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CHAPTER 34: ADOPTING EVIDENCE-BASED CHILD RIGHTS AWARENESS STRATEGIES:  
MOVING FROM MIRAGE TO REALITY IN CHILD RIGHTS IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

Nigeria has ratified and domesticated the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, but the protection of children's rights still remains poor as millions of children suffer from various forms of abuse day in day out. One of the key issues linked to child rights abuse in Nigeria is lack of awareness of children's rights. Before child rights can be embraced, they must first be publicised. Information on child rights has not been sufficiently disseminated to children and parents in Nigeria, according to the literature. Among the numerous steps that should be taken to advance children's rights, raising awareness is clearly the most important. As a result, this paper presents several strategies that have been empirically proven to be helpful in raising awareness among various stakeholders in other countries. It begins by identifying children as vulnerable individuals with rights, outlines several laws safeguarding them, with a focus on the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989 and Child Rights Acts, 2003. Several incidences of child rights abuse in Nigeria are also reported. Likewise, the paper emphasizes the importance of raising awareness in the realization of children's rights and describes various strategies used in many nations of the world to raise awareness of child rights protection, with a focus on creative strategies. It concludes by emphasizing that failing to protect children's rights has a number of long-term consequences, and that one of the most effective ways to move from just passing laws to actual implementation is to use effective awareness strategies such as creative arts to promote child rights among the children, stakeholders and the general public.

### **Introduction**

Childhood is widely acknowledged as a sensitive time requiring extra care, attention, and safety. It is the obligation of the adults in their immediate vicinity to give them a supportive atmosphere that will be beneficial to their growth and well-being and enable them to participate in society as future citizens. Early experiences have a big impact on how a child develops later in

life. Adults and community leaders have a duty and moral obligation to put the needs of children first and to take good care of their health, education, well-being, and development. Contrarily, it is regrettable to see that children, due to their immaturity, physical weaknesses, and innocence, are the most vulnerable members of society. They are frequently viewed as the parents' possessions because they are reliant on the adults in their environment to survive. They are not acknowledged as beings with the same fundamental rights as adults and additional rights that take into account their unique needs. Every child deserves a childhood free from exploitation, violence, abuse, and neglect. The foremost responsibility of a nation is to make sure that children's rights are upheld and their welfare is maintained, according to researchers like Anna (2001), Osanyin (2005), Soyibo (2005) and Adedigba (2015). The treatment they receive reveals a nation's degree of development. Every time a society fails to protect children, a heavy price is paid. Its detrimental consequences last throughout adulthood and have significant repercussions for the nation's growth.

In essence, it is now more important than ever to support children's rights and create environment that are supportive of their growth and development. It is essential that children in Nigeria have their rights upheld in order for them to succeed the older generation as leaders. It is crucial that adults are aware of children's rights, especially parents and other adults who work with children. Effective methods of spreading knowledge among these people must be adopted in order to do this. Children's rights may not be successfully implemented without public awareness of them. In order to raise awareness among many stakeholders, including parents, teachers, the community, and the children themselves, this study identifies a number of strategies that have been empirically demonstrated in other countries.

### **Child Rights Laws**

Internationally and in Nigeria, a number of laws that aim to safeguard children have been passed. To safeguard children from abuse, numerous laws and regulations have been implemented. These international treaties were approved in order to safeguard children from harm and exploitation as well as to establish norms and guidelines for improving child survival and protection. These conventions include the Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child of 1924, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child of 1979, the Minimum Age Convention of 1973, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention of 1999, and the International Labour Conventions on Child Labour, which include the Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention of 1919 (No 6), the Minimum Age Convention of 1973, and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention of 1999. Others include the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children of 1999, which states that children must be protected from all forms of harm, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) of 1989, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child

Prostitution, and Child Pornography, and The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development pledges to give children and young people a caring environment so they can fully realize their rights and potential (paragraph 25).

Additionally, the Federal Republic of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution guarantees several fundamental rights to all people, including children. (Nos. 33–41 in Chapter IV). The Children and Young Persons Act, which primarily deals with juvenile justice administration, the Criminal Code Act, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990 CAP 77, which protects children from harm and sexual exploitation, and the Labour Act (1974), which guards against physical and mental harm to children, are additional laws in the nation that protect children's rights. In 1991, Nigeria joined the UNCRC as a member state. The UNCRC serves as a major source of inspiration for Nigeria's national policy on children's rights. With 196 signatories, the UNCRC is the human rights agreement that has been ratified the most times in history. It is the most extensive human rights treaty and legal document that lays out a fundamental, international standard for the upbringing, treatment, survival, growth, and involvement of all children.

