

RULE OF LAW AND ANTI-CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

The Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) programme is working to enhance good governance by strengthening the rule of law and curbing corruption.

Our main objective is to back the government's justice and anti-corruption agenda through supporting the adoption and implementation of relevant legislation, policies and strategies in the sector. We work at the federal level and in Lagos, Kano, Anambra, Edo, and Adamawa states.

Our work focuses on the following areas:

- Reforming the criminal justice system
- Ensuring women, children and people with disabilities have access to justice
- Improving the performance of anti-corruption agencies and how they work together
- Enhancing the voice of Nigerians in justice sector reforms and curbing corruption

The five-year programme (2017-22) is funded by the European Union and implemented by the British Council.



Event to develop practice directions and guidelines for the implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Laws. Source: HerStoryOurStory

KEY ACTIVITIES

This newsletter highlights activities undertaken between April to June 2022.

Summary of key activities:

Criminal justice system:

- RoLAC and partners promote actions against torture in Nigeria

Access to justice:

- Judiciary intensifies efforts towards use of Protection Orders for victims of sexual and gender-based violence
- First female speaker emerges in Kano Children's Parliament
- Anambra State Child Rights Implementation Committee carries out campaign against early/forced marriage in three communities
- Legal aid coordination team provides legal assistance to inmates of the Nigerian Correctional Service

Curbing corruption:

- Adamawa inaugurates Steering Committee for the implementation of state's anti-corruption strategy

Civil society and media:

- Child Protection Network commemorates the Day of the African Child
- Youths hold policy dialogue on youth perspectives for building and sustaining a prosperous Nigeria

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

RoLAC and partners promote actions against torture in Nigeria

The Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) Programme, collaborated with the Avocats Sans Frontières (ASF), and Access to Justice (A2J) to host a series of events to commemorate the 2022 United Nations Day in support of victims of torture. June 26 of each year has been designated as the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The day is used to remember victims of torture, create awareness on the impact of torture and make calls to action to prevent torture.

This year, RoLAC, ASF and A2J organised a series of activities to commemorate the day. From June 21-22, a technical consultation themed “zero tolerance for torture by security agencies” was held for local experts and heads of security and law enforcement agencies.

The consultation noted that Nigeria domesticated the International Convention Against Torture by enacting the Anti-Torture Act (ATA) and established the National Committee Against Torture (NCAT) in 2017. However, the committee lacks autonomy and requisite funding and acts of torture persist among security agencies. Furthermore, a lack of accountability for perpetrators of torture continues to fuel impunity for torture by security agencies. Five years after the passage of ATA, there is no record of prosecution or conviction under the ATA for crimes of torture.

The following recommendations were made:

- Redress for torture need not be through courts alone. The Federal Ministry of Justice (FMOJ), the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) and other security agencies should institute or strengthen internal mechanisms for holding law enforcement or security operatives accountable for acts of torture. Implementing effective internal mechanisms assures the public that the FMOJ and security agencies will not condone torture. It also sends a strong message to operatives that there will be accountability for acts of torture.
- The National Committee Against Torture needs to be provided resources and its composition reviewed to provide for new members with new ideas.
- Those with responsibilities for implementing the ATA, like judges, magistrates, prosecutors, investigators and correctional officers, need to undergo training; while investigators need incentives and facilities to desist from using torture as an investigative method.
- There must be justice for victims of torture. This includes adequate reparation or compensation and rehabilitation; accountability for the perpetrator, who should also be made to pay compensation; and justice to the taxpayer or society, which seeks a reassurance that law enforcement agencies will respect the rule of law and the rights of citizens and would subject no one to torture no matter the alleged crime.

Following the consultation, RoLAC and ASF engaged the media and public in a press conference, and a road show awareness walk to create awareness of the ATA and its provisions, and to encourage the public to demand for their rights. The programme also supported the development and publication of videos and posters. These were disseminated on social media, which generated over 120,000 views, likes and comments in only two days.

RoLAC aims to reconvene a technical consultation forum in a few months to measure successes harvested from the above series of activities.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Judiciary intensifies efforts towards use of Protection Orders to protect victims of sexual and gender-based violence

The judiciary in the FCT and Adamawa, Anambra, and Edo states have developed a Practice Direction and Guidelines for the effective implementation of protection orders in line with the various provisions of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Laws (VAPP).

