

AGENTS FOR CITIZEN-DRIVEN TRANSFORMATION

The Agents for Citizen-driven Transformation (ACT) programme works with civil society organisations (CSOs) to enable them to be credible and effective drivers of change for sustainable development in Nigeria.

Our work focuses on strengthening the system of CSOs, networks and coalitions to improve their internal, external and programmatic capabilities. We also focus on providing a platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue for an improved, effective and inclusive regulatory environment for the operation of CSOs in Nigeria.

ACT is implemented in 10 states selected across the six geo-political zones: Adamawa, Borno, Edo, Enugu, FCT, Kano, Lagos, Plateau, Rivers and Sokoto.

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This case study and other ACT publications are available at www.justice-security.ng

MOBILISING STAKEHOLDERS FOR THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS AND CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES



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WHY THIS CASE STUDY?

This case study illustrates the importance of stakeholder engagement and mobilisation in addressing education challenges, particularly the issue of out-of-school children. It shows how civil society organisations (CSOs) can make a difference in their communities through strategic and consistent advocacy. The case study is a useful learning tool for mobilising stakeholders to act towards achieving a specific goal or objective.

BACKGROUND

Even though primary education is free and compulsory in Nigeria, there are about 20 million children who are presently out of school, according to recent figures from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).¹

Poverty and conflict remain underlying reasons for the huge number of out-of-school children in Nigeria, especially in the northern parts of the country. Sociocultural norms, gender disparity, and weak social inclusion practices – early marriage, street begging and hawking – have also contributed to the issue. These factors have made school enrolment especially difficult for girls and children with disabilities.

There are ongoing efforts by concerned citizens and organisations to address the problem. Kano Education Volunteers (KEV) – a local CSO in Kano state – has been part of these efforts. Its aim is to increase access to education for girls and children with disabilities in the state, where over one million school-age children are not in school.² KEV targeted the Takoke, Gandu, Minkyau, Muncika, and Rimin Kebe communities in the Ungogo local government area (LGA). In these communities, schools are located in far distances or lack facilities to keep girls and disabled children in school.



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APPROACH

KEV has always been concerned about out-of-school children since its registration as a CSO in 2015. Its partnership with the ACT programme in 2019 rekindled its interest in supporting out-of-school children. The partnership enabled KEV to enhance its internal governance, advocacy and communication, gender and social inclusion, and external relations strategies. ACT support also helped KEV improve project management and fundraising, and develop a strategic plan that recognises the concerns of parents, girls, and children with disabilities. KEV also received a grant of about N3 million from ACT to implement a plan to reduce the number of out-of-school children in its immediate communities.

In implementing the plan, KEV carried out house-to-house sensitisation to persuade parents, guardians, and other household members about the value of educating girls and people with disabilities. It reached about 25 communities and specifically targeted parents who often rather marry off their female children or send them to hawk on the streets.

KEV also paid advocacy visits to key education stakeholders, including the Ungogo LGA district head, chairman, and education secretary, as well as the Chairman of the Kano State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB). The advocacy enabled the decision makers to review the plights of out-of-school children in the Ungogo LGA and to make commitments towards addressing the problem. KEV also organised a townhall

meeting in Muncika where the challenges and limitations of schools and parents were thoroughly discussed and debated.

RESULTS

Targeted sensitisation led to increase in school enrolment

The sensitisation on the importance of educating the girl child and persons with disabilities was delivered by KEV across 25 communities in the Ungogo LGA. It led to the mothers in these communities forming the Hannu Dayawa Association as a platform to hold members accountable for curbing hawking, street begging, early marriage, and other practices that prevent girls and young women from attending school. The self-accountability through the women's association was responsible for an increase in school enrolment in the communities.

Improved school facilities

KEV renovated a block of four toilets in the Musa Muhammad Primary School with parts of the grant it received from ACT. Some girls who stopped attending school because of the lack of the toilet facilities have now returned to school. In another school, the Government Junior Secondary School in Wakili Baba, KEV constructed ramps to assist disabled students to access their classrooms more easily.

² Premium Times – SPECIAL REPORT: Kano, Akwa Ibom, eight other states housed most of Nigeria's out-of-school children – <https://bit.ly/3LcaY3f>

Advocacy led to construction of local school

To address the issue of students having to travel long distances to the nearest school, KEV advocated to the education authorities, including the Chairman of SUBEB, to construct eight blocks of classrooms in locally in Muncika. The donation of land by the people of Muncika sped up the construction process, which when completed, will increase school enrolment in the community and reduce travel distances for students.

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We are elated with the results of KEV and the assistance from ACT. This is a great work. ”

Saleh Ibrahim, representative of the district head, Muncika

LESSONS LEARNED

Organisational capacity development is critical for CSOs

KEV highlighted that it was able to do a lot more in terms of planning and advocacy because of the capacity development support received from ACT. The organisation reasoned that capacity development is critical to making CSOs effective drivers of change for sustainable development.

Funding CSOs is as important as capacity development

Given the right support, including adequate funding, CSOs can make a difference in their communities. KEV used parts of its grant to renovate four toilets in Musa Muhammad Primary School. This helped bring back some girls who had stopped attending school because the toilets were not previously useable. KEV also used its grant to construct ramps at the Government Junior Secondary School, making it possible for disabled students to access the school.

Improved sanitation has a direct correlation with girls attending school

With a significant number of female students returning to school after the toilet renovation, this highlights that sanitation plays a major role in attracting and keeping children in school.

Effective sensitisation can result in strong community buy-in

Following the house-to-house and town hall sensitisation that brought all stakeholders together, it became clear that effective sensitisation is needed for community buy-in of the importance of educating the girl child and persons with disabilities. It is also pivotal to get concrete commitment to education development as demonstrated by the Muncika community through the donation of communal land for the school project. Similarly, the strategic and repeated advocacy by KEV was instrumental to the consent and support of the Executive Secretary of the Ungogo LGA in authorising the implementation of KEV activities in any primary school within the LGA.

“

We are extremely grateful to KEV in meeting the needs of the people in our community. Without their efforts, we might not have achieved this progress. ”

Muhammad Yahya, Secretary, Ungogo LGA



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Find out more

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