### **The 2003 Child Rights Act (CRA 2003)**

In order to comply with her duties under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Nigeria has since ratified the Child Rights Act 2003 (CRA). CRA (2003) encompasses all facets of children's and teenagers' life and is divided into survival rights, which address the essential requirements and services for children to survive and flourish from the moment of their birth. The right to life is one among them (e.g. an adequate standard of living, registered name and nationality, safe shelter, age-appropriate nutrition, clean drinking water, quality health care, e.t.c). Protection rights come next. These are protections against all kinds of exploitation and brutal treatment for children and teenagers. These include the right to be shielded from all types of harm, including physical and domestic violence, child labour, child marriage, sexual exploitation, torture, and drug use, as well as protection from all types of exploitation, including trafficking, smuggling, kidnapping, and all other forms of exploitation (e.t.c). This is followed by development rights. These include the right to education from early childhood development services, access to information from various sources, play, leisure, and cultural activities, freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, the chance to develop more specialized skills, and equal rights for children to reach their full potential. In order to reach their full potential and actively participate in society, children with disabilities have effective access to education and healthcare. The last group of rights is participation rights, which give children and teenagers the freedom to express their ideas, join organizations, take part in their communities, and have a voice, especially in decisions that have an impact on their own life.

### **Incidences of Child Rights Abuse**

Many children in Nigeria continue to experience various sorts of abuse, degrading treatment, brutality, and violence despite all of the national and international legal frameworks established for their protection. While some of these events are covered by Nigeria's national daily media, many more are kept under wraps out of fear or embarrassment. Child abuse is an international issue. Up to one billion boys and girls between the ages of 2 and 17 have experienced physical, sexual, or psychological violence worldwide in the previous 12 months. There are far too many children who are denied access to quality healthcare, social services, and education. Today, 18.5 million children are out of school in Nigeria according to UNICEF, May 2022. 60% of who are girls. Children are the target of serious physical or psychological harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, or an action or inaction that puts them in danger of serious harm in the near future. Child labour, child marriages, female genital mutilation, kidnapping, child trafficking, sexual assault or molestation, neglect, and other forms of abuse are among the many violations of children's rights that are reported in Nigeria (Adedigba, 2015; Ede and Kalu, 2018).

Many children experience neglect and are deprived of fundamental requirements and care, including food, shelter, clothes, education, supervision, medical attention, and other necessities for their physical, mental, and emotional growth. Most children lack access to a basic education. Due to their parents' failure to meet their children's educational demands, children frequently drop out of school. In Nigeria, child labour is also becoming more prevalent. Nigeria has the highest reported prevalence of child labour in Western Africa, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO), with an estimated 15 million children working there currently. Children are employed in a variety of industries including domestic servitude, according to Decker (2020). In society, using children as cheap labour is common. Children have been known to engage in street hawking, begging for alms or prostitution, loading and unloading cars, buying, selling, and hiring jobs instead of attending school for their own personal development. They are subjected to dangerous situations and an unsafe environment, which frequently leads to physical damage, severe trauma, and even death. Children are also not exempt from the new wave of kidnappings. Nigeria has not also fully met the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking because there were continued reports of child trafficking. Girls are more likely to be the victims of trafficking in the sex industry. Also, the number of children in armed forces keeps on increasing. According to UNICEF between 2013 and 2017, 3,500 Nigerian children are believed to have enrolled as child soldiers and currently the Cable reported that over 8000 boys, girls have been recruited as child soldiers in Nigeria since 2009 (The Cable, February 14, 2022).

Likewise, children are subjected to cruel treatment, including being severely beaten in the name of correction, punishment, or anger. Some children are subjected to degrading and inhuman conditions, severe beatings in the name of chastisement, correction, or anger. For example, in Anambra State, a 24 year old lady flogged and later locked up with a dog in the kennel a 10-year old boy who happened to be her nephew. CENCOD (2012) also reported that in Akwa Ibom, a child aged eight was battered and tortured; and burnt with hot knife from her mistress for stealing biscuit worth of N10.00. The Guardian (2020) also reported that in Kaduna State, over 300 children between five years of age and under the age of eighteen were discovered in an Islamic boarding school tagged “house of torture”, were chained, constantly beaten and raped by those who taught in the school. Also, a couple was reported for allegedly abusing and assaulting their 12-years old daughter thereby inflicting her bodily harm (Guardian News, July 14, 2020).