This became necessary to encourage the judiciary to adopt a uniform approach to handling SGBV cases and increase the use of protection orders thereby improve implementation of the VAPP Laws. A protection order is an official legal document signed by a judge that restrains an individual or state actor from further abusive behaviour towards a victim.

In June 2022, the practice direction and guidelines were developed at a two-day event held in Lagos for designated SGBV judges from the FCT and each focal state. The focus was to secure the judiciary’s buy-in across RoLAC states for the adoption of the validated practice direction on the implementation of the protection order for victims of SGBV. The event also provided a platform for peer learning and experience sharing with the Lagos state sexual offences court. The judges had the opportunity to discuss the practicability of adopting uniform practice direction for the handling of cases across SGBV courts in their respective states.

Seventeen judges were in attendance including the Chief Judge of Edo State. The Practice Direction and Guidelines will be presented to the Chief Judges of the States for formal adoption and issuance.



Judges develop practice directions and guidelines for the implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Laws. Source: HerStoryOurStory

First female speaker emerges in Kano Children’s parliament

Hauwa Ibrahim Muhammad has been elected the first ever speaker of the Children’s Parliament in Kano State. Hauwa is a 16-year-old female student at the Kano Capital School. The election was organised by the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, with support from Rule of Law and Anti-corruption (RoLAC) and the Expanding Social Protection for Inclusive Development (ESPID) - a programme from Action Against Hunger.

The election event took place in June 2022 where 10 elected officers emerged for the 4th Assembly of the Children Parliament. The new parliamentarians were inaugurated late in the month inside the chambers of the State Assembly. The election became necessary following the expiration of the tenure of the 3rd Assembly last year.

Other female students were elected Deputy Speaker, Deputy House Leader, Clerk, and Mace Bearer. The election exercise was conducted by an electoral Officer from Kano State Independent Electoral Commission, KANSIEC, Mr. Najib Bashir Musa.

RoLAC has been working with the State Ministry of Women Affairs on children related issues. It has also been working with the state government towards domesticating the Child Rights Act, which the state renamed Child Protection Law. The Child

Protection Bill is now before the State House of Assembly awaiting public hearing after passing all the required readings on the floor of the House.

Earlier RoLAC had worked with the State Ministry of Women Affairs to develop a child protection and safeguarding policy document. Recently, RoLAC supported the development of standard guidelines for improve children's correctional facilities in the state.

RoLAC will support the Children Parliament as they commence their tenure with trainings and other technical support to ensure their success.

“In keeping with the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the provisions of the Child Rights Acts 2003, the Children’s Parliament offers a unique platform for us to one step at a time and one day at a time bring to the forefront Child – sensitive issues with a view to support all efforts by diverse stakeholders to make Kano State the safest place to be a child.”

Hauwa Ibrahim Muhammad

Anambra State Child Rights Implementation Committee carries out campaign against early/forced marriage

The Anambra State Child Rights Implementation Committee (ASCRIC) has successfully carried out a campaign against early/forced marriage in three communities in Anambra State: Anaku, Amanuke and Ozubulu. These communities were identified as having a prevalence of early/forced marriage of underaged persons – through other community-based activities that the committee carried out and through cases reported to the committee on child custody issues by local government welfare officers. This is against sections 23 and 24 of the Child’s Rights Law Anambra 2004 (CRL) of Anambra State, which provides that no person under the age of 18 years can contract a valid marriage and that no parent, guardian or other person shall betroth a child to any person.

ASRIC is created by the provisions of the CRL. It was resuscitated through RoLAC support in 2018. Its work has led to resuscitation of the Children’s Parliament and ongoing work to regularise the operations of children’s homes in line with the guidelines for homes to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child (victims of crimes). RoLAC support enabled the committee to carry out the campaigns in the three communities.

The campaigns involved key community stakeholders including town union presidents; village leaders; community-based organisations, faith-based organisations; women, men and youth leaders; and traditional rulers. The stakeholders corroborated the prevalence of early and forced marriage in their communities, which they ascribed to “Eloi” or the birth of a child outside of marriage and the stigma around it. To avoid this, pregnant girls are married off to men, most times older men to give a name to the baby when born as well as remove shame from the girl and stigmatisation by the society. Other reasons cited by the community were: poverty and sexual violence.

