How to achieve food security

The General Manager, Loving Gaze, Ms Barbara Pepoli, has said engagement in social agricultural projects through cooperative agricultural with local farmers will help boost production, create jobs and assure food security in the country.

Speaking in Lagos while receiving the Italian President of the Chamber of Deputies, Hon. Laura Boldrini, during her visit to Nigeria at St Kizito Clinic and SS Peter & Paul Nursery & Primary School, Lekki, Lagos, Pepoli said the organisation has continued to touch the lives of millions of Nigerians through various initiatives designed to empower them.

She said: “In the last few years, Loving Gaze went beyond health care and primary education, initiating women vocational trainings (soap making, tailoring, food making), community engagement and education activities. We got generous support of USAID programme; engaged in social agricultural projects in Lagos, egg production; in Taraba State; we also engaged in cooperative agricultural initiative with local farmers. In 2007 we completed the construction of St John School in Ikorodu, Lagos. Till today, Italian AVSI donors are supporting 300 students in St John School and a most of our students in SS Peter & Paul School.

“But all these have been built through the hard work of our local staff and the generous donations in Nigeria and beyond who supported us from the beginning, when we arrived in Lagos 25 years ago. AVSI Foundation, an Italian NGO active in more than 30 countries, arrived in Lagos in 1988 and, with the support of the Italian Development Cooperation aid programme, started the development of two St Kizito Clinics in Lagos, one in Lekki and another one in Idir-Araba. Our first school was actually a bamboo school on the lagoon’s shores, in 2003, thanks to the European Development Funds (EDF) we established the SS Peter & Paul Nursery & Primary School, which now welcomes 450 students. Loving Gaze is an independent not-for-profit organisation with 25 years of experience in Nigeria. We serve the unprivileged and most vulnerable communities in Lagos and in Taraba State."

She told Hon Boldrini that two years ago, the group touched the lives of 60,000 people in across the country.

“We helped men and women to get the health care they need, young children to continue their primary education, we helped community groups save pennies a day that added up to real, fast change,” Pepoli said.

Responding, Hon. Boldrini lauded the Italian community’s effort in supporting the most vulnerable communities in Lagos and expressed gratitude for the long-term sustainable projects of the group.

She was impressed by St Kizito Clinics’ effort in providing access to the children’s vaccination programme to protect them from birth.