Worst still, numerous sexual abuses are perpetrated against children, as reported in many states. In 2012, a seventy-year old man raped a nine-year old girl after luring her with N200. In Ekiti State, it was reported that a policeman raped and impregnated a minor and a physically challenged 12-year-old girl was raped by a 30-year-old man in Osun State. Also, in Kwara State, CENCOD (2012) reported that a girl was defiled by a retired soldier and a school girl was sexually abused by a 65-year-old man. In Benue State, a man was accused of raping and impregnating a 10-year-old girl who was an orphan (Pulse.ng, 2019). In Lagos State in April 2019, a 13-year-old victim was frequently raped by a 44-year-old man and his 19-year-old son (allAfrica.com, 2019). Also, on May 1, 2022, Punch News reported that a father in Ubima community, Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State caught a 60-year-old pedophile molesting his deaf, dumb, and disabled 12-year-old daughter. In addition, many incidences of child trafficking were reported. In Anambra State, some ladies, who purported to be blind, borrowed young children from other human traffickers for 1,000 Naira each day so that they could solicit donations from passing motorists (Legit, 2018). Numerous cultural beliefs and customs are harmful to children, particularly girls. Female genital mutilation, early marriage, skin marks, and tattoos are a few examples.

The misuse of children's rights in the cases stated above is clear evidence that current child protection regulations are ineffective. The ineffectiveness of such laws and policies in Nigeria is caused by a number of factors. The Child Rights Act has been enacted by 28 states as of November 2021 but there is still very little dedication to upholding it because child rights abuse is still prevalent in many jurisdictions. However, it is indisputable that certain efforts have been made over the years to put laws and policies protecting children's rights into place. Literature revealed, for instance, that a campaign had been initiated to raise awareness of children's rights protection in the fields of education, immunization, and violence prevention. There is still more that needs to be done to ensure that children's rights are respected, given how frequently they are still abused in Nigeria.

According to literature, one of the issues with implementing child rights is that society as a whole is not aware of or knowledgeable about children's rights. Parents and children are rarely given information about child rights. This was supported by the investigations of Adedigba (2008) and Sopekan (2009), which found that parents, teachers, and students in elementary schools had a poor level of knowledge about children's rights. Akinwumi (2009) also noted that the children and youth, whom child rights are designed to safeguard, typically lack knowledge at all levels of society. The Child's Rights Act of 2003 has not garnered enough awareness or acceptance since its domestication, according to Okoye (2011), who found that this is due to a broad but excessive apathy brought on by a lack of knowledge and complete appreciation. Adedigba (2015) stated in a different study that children themselves lacked awareness of their rights, despite the fact that they were expected to be active participants in the preservation of their rights. Adedigba added that just a small number of individuals are aware of or actively participate in the multiple programmes planned and committees established by government and non-governmental organizations.

### **The Value of Raising Awareness of Child Rights**

Raising awareness is without a doubt the first, most crucial and fundamental step that must be taken in support of children's rights. Child rights may not be achieved and safeguarded if parents, who are the duty bearers, and children, who are the right holders, are not aware of them. It is crucial to educate children about their rights since doing so can influence society's attitudes and behaviour toward rights. Popularizing children's rights requires increased public awareness. The laws against child abuse, their repercussions, and the standards for compliance must all be known to the public. If child rights should be promoted for the protection of Nigerian children, then increasing awareness and fostering a better understanding of the UNCRC's principles and provisions, its three optional protocols, and general comments, as well as other international and regional instruments and standards relevant to the rights of children, both within the nation and among people at all levels, is not a sufficient substitute.