As a baseline, 33 cases showcase the drivers such as rape, abandonment, poor parenting, neglect of children and their mothers, poor parenting, cultural practice of friendship with another family, male child preference, and domestic violence.

The key outcome of the campaign is the establishment of 10-member community child protection committees in each community, which are linked to the ASCRIC desk at the at the

Ministry of Women Affairs. The ministry is currently supporting the committee with logistics to enable them to intervene in cases of domestic and sexual violence.

Since the intervention, the communities have commenced reportage of cases through the community child protection committee and ASCRIC to the gender desk at the Ministry of Women Affairs. Some cases of note include: (1) a 14-year-old girl from Ozubulu community who was gang raped by three boys and the ministry is working with the police to arrest the suspects; (2) two cases of rape and domestic violence were also reported from Amanuke by the community protection committee. The ASCRIC has intervened, and the suspect was arrested; while the mother and children involved in the domestic violence incidence were rescued from their father and sent to a relative’s home.

With the awareness created amongst community members and increased reporting of cases, there is potential for the increase in promotion of the rights of children; the eradication of early/forced marriage; prevention; reporting of all forms of child abuse cases; and protection of children from all forms of abuse/violence. The aim is that these measures will lead to the increased implementation of the Child’s Rights Law and access to justice for children in Anambra state.

“We had overlooked this issue of early child marriage, rape and like crimes and never thought anything could be done about them. But now, this sensitisation has given us knowledge and information to share with our people. These issues can be addressed by the Child’s Rights Law. We will disseminate this information widely across our community: in weekly and monthly meetings of the Umunna (kinsmen) and town hall meetings.”

Solomon Anagboso, youth leader, Eziora Village, Ozubulu, Ekwusigo LGA, Anambra state

Legal aid coordination team provides legal assistance to inmates of the Nigerian Correctional Service

More poor citizens in prison detention have continued to benefit from free legal services provided by the Legal Aid Coordination Team (LACT). The team was established by RoLAC as a coordination platform with the primary aim of enhancing access to justice for poor Nigerians through the provision of legal aid services. Members are drawn from the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), the Legal Aid Council of Nigeria, the International Federation of Female Lawyers (FIDA), the Citizens Rights Departments in the Ministry of Justice, and legal aid focused civil society organisations.

The work of the team is already impacting on prison congestion. Statistics have shown that one of the major causes of prison congestion in Nigeria is the high rate of awaiting trial inmates. Most of the inmates are still in prison either due to the inability to perfect bail conditions or are too poor to afford legal representation.

In Edo state, RoLAC supported the team to hold a two-day law clinic for the inmates of the Nigerian Correctional Service, Edo State Command. During the clinic, 42 inmates (38 male and 4 female awaiting trial inmates) were provided with free legal assistance. The services included the representation of inmates in court, application for accelerated hearing, and facilitating the fulfilment of bail conditions. As a result, the trial of 31 awaiting trial inmates progressed in court (28 males; 3

female); and 13 of the awaiting trial inmates were released by the court (12 male; 1 female).

CURBING CORRUPTION

Adamawa state inaugurates steering committee for the implementation of the State Anti-Corruption Strategy

The Adamawa State Governor has inaugurated the State Steering Committee for the implementation of Adamawa State Anti-Corruption Strategy (ADSACS). The strategy was developed with support from RoLAC and adopted in January 2018. The objective was to put in place a system, which promotes an increased alignment of private and public interest; and strengthen the effectiveness, efficiency, and synergy of the institutions, laws, and measures designed by the state to prevent and combat corruption, as well as to engage the public more actively in the process.

To implement the strategy, the Governor appointed four Commissioners, the Adamawa State Head of Civil Service, a member of the House of Assembly and a representative of the Office of the Secretary to the State Government as members of the committee. The committee was officially inaugurated in April 2022 and headed by the Adamawa State Head of Civil Service. Its functions include conducting public engagements to sensitize and create awareness on ADSACS activities; organising a conference for all ADSACS Implementing Units (IU) to review the activities of the previous year and map out strategies for improved performance; establishing reward and sanctions system; approving all action/implementation plans, budgets and proposals of ministries departments and agencies; and establishing a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) committee and development partners.

