



PROGRAMME FOR CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS IN AFRICA

WOMEN'S PROGRAMME ANNUAL REPORT

2011

PROC MURA-PRICA.ORG

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INTRODUCTION

“Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father, for there is no shadow of turning with thee”.

It is with these words of the hymn composed by Thomas O. Chisholm that I start this report, to express how grateful I am to God for the support, the good health and all the insight He has granted us during our time of Office in PROCMURA. This being my last report to the ELC; for my contract is ending in September this year, I wish to appreciate all who were involved in one way or the other in the work of the Women's Programme during my term of office.

To this effect:

I would like to express my very deep appreciation and gratitude to the General Adviser, the Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah, for the elderly as well as professional advice and support I have received from him. It is my prayer that God shall continue to refurnish him with wisdom.

I do not forget my colleagues both at the Central Office and at the Grassroots for their assistance has been very much appreciated.

Special flowers to the PROCMURA women at constituency level for the commitment, hard work and the zeal which they have demonstrated to ensure that the Programme moves to greater heights.

To you the PROCMURA's partners and friends, I just want to say THANK you and God bless you for everything. Yes thank you and thank you so so much.

Back to our report, we would say that it is with great pleasure and satisfaction that we are reporting on the activities of the Women's Programme. The report covers three main parts with sub-titles. As such, the first part is talking of the activities that were conducted since we

took office; the second part gives an evaluation of the programme and the last part highlights the challenges and the plans as per the organisation’s Strategic Plan.

I- ACTIVITIES COVERED DURING THE PERIOD

Here we are giving a summary of all that we were able to do in terms of activities as it relates to the Women’s Programme in particular and PROCMURA in general. As such we have five sub-headings on which we shall elaborate.

1- Core Programmes

The core programme consists of activities (Workshops, seminars, and training) of Christian women only on issues of particular concern to Christian women in Islam and Christian-Muslim relations. In other words, activities here have to do somehow with the two operating principles of the organisation. Hence, women discussed issues of interfaith marriages, received training on the basic tenets of Islam and how to conduct a responsible Christian



Empowerment workshop for Christian women in Tanzania

witness that respect the spirit of good neighbourliness and address the issues of peace among others. It is an intra-faith exercise that is meant to keep our house in order and prepare the women for positive constructive engagement with their Muslim counterparts. With such activities, PROCMURA is assisting the African Church in its bid to witness Christ in an interfaith environment of Christians and Muslims with respect and responsibility by building the capacities of the Christian women in terms of relations with people of other faith in general, and with Muslims in particular. There have been activities at country level in all the organisation’s constituencies and the women have demonstrated a lot of interest and engagement on the programme, hence requesting for more of such activities. We would like to stress here that the General Adviser as well as the Regional Coordinators and Area Advisers have been of great help by offering their expertise and experience on the matter.

2- Specific Programmes



Joint workshop for Christian and Muslim women in Togo on HIV/AIDS

The specific programme is a section under which the programme carries out joint activities (Consultation, workshop) for Christian and Muslim women on social, health and cultural issues that are of common concern to the women. Thus, the programme uses those issues as

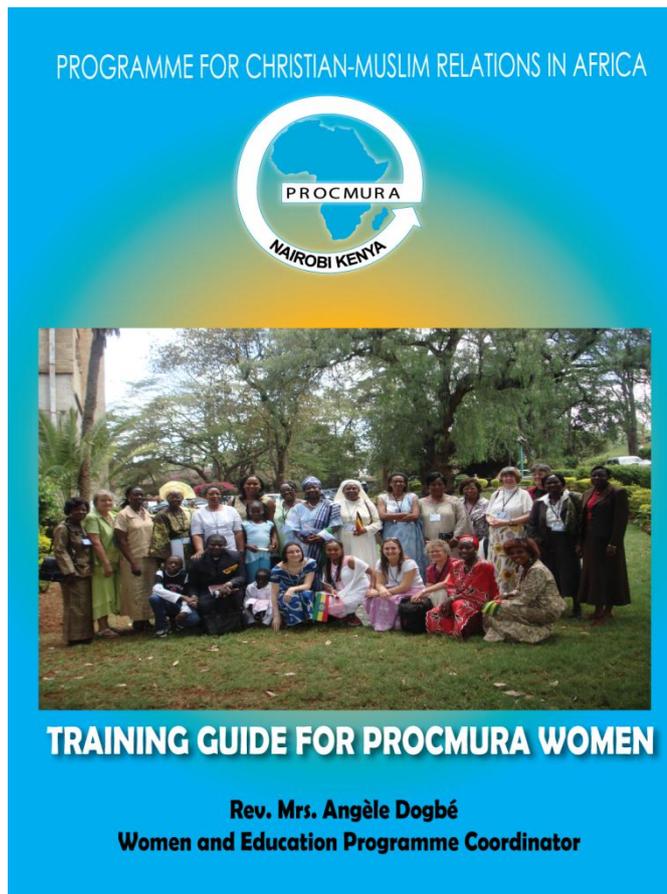
common ground for the women so as to be able to bring them together. From 2006, the programme concentrated on addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic with the women, in trying to find an interfaith approach to the disease. However, there have also been other issues particular to the context of each country. As such, we had workshops on violence against women, capacity building for Christian and Muslim women on the importance of peace and reconciliation and child trafficking; and we were always assisted by experts on the issues being discussed, from both the Muslims and the Christians. The activities were carried out at both regional and country level, having had a continental consultation in 2004 during which we gathered the women's leaders from all our constituencies to identify and decide the issues that are to be addressed with their Muslim counterparts.