Raising awareness is a way to inform children, parents, and the general public about child abuse, the harm that is caused by not respecting children's rights, and the urgency of finding a solution. Studies have provided compelling evidence for the significance of raising public awareness of children's rights (Asha, 2003; Racelis & Aguirre, 2005; Kaltham, 2009; Okoye, 2011; Elohor, 2011). For instance, Adedigba (2008) claimed that raising awareness could change how people behave and feel about children's rights, including parents, communities, the government, and the general public. Public awareness is crucial because it serves as the cornerstone upon which empowerment and understanding are formed, according to Okoye (2011). According to Elohor (2011), educating people about child rights can help them understand the importance of fostering a culture of respect for children. Without a high level of public awareness of child rights, no

country can be certain of efficient implementation, let alone have a transformed attitude toward child rights, according to Kaltham (2009) and Okoye (2011). According to Vanguard Media (2012), the Child Rights Act has gone unnoticed, resulting in the abuse and maltreatment of millions of Nigerian children. It is sufficient to remark that without knowledge of their rights, people are of little commitment because awareness opens the door to behavioural and attitudinal change. By raising awareness, we can influence important policy, legal, and practice changes that will have a long-term effect on children's lives and show how important it is for children, their families, and communities to be involved in making decisions that will affect their lives and play an important role in their own development.

### **Effective Strategies for Raising Awareness of Children's Rights**

According to the literature, numerous researchers have used a variety of awareness-raising techniques to increase public understanding of issues affecting children (Asha, 2003; Racelis, 2005; Awosola and Omoera, 2008; Kansar, 2010; UNICEF, 2011 & 2012; Adedigba, 2015). These researchers have validated the use of street theater, puppet theater, and literature-based strategies that include drama, songs, dance, art, sports, and recreational activities; poster campaigns that include the distribution of leaflets, flyers, stickers, and other promotional materials; and media campaigns that include radio and television as well as other comparable methodologies like organizing forums for different stakeholders, children's clubs, and women's self-help groups.

In their 2008 report, Awosola and Omoera examined the influence of the media, particularly television news coverage, in promoting awareness of child abuse and rights in Nigeria. The majority of Nigerian television stations air the drama series "I Need to Know," which was created by the Canadian International Development Agency and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (CIDA). In the Oredo local government area of Edo State, for instance, the program is a regular feature on Edo Broadcasting Service (EBS), Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), and Independent Television (ITV). It addresses issues including child welfare and abuse. The creation of "Izozo," a national television drama series, was supported by the Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF). The detrimental impacts of child labour are the main topic of this weekly (NTA network service) show. Kenya has also published reports on the use of the media to promote understanding of child rights and abuse. For instance, in Kenya, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the University of Nairobi, and the African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) worked together to broadcast a six-part television series to increase public awareness of human trafficking, such as child trafficking for forced labour or the commercial sex industry. A

public service advertisement on the campaign's goals of reducing child labour and promoting the value of education was created by VOC Rural Development Centre (VOCRC) in India in collaboration with a cable television network and aired every 30 minutes. The Child Rights Forums' efforts to end child labour via education were highlighted in a television documentary produced by CWIN and aired on Nepal's national television station.

Kansar (2010) also noted that Aasaman in Nepal employed a range of techniques, including public rallies, sensitization and training workshops, a birth registration campaign, home visits, and street theater, to educate members of underprivileged communities about the value of education for all children and the necessity of removing children from work and enrolling them in school. It was found that using street theater was a great way to get the neighborhood's attention. Additionally, Racelis (2005) noted that in the Philippines, Kaugmaon found that combating the worst types of child labour through education is more effective when awareness-raising is combined with other strategies. The project's primary objective was to increase awareness among parents and community members of the risks associated with child labour and the value of education in preventing it. By hearing about what they had observed and accomplished with children in their own villages, Kaugmaon taught others about child labour. The methods used to facilitate conversations on children's issues included role playing, visual arts, poetry, and games. These meetings helped a core group of young people develop their leadership and life skills. This increased their sense of self-worth and gave them the tools and chances to express themselves and take part in activities that had an impact on them individually. To aid social workers in their work with vulnerable children, the Children Research for Action and Development Agency (CRADA) in Ghana produced a brief training film. The movie featured exercises that parents may perform with these children, like self-awareness seminars and sensitization workshops. The program's objective was to increase social workers' awareness of child labour and the significance of giving at-risk children and children who work social services.

