

AGENTS FOR CITIZEN-DRIVEN TRANSFORMATION

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

Our work focuses on the following areas:

- Strengthening the system of civil society organisations, networks, and coalitions to improve their internal, external, and programmatic capabilities.
- Providing a platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue for an improved and effective regulatory environment for the operation of CSOs in Nigeria.

The programme works with CSOs in 10 states selected across the six geo-political zones in the country: Adamawa, Borno, Edo, Enugu, the federal capital territory (FCT), Kano, Lagos, Plateau, Rivers and Sokoto.

We also focus on providing a platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue for an improved, effective, and inclusive regulatory environment for the operation of the CSO in Nigeria. This work is implemented across the 36 states and the FCT.

The four-year programme (2019 – 2023) is funded by the European Union and implemented by the British Council.

KEY ACTIVITIES

This newsletter highlights the key activities undertaken by the programme in August to October 2022.

Summary of key activities include:

CSO system strengthening:

- Survivors of gender-based violence empowered in Edo State
- CSO intensified campaign against irregular migration in Edo State
- Harmony Centre enhances citizen's participation in Local Government Administration in Rivers State
- ACT grantee produces first-ever baseline study for stakeholder advocacy in Enugu State
- CS-CRIN Moves to reconcile headers and farmers conflict in Kano State
- ACT beneficiary establishes learning centres for out-of-school children in Adamawa State

CSO regulatory environment:

- ACT trains partner CSOs and networks on civil society regulatory frameworks and compliance
- Enugu State government sets up a joint committee to harmonise CSO regulatory frameworks



An ACT grant is supporting the livelihoods of survivors and improving awareness against practices of gender-based violence Source: British Council/Kelechi Ezumah

CSO SYSTEM STRENGTHENING

Survivors of gender-based violence empowered in Edo State

A grantee of the ACT Programme - the Global Women for Quality and Sustainable Development Initiative (GWSD) - has empowered survivors of gender-based violence. The CSO has provided start-up packages to survivors to enhance their livelihoods and improve awareness against practices of gender-based violence in the Edo South senatorial district of Edo State.

The GWSD is a non-profit organisation working in the state to prevent and address incidents of gender-based violence through protection, psychosocial support, legal and medical services for survivors.

Funded by the
European Union



Implemented by
the British Council



In the last nine months - with the grant and programme support from ACT - GWSD has partnered with a private legal firm to provide legal services for 17 survivors, delivered medical services for four survivors, and provided psychosocial support for 200 survivors. Twenty-five of the survivors received counselling and skills training in various fields including hairdressing, catering and fashion design.

The project was initiated based on research conducted by the CSO to validate the number of reported cases of GBV in Benin. This was due to an increase of women reporting GBV either from their direct relatives, spouses, or other close relatives.

“ACT has helped us achieve economic empowerment for 25 survivors in the Edo South Senatorial District. We used the capacity support to access funding for this course from the Women International League for Peace and Freedom.”

Mariam Kadiri Ezolome, CEO and Founder, GWSD

CSO intensified the campaign against irregular migration in Edo State

The Society for Empowerment of Young Persons (SEYP) has advanced its initiative through a grant from ACT. The project focuses on improving the awareness of safe migration and human trafficking among youths, stakeholders, and government institutions. Campaigns were conducted in schools and rural communities in the Oredo and Ikpoba Okha LGAs of Edo State.

This comes in the wake of irregular migration, which has taken on a new dimension in the state with a growing number of youths becoming victims of trafficking. Irregular migration is influenced by some socioeconomic factors, poverty, natural disasters, and the "quick money-making syndrome." The predators, who are mostly relatives of the victims, use different methods to lure their victims. Many victims are children and youths who have become a target for traffickers and smugglers because they are often perceived as gullible.

Over the past nine months, SEYP strengthened the capacity of stakeholders to mitigate irregular migration and trafficking in persons through advocacy and training. Significant achievements have been made towards the objectives of enhancing the lives of women and young people to reduce irregular migration, human trafficking, and child protection concerns in Nigeria.

To sustain this progress, SEYP has set up Anti-Trafficking Clubs in eight secondary schools in the Oredo and Ikpoba Okha LGAs. In addition, four returnees were trained to serve as project ambassadors in these schools.

“This project has impacted the community and the students positively. I am thankful to ACT for the partnership with the Ministry of Education and the inauguration of the school clubs and peer educators.”

Victoria Omo-Ero, Executive Director, SEYP



Participants at the training on irregular migration. Source: ACT

Harmony Centre supports citizen participation in Local Government Administration in Rivers State

With support from ACT, the Centre for Human Rights, Health, Ethnic Harmony, and Livelihood Development (CHHELD) - also known as Harmony Centre - is implementing a project to promote participatory governance at the local government level. Citizens are being equipped with the knowledge to engage in planning, executing, and monitoring a coherent governance plan based on the interests and priorities of citizens.

