

ABDUCTOR NEXT DOOR

A handbook with practical guidance for
School Teachers, Parents and the Public.

(Train the Trainer Manual)



SCHOOL SAFETY INITIATIVE

Dennis Ekwere



*“WE MUST PROTECT FAMILIES,
WE MUST PROTECT CHILDREN,
WHO HAVE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
AND SHOULD BE LOVED,
SHOULD BE TAKEN CARE OF
PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY,
AND SHOULD NOT BE BROUGHT
INTO THE WORLD ONLY TO
SUFFER” .- **INDIRA GANDHI***

*“THE SCHOOLS PLAY AN IMPORTANT
ROLE WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO
PROTECTING CHILDREN AGAINST
VIOLENCE. VIOLENCE IS ONE OF THE
PRINCIPAL REASONS WHY CHILDREN
DON'T GO TO SCHOOL. ITS ALSO ONE OF
THE CAUSES OF THE ALARMING SCHOOL
DROPOUT RATES”. - **SHAKIRA***



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dennis Ekwere is the founder and facilitator of “Children and Young People Living for Peace” aka CYPLP. A local youth focused not for profit organization based in Kaduna, Nigeria.

It is voluntary and open membership based of like minds coming together to contribute to driving change in their communities.

Dennis Ekwere is passionate about change in Nigeria by creating new platforms for young people to carry out rehabilitation activities on a local level.

He was wrongly alleged of child abduction by his landlord when they disagreed over his tenancy. He was arrested on January 1, 2010 by the Nigerian Police Headquarters in Kaduna and detained for four days in a cell.

Whilst detained, he met 23 inmates between the ages of 18-40, charged with crimes ranging from assassination, murder, fraud, armed robbery, kidnapping/abduction, rape etc.

They confided in Dennis that they had committed the alleged crimes and intended to return to crime once free. They shared their stories and tactics. These form the content of this handbook and will hopefully provide guidance to others.

INTRODUCTION

There has been an increase in the number of child abduction (and attempts) in Nigeria, especially during school hours. Some of these cases are reported and recorded, many have not. Interestingly, most child abductions have been recovered by the law enforcement agencies, while many others are still not yet rescued. Effort for rescue must be intensified.

Abduction is a traumatic experience for a child; even if they are rescued or and found alive they are not the same. The child has been brutally injured psychologically, abused and assaulted. Such trauma may linger for a very long time. It will take a lot of healing for the child to recover from such experience. It is therefore better to prevent, rather than cure, child abductions.

But what could be the rationale for this new wave of violence crime? Greed, corruption, cheating, injustice and no access to alternative platforms to ventilate, express grievances could be a major cause. Parents and school teachers are never tutored on ways of preventing this new kind of violence crime and are almost taken unawares every time. There is therefore an increasing need for schools and parents to seek knowledge on school safety awareness training including community policing as security is everybody's business. This booklet aims at imparting and influencing the importance of knowing your next-door neighbour and what he/she does without being a backbiter. Your next-door neighbours are the people in your eco neighborhood. They are the people you meet on daily basis.

So when you finish reading this booklet, pass it along to a friend. For it is only through collective efforts that we can overcome this menace and prevent children from falling prey to these acts.

We cannot wait for the act to happen again so that we can report it to law enforcement agencies and protest for international attention. "Prevention they say is still better than cure". This booklet is a preventive training manual.

However, to understand this booklet it is important that you know what child abduction is and what it is not. First, ***child abduction*** is the taking away of a minor i.e. a child that is below 18 years, illegally using force by keeping such person(s) as a prisoner in order to get money or something before releasing the person.

There are many kinds of child abduction including abduction by family members and non-family members. Literally, abduction is the same as the word kidnapping.

To kidnap or abduct is to seize.

Kidnap is a co-joined word of – “KID” and “NAP”.

A “KID” - is a child, a minor, young person below 18 years old.

“NAP”- simply means to take.

When you join the two words

KID + NAP - Kidnap.

Ironically, kidnap gives us the idea that a “kid-is napped”.

This helps illustrate the fact that children are being targeted for kidnapping at all times. Where are they being taken away to and for what purpose? The reasons are unjustifiable. However, by analyzing these reasons behind child kidnapping, you will notice the gaps that expose school children to abductors/kidnappers all the time.