The Rehabilitation and Development Agency (RADA) in Sierra Leone started an Anti-Child Labour Club in 2013, which included parents of children who were at risk in the targeted neighborhood close to the Liberian border. In order for the group's members to educate other adults, they were taught anti-trafficking laws and peer education strategies. Children's clubs were also established in every school in the target communities. Members conducted an outreach effort in the neighborhood to raise awareness of child trafficking after learning about it. As part of her awareness-raising efforts in India, Asha (2003) created a "education caravan" that visited the various project communities. These campaigns aimed to increase parents' awareness of the need of education and urge them to enroll their children in non-formal education programmes or nearby schools. Everywhere the caravan stopped volunteers and field workers handed out booklets and banners to the community, warning them of the legal repercussions of child labour. The caravan staff would perform multimedia shows, produce plays, deliver presentations, sing songs, and shout slogans to amuse and instruct the crowd.

In order to keep project beneficiaries active throughout their summers and to aid in the development of their interpersonal and social skills, Asha also organized education camps. To participate in the camp's activities, participants were encouraged to bring their own children. It has also been demonstrated in some cases that enrollment initiatives spearheaded by children are more successful. In India, for instance, Arunodhaya helped those who benefited from schools and forums for child labourers to plan public protests where the children carried posters and banners and chanted messages. The marches had the support of the youth and women's forums as well as businesses that had pledged not to hire youngsters. The Arunodhaya effort in India involved 1,200 children in a human chain to demand a safe and healthy environment, connecting environmental issues to child protection issues, such as the elimination of child labour. The Committee for Legal Aid to the Poor (CLAP) in India staged a massive, six-day enrollment push for schools that included marches, demonstrations, and open-air events. Since they can be exciting, loud, and colorful while also instilling a sense of purpose, demonstrations and rallies, particularly those involving children, are a popular technique to raise awareness. The objective is to gain the interest and support of onlookers and bystanders. It's a great idea to involve the participants, especially the younger ones, in the preparation and planning of the activity. For example, you could ask them to make banners, paint posters, or create brochures. Music, singing, dancing, theater, and other performances that they may have taken part in drew in the audience (Asha, 2003).

In order to increase children's awareness of various forms of child labour and fundamental children's rights, Bangladesh's National Development Strategy (NDS) built mobile education centers that moved to the project's target locations. They also urged students to pursue a better future through education, skill development, and sporting events like a cricket competition run by DWAY in Pakistan or a friendly football game organized by MUK in Bangladesh as part of an outdoor public awareness event. They also made use of children's and youth clubs, which offer children a secure after-school setting where they can mingle and engage in extracurricular activities like sports, the arts, theater, and music. For children who are having trouble in school, these clubs could offer extra or remedial tutoring. Through the clubs, children can also learn about and engage in conversation about problems that are important to them, such as child labour, education, children's rights and responsibilities, and children's future aspirations. The clubs also enable youth to watch out for one another and can act as a warning system for children who could be at danger of being pushed into child labour or falling prey to human trafficking. By participating in groups, children can learn how to defend themselves and report instances of abuse and neglect.

Children and teenagers like children's theater and other arts-related activities because they can improve their self-esteem, confidence, memory, and discipline while having fun. People who have gone through psychological, emotional, or physical trauma frequently use theater in therapy because it has therapeutic qualities. It can be used as an awareness-raising strategy in a variety of ways, from straightforward role-playing to elaborate theatrical productions. A form of therapeutic theater known as "psychodrama" was employed by the children's group Clubere at Brazil's

Sociedade 1 de Maio. Therapists used puppets to help behaviourally challenged children in elementary school. The children used the puppets to act out stories from their own experiences, both at home and on the streets. They were able to express their emotions through them, and the therapists could use the puppets to help the children comprehend and deal with the illnesses. The strategy led to improvements in their behaviour and social skills with other children.

Especially with young people, awareness-raising frequently incorporates writing, music, singing, dancing, and photography. They have performed for at-risk youth and former child labourers at after-school programmes, inspiring them to sing, draw, or write about their experiences. For instance, Asha created a project similar to this in India, painting messages on the walls about child labour, relevant laws, and the responsibilities of communities and parents. Through a variety of artistic techniques, children may talk to other children about the dangers of child labour and the need of education. Competitions in the arts were established to raise awareness. Children were given books, paint, and school materials as rewards for putting in more effort in class. Primary school students in Nepal's Aasaman project painted slogans and images on the walls of their classrooms to promote awareness and education. The alphabet, a map of Nepal, and a few pro-education sayings were among them. Children who had been removed from child labour were to have some fun, and other children were to learn valuable lessons. A meeting between the schoolchildren and a professional painter to talk about the idea of spreading social messages through painting was one of the exercises.