The local government was created to bring the government closer to the people at the grassroots level. Numerous studies have revealed the difficulties facing the Nigerian local government system, including citizens' lack of participation in governance, human capital scarcity, corruption, poor service delivery, etc. In this regard, the CHHELD project sought to create an inclusive framework or model that local government administrators in Nigeria could adopt to ensure greater citizen participation in decisions that affect them.

To achieve the project's goals, Harmony Centre secured the support of community leaders of four communities in the target local government of Degema and Asari-Toru, Ipokuma, Sama, Obuama, and Ido. It established a thirty-two-member team named: Advocates for Local Government Accountability and Transparency (ALAT).

The ALAT team was trained to be familiar with local government administration, the Freedom of Information Act, and budgetary processes to drive accountability, transparency, and participatory governance at the local government level and attract development to their communities.

A community-based needs assessment was conducted by the ALAT team in their various communities using the participatory vulnerability analysis (PVA) tool to engage the local government authorities.

The outcome of the assessment was used to draft a formal demand letter issued to their respective local government chairs. The demands were adopted, and the chairs promised to incorporate them into the 2023 Appropriation Bill of the local government.

“We will support the ALAT team to succeed and achieve their aim and goal in the Obuama Community.”

Benjamin, CDC Member, Obuama

CS-CRIN moves to reconcile herders and farmers conflict in Kano State

There has been a drastic reduction in violent clashes between farmers and herders in the Sumaila and Rogo LGAs in Kano State due to the activities of the Civil Society Organisation for Conflict Resolution in Nigeria's (CS-CRIN) - an ACT grantee.

Reports show numerous conflicts over land resources between Fulani herders and farmers during the harvest and planting seasons. As a result, ACT empowered CS-CRIN - a non-profit organisation working to promote peace and justice, democracy, good governance, human rights, and women's and youth empowerment - to carry out advocacy, community sensitisations, community dialogues, and training to promote the peaceful coexistence in two LGAs.

The grant has enabled CS-CRIN to carry out many activities, most notably the community sensitisations and dialogues which have led to a significant reduction in clashes, demonstrating the CSO's increased capacity and a substantial step towards the achievement of the SDGs in Nigeria.

“Our engagement with ACT resulted in a quantum leap in the improved relationship between farmers and herders.”

Aremu Adeniyi, Executive Director, CS-CRIN

ACT grantee produces first-ever baseline study for stakeholder advocacy in Enugu State

Six years after the domestication of the Child Rights Law in Enugu State, the Development Strategy Centre (DSC), along with three other CSOs, won an ACT consortium grant to carry out research. The study will serve as a baseline for the implementation of the consortium's project.

The research, titled "Children and the Law: Improving the implementation of Child Rights Law in Enugu State," was carried out to bridge the existing information gaps and provide data in the face of no known current database for various forms of child rights abuse in the state, as well as serve as a valuable tool for advocacy among stakeholders in the state.

Results from the study indicate that child rights violations are still prevalent in some areas of the state. It exposed prominent perpetrators, factors predisposing children to abuse, and the effects of such breaches on children's well-being.

The DSC is a socioeconomic research, policy reform, advocacy, and training centre based in Enugu. The centre was established to conduct research and advocacy to improve the public policy space and knowledge base in developing countries through training and mentoring young scholars and conducting research that provides evidence for policy and stakeholder engagement.

Findings from the study were presented to relevant government representatives from the Ministry of Education, Gender, Immigration, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps, the Nigeria Prisons Service, CSOs, and others at the end of a stakeholder consultative forum on 12-13 October 2022 in Enugu.

The group unanimously agreed, among other things, that creating a family court in the state was paramount to taming the growing menace of child rights abuses.

ACT beneficiary establishes learning centres for out-of-school children in Adamawa

Pastorale Resolve (PARE) has established six non-formal learning centres, employed six facilitators, and mentored two teachers to provide numeracy and literacy classes to 210 almajiris and out-of-school children enrolled in the centres, thanks to EU-ACT support.

According to UNESCO, [about 20 million children are out of school in Nigeria](#). While education is fundamental to human and national development, efforts at enrolling children must outweigh the birth rate.

Due to the importance of this issue, ACT supported PARE – a CSO partner - in proposal development and to scale them through grant selection processes. With this support, PARE was awarded a grant from the ACT programme to work on one of the European Union's thematic areas: education.

“The learning from the ACT capacity strengthening support helped us achieve success. The community now sees the intervention as a welcome development that will support their children's education. Learners can now identify, read, write and combine two letter words.”

Abubakar Gambo, Project Officer, PARE, Song LGA

“Muna murna da farin ciki kawo wanna abu so bada zai temaka ma yaran mu wanda basu da dama zuwan makaranta wajen samun ilimin boko.”

Mallam Sorajo Mohammed, caregiver and tsangaya teacher, Kolere community

[Translation: We are happy about this intervention because it will help our children who don't have access to school to have formal primary education.]

"Before joining the class, I could not write and read. I am happy and can now write mine and my father's names."