CHAPTER ONE

In the beginning

Kidnapping was born in Nigeria when a handful of youths from the Niger Delta struggled against the Federal Government of Nigeria for the acclaimed emancipation and compensation of the oil rich territory. These fighters were termed militants and they went all out in search of foreign oil explorers and workers. When they found them, they were seized and a ransom was placed on them as a condition before release. The ransom was somehow regarded as indirect compensation and the society did not do much about it. Maybe, as was argued, the oil explorers were greedy and insensitive to the plight of the people. The Government of the day had shown such a soft spot for the explorers that it appeared as if they were benefitting from them in an unexplainable manner. This perceived injustice fuelled a monster which remains to date.

As they militants realized the simplicity of getting their target and how lucrative this was, they intensified the act. The region suddenly became more dangerous for oil explorers and they started leaving the region. Then the Government intervened with an amnesty program, which brought order to the militancy in the region. However, the militants then targeted the children of the rich instead of oil explorers.

They claimed that the children's parents connived with explorers to take away their common wealth and left them with nothing. However, whether a child is from a rich parental background is relative. Better yet, why should a child be scapegoat for their parents?

For examples, Abayi International School, Ososio near Aba, Abia State was judged by the abductors as a school of rich pupils. 15 pupils were abducted in a school van when the driver was on his way to drop off some of the pupils. The majority of the children were those in nursery or the -primary section aged 2-8 years. Their abductors, using the driver's phone, placed call(s) to the school management and placed

a ransom of N40 million only for the release of the children. After days of negotiation and outcry from the public, the abductors pegged their demand down to N20 million and threatened that if their demand was not met in three days, the pupils will be killed. Before the expiration of the three days demand notice, the pupils were released. The question is was the ransom paid? One can only but infer.

If we take a closer look at the above scenario, it is clear that:

- Kidnapping/abduction is a huge business.
- It does not just happen, it is organized crime.
- It always takes victims by surprise.
- Most targeted victims are those from wealthy backgrounds or within such perceived environments.
- Insensitivity and negligence on the part of victims, caretakers and, parents recognizing early warning signals due to lack of knowledge is the main cause.
- The more one lacks the knowledge about safety awareness, the more vulnerable such person becomes.
- Abductors and kidnappers are very familiar with the victims' world.
- Anger, frustration, greed for money, politics, sex etc are the motives behind the acts.
- In cases of sexual assault, victims are children of circumstance.

Let us look at another instance. In 2011, during the Easter break holiday, not fewer than 20 young girls of JSS1-SS2 ranging from 12 -16 years old were abducted. These school girls were in boarding school and were going home for a break. They boarded a commercial bus and journeyed through the night. Midway into the journey, they met a stone wall of predators that sexually abused and, assaulted them. Most of them were virgins.

The question is why the school allowed these children to undertake a journey at night. That alone exposes these children to anything!

CHAPTER TWO

The stranger'-next door

In a child's world, a stranger is quite different from what an adult perceives as a stranger. This is a point that must be stressed to parents, and especially caretakers or teachers at schools. Children innately have a natural affinity to strangers and willingly wish to follow a stranger home or anywhere without feeling of danger. In short, to a child, a stranger is his/her best friend, confidante and comforter. They do not see “a stranger” as a stranger, rather they see them as new special guest. Therefore, children ought to be taught at home, schools etc who a stranger really is? The earlier children are taught of this, the better. For almost all child abductions are easily attainable by someone who posed as a stranger next door. The stranger must know much about the child to make the child comfortable with him/her at first.

Therefore a child should be told that a stranger is

- Someone that will betray him/her
- Someone who ask you to follow him/her in the absence of daddy or mummy, uncle or auntie.

Furthermore, a child should be taught how to identify who a stranger is at all times. The above characteristics will make know when a stranger approaches them.

They should know that a stranger is:

- a. Any person who gives gifts like sweets, biscuits or money when you are alone. Do not take such gifts. Simply thank the person.
- b. Any person that asks you to follow him/her somewhere. “Say NO, I will not, and refuse to follow him/her.

- c. Any person that asks for your name and then asks you to enter the car. Do not enter the car, rather scream and shout HELP! HELP!!HELP!!!
- d. Any person (especially adult) that asks you for road directions. Tell him or her to leave you alone.

In addition, parents and teachers must educate children/pupils on safety procedures that can help prevent abduction in the first place. These safety tips include –

- § Do not go somewhere you do not know with a stranger.
- § Whenever you do not know where you are, ask for help immediately from any nearby restaurant, store, police station, a mother with a child on the road etc.
- § Restaurants, stores, police stations, a mother with a child walking along the road are safety points and are “SAFE STRANGERS” anytime.
- § Do not give out your name, address or phone number(s) including personal information on the internet without the consent or guidance of daddy/mummy, teacher-uncle or auntie.