The specific programme is an implementation mainly of the organisation's second principle of operation, where interfaith activities are encouraged as well as cooperation and collaboration with the Muslim women for the betterment of our society and our common environment. Both Christian and Muslim women appreciated the activities and came to the realisation that as women of faith, they have to bear responsibility of responding to the issues that are affecting the women with maximum commitment and leadership at all levels, hence being at the forefront of the fight.

3- Training booklet

When we took office, part of our roadmap was to develop a booklet that will serve as a training guide for the Women’s Programme. It will be used by knowledgeable women at country level to conduct seminars and workshop with the assistance of the Area Advisers and Regional Coordinators, so as to reduce travel cost for the Women’s Programme, and also have more activities conducted at country level.

We have been able with the help of the women to develop the said booklet with issues that have been identified and dealt with by the women at regional and country levels. The booklet follows the pattern of the Women’s Programme; meaning that there is a section on issues that have to do with the core programme and a section on issues of the specific programme. A concise elaboration has been provided on each issue serving as a pattern to be followed by the user. However, all topics are open for change so as to reflect the context in which the guide is being used. We are hoping that we will be able to have a continental gathering so as to provide training on the usage of the guide.



4- Expansion to other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa



Christian and Muslim women from DRC who participated in the Joint workshop on HIV/AIDS for Central Africa Region

One of the requirements of the Strategic Plan for the Women’s Programme is to expand the Programme to at least five countries. In this regard, the Programme had an activity for the Christian women in Madagascar as introductory, a joint activity for Christian and Muslim women in Burundi and contact are being made with women from DRC to have a joint activity there also.

5- Relationship with partners and other organisations

PROCMURA collaborates and cooperates with sister and partner organisations that share all or part of its vision. As such the organisation is called upon to share its many years of experience with others so that they may learn from it or offer expertise on what it knows to do best. With this background, we would like to