Additionally, there are some remarkable days associated with the protection of the rights of children, which are celebrated both nationally and internally. The strategies highlighted above are all evidence-based, which means they have been either trial tested or proven research and are also used by some non-governmental agencies to advance child rights. Some of these advocacy or interventions are carried out on national and international holidays devoted to celebrating children in order to increase awareness of child rights and other related issues affecting them. These include, Human Trafficking Awareness Day (January 11); World Malaria Day (April 25); World AIDS Orphans Day (May 7); International Day of Families (May 15); World Hunger Day (May 25); Children's day (May 27); International Children's Day (June 1); Day of the African Child (June 16) International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression (June 2); World Day Against Child Labour (June 12); World Day Against Trafficking in Persons (July 30); International Youth Day (August 12); International Girl Child Day (October 11); Infant Protection day (November 7); Universal Children's Day (November 20); World Disability Day (December 3) and UNICEF Day (December 11).

From all the awareness campaigns mentioned above, it is clear that the creative arts are essential for both promoting child rights and opposing child abuse. The creative arts are fully utilized as a potent tool to convey the contents of child abuse and child rights as well as appropriate interventions for the implementation of child rights. This ranges from media activities to street

theatre, drama, cartoons, puppets, rights education, rallies, and other activities. The benefits of the creative arts on people, communities, and society are supported by increasing evidence. Children's and adults' social engagement and wellbeing can be significantly increased through the arts. Through artistic activities including drama, dance, music, and visual arts, one can increase awareness of children's rights. The effectiveness of literature-based instructional practices has also received appreciation from many academics. They have discovered connections between the deepest mental processes in humans and songwriting and music. Active music making has been associated with improved language development, improved social behaviour, and enhanced spatial-temporal reasoning, a critical component of problem solving (Ghosn, 2002; Zhang, 2005; Klein, 2005; Mustapha, 2011; Wright, 2015). Adedigba (2015) showed a significant rise in dependent variables after exposing children to drama, stories, poems, and songs about the topics of child rights in a study on the effectiveness of literature-based instructional strategies on students' awareness of and attitude toward child rights.

According to Wainwright & Williams (2005), the creative arts are a crucial component of culture and one of the most effective channels for explaining and comprehending the human condition. It is an effective instrument that helps people to create new understanding on a group basis. Issues that have an impact on us in our daily lives can be brought to light through creative art. Children may be able to express themselves more fully as well as have the chance to learn about their rights and develop the necessary skills to take an active role in society on matters that matter to them. It is possible to interpret peoples' realities within their cultural contexts through the use of creative arts such as stories, visuals, and poetic languages. They are developmental support tools that can encourage participation, reflection, and discussion among children in their local environments (Save the World, 2011). Child rights can be communicated through illustrations, animations, stories, cartoons, lyrics, music, theater, dance, and drama. According to studies (Blanchard, 2006; Davies, Knuiman, Wright, & Rosenberg, 2014; Fraser et al., 2015), older adults use the arts for awareness, communication, and knowledge translation. To reach a global audience with the message of children's rights and protection, artistic innovations have been developed.

## **Conclusion**

In Nigeria, laws designed to safeguard children are ineffective because so many other issues prevent their proper application. Children that are abused or exploited do not enjoy their childhood, which has a number of long-term effects. On the other side, if children are safeguarded from abuse, they will develop into healthy, self-assured adults who can fulfill their potential and help the country advance. Enacting legislation has the dual goals of preventing a problem from occurring and reducing its frequency. The goal of these laws is lost when they are ineffective. Unquestionably, raising awareness is crucial to the fight against child abuse and the defense of children's rights. In order to ensure the efficiency of these laws and lower the incidence of child

abuse, effective awareness methods must be established to address problems such cultural attitudes, corruption, a lack of law enforcement, and parental attitudes. Programmes for education and awareness should be established to help correct misconceptions about child abuse in Nigeria. The negative cultural practices that harm children, particularly female genital mutilation and child marriage should be brought to public attention by organizations and non-governmental organizations. This campaign can be carried out using seminars, workshops, and training programmes. The media can advocate for a policy that will benefit children and cause a shift in attitude among community members through advertising, dramas, special programming, and documentaries. Making knowledge of the Child Rights Act and its main clauses accessible is also a smart idea. Every initiative to raise public awareness of children's rights should be supported and encouraged by the government.

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