CHAPTER THREE

The role of school management

School management has a huge role to play in curtailing child abduction, especially during school hours. Such effort is not wasted and is better than when pupil(s) fall victim(s). To redeem a school's image, after such an event may take too much time and expense. Therefore, responsible school management will:

- Make arrangements for its pupils in the nursery /primary section for picking and dropping off distance pupils as these groups are more vulnerable to predators.
- Put in place identification tags on drivers, who come to pick up pupils.
- Verify the tags at the gate entrance and change the tag from time to time.
- Give “CODE” to parents and for those that pick up the pupils.
- The “CODE” must be answered before pupils are released.
- The pupil must also know of the “CODE” and how to answer it.
- The “CODE” must be kept secret.
- Conduct safety awareness programs to educate students, parents and teachers.

- Put in place means to prevent chaos or confusion and if it happens, know how best to control students.

In attempts to avoid abduction it is important that -

- Ø Students always walk and play in groups; predators search for isolated targets.
- Ø Students that use public transport should use recognized painted city buses or taxis.
- Ø Students must have ID cards.
- Ø Students must avoid hanging ID cards on their neck or displaying ID card on them. This exposes them and strangers can easily get to them by calling them by their names as if they know them.
- Ø At the beginning of each term, open a register for the person who will be picking or dropping off the child at school.
- Ø Never release the child to any other person who does not know the school code.
- Ø Take fingerprints of students.
- Ø Take photos of pupils/students at least three times a year.
- Ø Get the school a dedicated emergency line.
- Ø Ensure the pupils/students know the school's emergency line by heart.
- Ø Let the phone number be simple to memorise.
- Ø Teach pupils/students to know their full names, residential address and one significant thing that they

can use in identifying their nearness to school and home.

- Ø They should yell and scream when anyone is following them unduly.
- Ø They should “NEVER” allow anyone touch them anyhow.
- Ø Move away from cars that daddy or mummy is not inside, unless it is someone that daddy/mummy elected to pick you and you were told.
- Ø When anyone asks you to keep a secret, do not. Expose it immediately.
- Ø Avoid walking or taking short cut roads/tracks.

In case where a child has already been abducted?

They must be taught how to implore “SAFETY FIRST” and how to play along for safety. These are –

- a. If predators or abductors ask for their items like phones, laptops, wrist watch etc, they should immediately release them without hesitation.
- b. They should form a bond with abductors immediately to increase their chances of full release without being hurt.

CHAPTER FOUR

The role of parents/guardians

Be interested in participation and must interact with school management in organizing safety awareness programs.

Watch and study their child's behavior and probe into any changes.

Teach the child how to deal with strangers.

Teach the child to know their full names, residential address, and phone number by heart.

Keep eye on their child's online activities.

Perform background checks on domestic staff before recruiting.

Secure procedures of recruitment and monitoring of staff especially drivers, gatemen, house keepers, cooks etc.

Have photos of staff, proof of address and referees.

Enhance security at any time that a disgruntled member of domestic staff is sacked.

NEWSPAPER PUBLICATION INDEXES OF KIDNAPPING IN NIGERIA FROM JANUARY 2009- DECEMBER 2010.

