ikpot, UPF-Nigeria director of international affairs, focused on the importance of education for peace and suggested how to develop a

curriculum for peace based on the UPF Peace Principles. The presentation outlined the principles of peace, root causes of conflict, and the principles and application of conflict resolution and reconciliation.

Presentation 3: “Establishment and Management of Peace Clubs in Colleges” by Dr. Oko. He guided participants on a step-by-step process including introduction of the peace club initiative to the school management, mobilizing students to join, applying to school management for registration, and developing a club constitution, among others. The presentation also covered issues of membership, partnership, programs and projects, funding and outreach services, as well as the appointment of patrons and connecting with UPF Ambassadors for Peace to serve as Visiting Ambassadors for Peace to the colleges. Participants also discussed how college peace clubs can commemorate the United Nations “International Days.”

Mrs. Maria Dauda Jev, UPF-Nigeria Ambassadors for Peace director of women's affairs, facilitated the general discussion and question-and-answer session, which provided opportunities for the participants to talk about issues, anticipated challenges, and opportunities and strengths. Participants sought clarification for some of the new concepts.

Day Two began with a recap/reflection on Day One facilitated by Maria Dauda Jev. Participants testified about their Day One experiences and their aspirations and expectations for Day Two.

Presentation 4: “Introduction to the Family Peace Blessing Festival” by Dr. Oko, which attracted wide interest as some of the participants who had watched the Blessing Festival videos were amazed by the large crowds attending the event. Some of the participants expressed interest in the matching program for the next Blessing Festival. Issues on marriage and family life came up for discussion. Participants voiced interest in introducing the Family Peace Blessing program to their graduating students.

Presentation 5: “Ambassadors for Peace Initiative” was delivered by Dr. Ikpot, who invited some of the Ambassadors for Peace to talk about their own experiences. Hajiya Fatima Ibrahim Mama, the founder of the Christians and Muslims Interreligious Peace Foundation, and Ambassador Babatunde Adegbesan described their experiences.

Presentation 6: “Peace Club Programs and Projects” was coordinated by Dr. Oko, who gave insights on how to adapt UPF International programs and projects to the local level, including: introductory seminars on peace education; Peace Day celebrations; Service for Peace; Religious Youth Service; Mister & Miss Peace pageants; peace education centers; Soccer for Peace festivals and Peace Cup tournaments, and student dialogue as an alternative to competitive discourse.

The presentations were followed by group discussions and action plans, in which participants developed their goals for establishing and managing college peace clubs, plans, targets, as well as indicators and timeline.

The closing ceremony featured testimonies, goodwill messages by visiting Ambassadors for Peace, the presentation of a certificate of participation to all attendees, and pledges of commitment to ensure that peace clubs are established and well managed in colleges of education. The president of Women in Colleges of Education, Mrs. Mary Aibangbe, thanked all the participants for their commitment and also commended UPF. She expressed gratitude to the National Commission for Colleges of Education for granting approval to the proposal for UPF and directing selected colleges to support their members to attend the workshop and serve as college Ambassadors for Peace.

UPF-Nigeria will coordinate the establishment of peace clubs in colleges of education and will work with college management to ensure that peace education is introduced into the curricula. UPF also will mobilize resources for the establishment of a Universal Peace College to train educators who will teach the ideals of peace in Nigeria’s elementary schools.

The workshop was reported on Radio Nigeria Network News, the nation’s largest radio network.