AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

In Nigeria a country with the highest population of older people in Africa do not have a working national policy on ageing that will protect their right to live in independence and enjoy their autonomy. Age Nigeria Foundation have been fighting for the right of older persons in Nigeria, by organizing series of seminars engaging the government, the elderly and the human right organizations in Nigeria. We also help the older people whose rights have been violated through legal action to help them seek for redress. However, there is no specific legal instrument that recognizes the rights of older people in our nation. This has made them to be vulnerable to abuse and neglect.

Older People have equal right to independence autonomy and social inclusion and should be able to have control over all aspect of their life including ability to make decision, freedom to decide for themselves. They deserve right to equal legal capacity like every citizen

The need to have financial independence and sufficient fund. Ability to work to support themselves. freedom to control their properties.

Older people here want to earn a living without recourse to begging on the streets.

Presently we are embarking on a huge awareness campaigns on the rights of older people in igeria and the efforts have yielded the following

* The Federal Ministry of Health is coming up with a policy implementation that will guarantee older people right to healthy and active ageing.
* There will be health package for older people in conjunction with Geriatric experts in Nigeria, Age Nigeria Foundation and Oxford University London.
* Through massive campaigns and awareness ensuring State Government provide adequate care and support for them to live independently and guarantee their choice to live and have access to age in place in the rural areas or urban centers.
* Through more engagement ensuring they have proper care and support that will guarantee they have control and autonomy in their activities of daily living, they should also have access to community service and facilities that will enable them to participate in activities around them.
* Through massive campaigns ensuring the government efforts are put in place by providing legal capacity for appropriate and effective safeguards to prevent abuse in accordance with international human right law. Such safeguards shall ensure that measures relating to the exercise of legal capacity respect the rights, will and preferences of the person, are free of conflict of interest and undue influence are proportional and tailored to the person’s circumstance apply for the shortest time possible and are subject to regular revision by a competent independent and impartial authority or judicial body.
* Through our campaigns and awareness ensuring that older persons are not deprived of their liberty unlawfully and arbitrary.

The Federal Government of Nigeria is working on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal which might also benefit the older people but there is no specific policy by the government to guarantee their independence and autonomy. Most of the older people are living below poverty line. Presently there is no national policy on older people let alone the implementation

We are faced with challenges of engaging the government officials who are unwilling to take decisive action on older people rights to enjoy autonomy and independence after much talk no action from their side.

Older people are not involved in the scheme of things, they are most vulnerable and neglected. There is serious discrimination toward them here in Nigeria. Older people are no longer suitable for employment and social services are skewed towards the children and the youths at the expense of older adults.

There is no judicial and non-judicial structure for older people to lay their complaints. Presently Age Nigeria Foundation is in court fighting for gross violation of the right of some older people whose property have been seized by their children and all effort to seek redress for them through alternative dispute resolutions are met with stumbling blocks hence the litigation. We are full of hope that the case in court will bring the issues of older people to limelight.