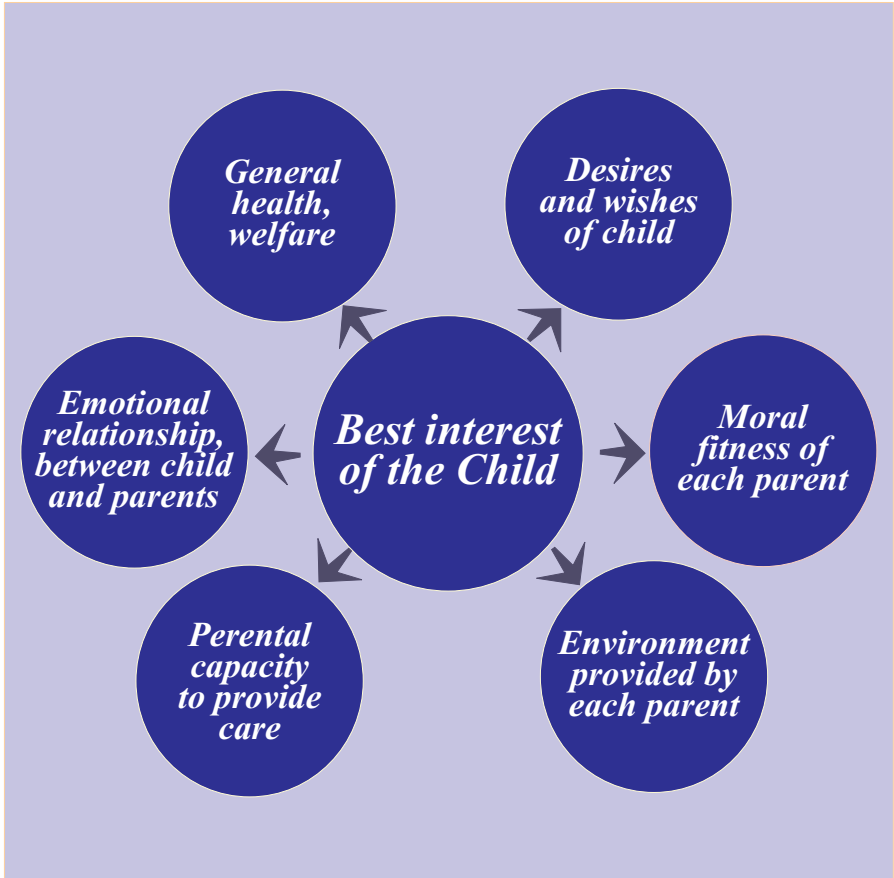
This index is taken from Daily Trust, Punch, Guardian, This day, Daily Sun, Leadership and The Nation Newspaper.

S/No	Date	Newspaper publication	Newspaper Page	Event
1.	27 th September 2009	Daily Trust	Ppl 83	Kidnapped Kaduna State SSG traced to Edo
2.	29 th August 2010	Sunday Trust	p.3	Police rescue Kidnapped -- -- --
3.	15 th May 2009	Vanguard	p.4	Man docked for Kidnap
4.	9 th March 2010	Punch	p.10	Ondo police arrest 15, parade 6 kidnap suspects
5.	5 th July 2010	Punch	p.11	Gunmen kidnap Ondo PDP Chairman, driver.
6.	25 th October 2010	Punch	p.11	Police rescue Ondo commissioner's mother, niece from kidnapers.
7.	22 nd June 2010	Punch		Robbers storm Ondo, kidnap Politician's neighbor

8.	28 th May 2009	Punch	p.5	Kidanpped Lagos House minority leader found in Oyo.
9.	30 th May 2010	Punch	p.58	Lulu's mother; kidnappers demand 200m ransom
10.	8 th December 2009	Daily Trust	p.9	NLC boos' daughter kidnapped
11.	17 th May 2009	Daily Trust	p.8	Police arrest motorcyclist over attempted kidnap
12.	13 th May 2009	Daily Trust	p.8	Police hold woman, other over kidnap
13.	30 th October 2010	Daily Trust	p. 13	12 years old kidnapped in Lagos, rescued in Sokoto
14.	23th May 2010	Daily Trust	p.4	I paid to be freed, kidnapped Kano bizman
15.	25 th November 2010	Daily Trust	p.9	3 charged with collecting N35m ransom

16.	31 st March 2010	Punch	p.11	Driver kidnaps 71 years old boss, demand N5m ransom
17.	30 th October 2010	Punch	p.6	5 Muslim pilgrims kidnapped in Kwara
18.	8 th February 2010	Punch	p.6	Kidnappers free PDP Secretary's son
19.	21 st June 2009			

**WHAT DOES BEST INTEREST
OF THE CHILD MEAN?**





Act to protect



At the best interest of children

TEST OF KNOWLEDEGE

- 1. What do you think could be the rationale for increasing wave of violence of child abduction in the country?*
- 2. What should schools/parents do to raise awareness on safety at schools?*
- 3. What does school safety awareness mean to you and how important is it to schools/parents?*
- 4. Map 3 threats you have identified at your school/home that exposes children to abduction?*
- 5. What can you do to mitigate those identified risk factors?*
- 6. In what ways are you willing to share knowledge gained at this workshop with others?*
- 7. Any new lesson learnt?*
- 8. What do you think is needed to be added to make the workshop more relevant and impactful?*
- 9. What should schools/parents do?*



*“HISTORY WILL JUDGE US BY THE
DIFFERENCE WE MAKE
IN EVERYDAY LIVES OF CHILDREN” .
- NELSON MANDELA*

*“THERE IS NO TRUST MORE SACRED
THAN THE ONE THE WORLD
HOLDS WITH CHILDREN” .
- KOFI ANNAN*





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