Bakari Ahmadu, 10-year-old learner, Mugumiya Learning Centre

CSO REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

ACT trains partners CSOs and network on civil society regulatory frameworks and compliance

The ACT programme has conducted several workshops to train partner CSOs and networks in ten focal states to tackle the low

CSO regulation compliance rate among civil society organisations.

According to a survey conducted by ACT, CSOs require the necessary knowledge and information about regulations and how to comply with them. Only 14% of the 119 CSOs surveyed complied with the anti-money laundering and anti-terrorism laws, less than 30% complied with the CAMA law, and less than 10% complied with all tax laws.

To mitigate this, ACT organised a workshop to enable its partner CSOs to gain in-depth knowledge of the CSO laws/regulations requirements and to help CSOs understand the required processes for compliance with the relevant regulations.

The workshop was facilitated by a consultant in collaboration with representatives of the four agencies regulating the civic space: the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), the Special Control Unit against Money Laundering (SCUML), the Pension Commission (PENCOM), and the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS). Representatives from each agency co-facilitated the training and provided technical inputs, while addressing existing compliance issues raised by participant organisations.

Training of CSOs in the remaining seven states and the networks or coalitions from across 36 states (and the FCT)

“We have gained in-depth knowledge of the requirements of four major CSO laws/regulations covering companies and allied matters, taxation, anti-terrorism and money laundering, and pensions. We now understood the required processes for compliance with the relevant laws and the step-by-step procedures to be adopted to comply with these processes.”

CSO participants

“This training is strategic for strengthening the systems of CSOs.”

Dr. Mina Ogbanga, Rivers State Network of NGOs

Enugu State government sets up joint committee to harmonise CSO regulatory framework

The Enugu State government inaugurated an eighteen-member joint committee on 21 September 2022, to coordinate and drive the process of harmonising the civil society regulatory frameworks in the state.

This is in response to the outcome of the ACT-supported National Consultative Forum for key MDAs and CSO networks on the need to harmonise CSO regulatory frameworks and registration procedures at the sub-national level held in Enugu State on June 22, 2022.

In his inaugural address, Governor Rt. Hon. Dr. Ifeanyi Lawrence Ugwuanyi, represented by the Secretary to the State Government, Prof. Simon Uchenna Ortuanya, stated that civil society organisations continue to play a significant role in shaping national policies in Nigeria. Noting that the ACT Programme has continued to stress the need to harmonise the guiding operating platforms upon which civil society organisations operate in the state. He added that the success

of improving the regulatory environment and framework would, in turn, boost foreign investment in the form of grants.

Members of the joint committee made up of representatives from the ministries of Gender Affairs & Social Development, Youths and Sports, Education, Rural Development, Finance & Economic Development, Budget & National Planning; the Office of the Secretary to State Government; the Office of the Attorney-General/Ministry of Justice; and Clerk of the State House of Assembly, as well as nine members of the Enugu Network of Civil Society Organisations (ENSNET).

The joint state steering committee will be co-chaired by both the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Gender Affairs and Social Development, as well as the Chairperson of ENSNET.

“Civil society organisations continue to play a significant role in shaping national policies in Nigeria.”

Governor Rt. Hon. Dr. Ifeanyi Lawrence Ugwuanyi (represented by the Secretary to the State Government, Prof. Simon Uchenna Ortuanya)



Participants at the training on civil society regulatory frameworks and compliance. Source ACT

FACTS & FIGURES:

(May 2019-April 2022)

Number of CSOs benefiting from capacity strengthening

202

Number of trainings delivered

174+

States covered by ACT

10

OTHER ACTIVITIES COMPLETED WITHIN THIS PERIOD

- Coaching sessions in Borno and Adamawa states
- Political and Economic Analysis (PEA) training for Plateau, Enugu, and Borno CSOs
- Onboarding sessions for consortium grantees from Enugu, Rivers, and Borno, Plateau, Kano, and Adamawa states
- Continued support to the Policy and Advocacy Centre on civil society legislative engagement
- Continued support on improving CSOs compliance with the Federal Inland Revenues Service, the Pension Commission, and the Special Control Unit Against Money Laundering

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- Grants reflection session with CSOs in Adamawa state
- PEA training for Borno, Enugu and Plateau CSOs
- Peer learning session with Borno CSOs
- Stakeholder meeting with TAC and CSAG members in the FCT
- Interviews for documentary in the FCT
- Training on CSO regulatory frameworks and compliance on CSOs in Plateau State
- Continued support to the Policy and Advocacy Centre on the 'Civil Society Legislative Engagement' project
- Continued support on improving CSOs compliance with the Federal Inland Revenues Service, the Pension Commission, and the Special Control Unit Against Money Laundering

Find out more

Agents for Citizen-Driven Transformation (ACT)

ACT@ng.britishcouncil.org
www.justice-security.ng

Key contacts:

National Programme Manager: Damilare Babalola (Damilare.Babalola@ng.britishcouncil.org)
Operations Manager: Maxwell Anyaegbu (Maxwell.Anyaegbu@ng.britishcouncil.org)

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