A presentation on PROCMURA during the Africa Secretaries meeting in Germany

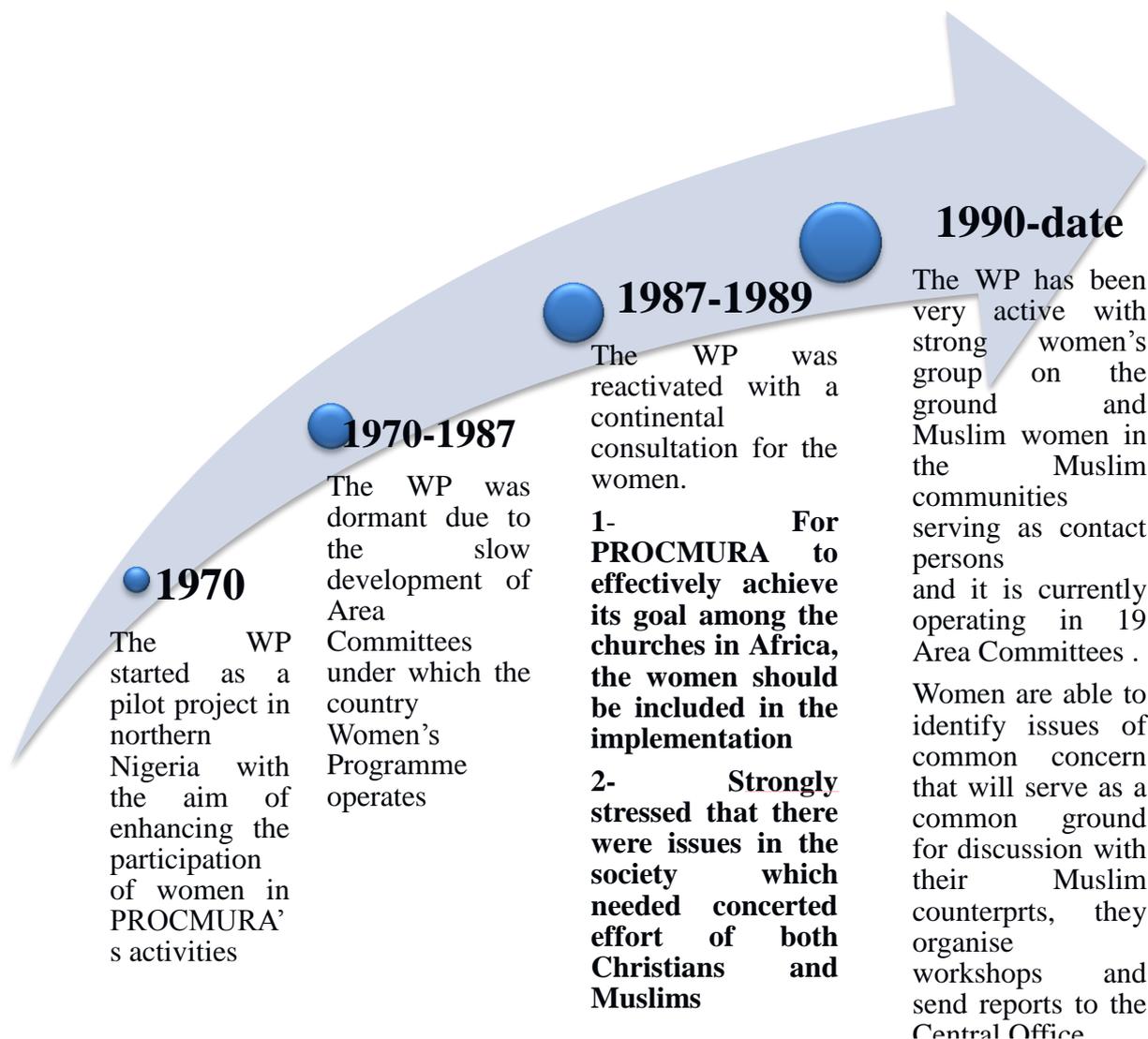
report that we have been invited to facilitate, share or teach on issues related to Islam and Christian-Muslim relations. We have also been asked some times to represent the General Adviser in meetings he could not attend at both national and international levels.

We wish to express our appreciation at this juncture to both the General Adviser and the various organisations that saw in us the potential of offering our little assistance on behalf of PROCMURA. Those experiences I must confess have been very helpful and enlightening for us in boosting our experience and helping us grow in our field of work.

II- EVALUATION OF THE WOMEN'S PROGRAMME

It is important to note that the Women's Programme has moved from point A to point B. In order for us to have an idea of what the Programme is today, we wish to evaluate it and state clearly its current shape.

We are very pleased to say that PROCMURA now has a very active and strong Women's Programme with women at country level who are very engaged to their work. Below is an illustration of the Women's Programme (WP) evolution.



III- CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PLANS

1- The Challenges

Claiming that we did all that we were able to achieve without facing any challenges would be unrealistic. Indeed, we did face challenges in terms of finances, lack of women resource persons, lack of security; among others which have either dragged the programme behind or even muffled the programme. However, as the General Adviser always says, challenges are there to be overcome. On the basis of that, we would like to call on all of us to join hands so as to help the Programme overcome the various challenges being faced.

2- The future plans

The organisation's Strategic Plan is still on and only needs to be evaluated so as to adjust the remaining activities to the current reading of Christian-Muslim relations in the various constituencies as well as world-wide. To this end, the Women's Programme will continue with the plan as stated in the Strategic Plan, and in that there should be joint activities on HIV/AIDS, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), expansion to at least two more countries and some activities on the core programme, with the training on the booklet.

CONCLUSION

The involvement of the church in Christian-Muslim relations has become paramount that the church can no longer do without having a special ministry dedicated to issues of concern in Christian-Muslim relations in order to assist its members who are living in an interfaith environment. It is equally important that a department on women in Christian-Muslim relations be opened in the various women ministries of our churches. As it should be understood that women's work in PROCMURA is paramount and taken seriously, so should it be in our churches so as to assist the Central Office. In addition when all stakeholders are engaged in working to improve human social and economic conditions through the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), women issues are looked into with a lot of concern for it has been noticed that at all levels it is the women and the children who are the most vulnerable link of the human chain. With the setting and on-going implementation of the MDG, many opportunities of working together as Christian and Muslim women have surfaced. On the basis of that, as we conclude this report, we call on churches in Africa to take more seriously issues of women in Christian-Muslim relations and try as much as possible to embrace the PROCMURA model of operation.

We also would like to call on our partners and friends to continue with the support that have always been given to the PROCMURA Women's Programme. As some said, PROCMURA's work cannot be evaluated by quantifying it. However, one sees the impact of our work through the fact that even though both religion have become more radical, there is yet more room and openness for constructive engagement which was not the case two decades ago.

Thank you and God bless.

Humbly submitted

Angèle Dogbé
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