ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE:
Facilitating the Emergence of IDEA Chapters in Southern Nigeria
Introduction

The high level of stigma and discrimination against persons affected by leprosy (PALs) has over the years discouraged them from openly advocating for improved social, political, cultural and economic participation and for the enjoyment of their rights.

• Over time, there was no visible collective initiative by the PALs to fight for social justice and equal rights for themselves and their families.
Introduction (contd.)

In 1994, Integration, Dignity and Economic Advancement for persons affected by leprosy (IDEA) International was formed in Brazil to perform this role.

- IDEA thus is a platform through which PALs are empowered psychologically, socially and economically to fight against stigma and discrimination.
- IDEA presently has over 20,000 members in more than 30 countries across the world including Nigeria.
IDEA Nigeria was conceived and registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission and Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, Nigeria in 2003.

• For several years after registration, activities were mainly in the North.

• Absence of state chapters in the south hampered coordination of support activities from willing donors and stakeholders.
In a bid to bridge this gap, German Leprosy and TB Relief Association (GLRA) Nigeria took a leading step to facilitate registration of state chapters in the ten ILEP project states supported by it in southern part of the country in the mid-2000s.

• In 2004, the association also became a member of Joint National Association of persons with Disabilities (JONAPWDs) which is a cluster disability group.

• GLRA Nigeria through its various activities is promoting the Vision and Mission of IDEA in Nigeria.
Methods

Through an iterative process, the GLRA Nigeria CBR team elicited the status of IDEA across fourteen states supported by GLRA.

- The gaps identified were then addressed in collaboration with the PALs in the various states.
- Funding for registration was provided where necessary.
- Capacity building programmes were done for the leaders.
Methods (contd.)

And there is a continuous onsite mentoring of state IDEA executives

• Done during routine supervisory visits to ILEP projects by GLRA technical staff.

• GLRA also facilitated the linkage of IDEA state chapters with corresponding state JONAPWDs chapters.
Result

PALs in nine of the ten supported states carry out regular advocacy visits to various stakeholders at the state and local levels.

• Similarly, awareness creation is carried out to sensitize the communities on inclusion and participation of PALs in community activities.

• PALs serve both as facilitators in relevant trainings and as resource persons in some special activities like media programs.
Conclusion

The various interventions by GLRA Nigeria have facilitated the setting up of IDEA state chapters in southern Nigeria.

• With the various state chapters now in place, persons affected by leprosy are better positioned

• To engage government agencies at state and federal levels to argue for their rights.