Prior to the inauguration of the committee - and with support from RoLAC - the state successfully established IUs in 47 MDAs with over 120 members. An M&E committee was established with over 17 member. Training was delivered for 11 staff of the ADSAC secretariat.

“Getting our ministries, departments and agencies to implement the strategy has increased transparency, accountability, and integrity in our government.”

Bashir Ahmed, Secretary, Adamawa State Government

CIVIL SOCIETY AND MEDIA

Policy dialogue on youth perspectives for building and sustaining a prosperous Nigeria

The Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC), Agents for Citizen-driven Transformation (ACT) and the Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) programmes - through the civil society and media engagement component for RoLAC - convened a policy dialogue for Nigerian youths on peaceful elections. The event focused on the perspectives for building and sustaining a peaceful and prosperous Nigeria led by youths. This dialogue provided a platform for young Nigerians with whom the European Union has engaged with through the British Council's implemented programmes that cut across conflict management, civil society strengthening, and justice reform interventions.

During the event the participants shared their perspectives on critical issues that should inform the public policy agenda in the lead up to the 2023 general elections. The following issues were discussed:

- Youth political apathy and future of leadership in Nigeria
- Towards empowering women for meaningful participation in governance and peacebuilding
- Youth perspective for addressing security challenges
- Politically disabled: barriers and factors affecting people with disabilities in political life
- Empowering youths with skills for the future green and digital economy

The perspectives shared at the dialogue will contribute to the British Council's broader commitment to building open and inclusive societies and offering a voice to marginalised groups. A total of 45 youth groups were represented at the event.

“More youths need to actively engage the electioneering process for better inclusion and accountability.”

Event participant



Participant at policy dialogue on youth perspectives for a peaceful and prosperous Nigeria. Source: HerStoryOurStory

A promotional poster for the Policy Dialogue: Youth Perspectives for a Peaceful and Prosperous Nigeria event. The poster features the logos of the European Union and the British Council at the top. The main title is 'Policy Dialogue: Youth Perspectives for a Peaceful and Prosperous Nigeria'. Below the title is a silhouette of a city skyline. The event details are listed: Date: Tuesday, 17 May 2022, Time: 12:30pm - 2:30pm, Venue: Belanova Apartments and Suites, 3349 Lualaba Close, Maitama, Abuja. Registration information is provided: To register and participate via zoom: https://bit.ly/3L2WPIQ. The event will also be live-streamed on Facebook Live at @civicactionng. The poster is organized by Agents for Citizen-Driven Transformation, Managing Conflict in Nigeria, and Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption.

Social media content to promote the policy dialogue event. Source: HerStoryOurStory

Child Protection Network commemorates the Day of the African Child

The 2022 International Day of the African Child was celebrated across Nigeria on June 16 - a day set aside by the African Union to commemorate the children killed during the Soweto uprising in South Africa.

In Lagos, RoLAC supported the Child Protection Network (CPN) to organise a sensitisation event to mark the day. The event held at the CPN secretariat in Ilupeju and was attended by children from various schools in 18 LGAs, teachers, media and non-governmental organisations.

Highlights of the event include a presentation on the harmful practices that affect children comprising all forms of abuse, female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage, forced marriage, breast flattening, and son preference. Strategies to deal with the practices were suggested including awareness raising, education and advocacy.

Presentations in songs, drama, and poetry were made by the various schools; whilst the NGOs reiterated their commitment to continue to raise awareness and increase sensitisation efforts to curb harmful practices against children to enable them to grow in a safe environment.

The network comprises of non-governmental and government agencies working together to prevent and respond to cases of abuse and focuses on the welfare and protection of children who are at risk of harmful practices in Nigeria. The network has rescued and assisted 115 children from January to May 2022 from various forms of abuse, including child labour and trafficking.

“The Day of the African Child is an opportunity to raise awareness of the ongoing need to improve access to quality and free education for children. It is also to reflect on what needs to be done to eliminate harmful practices affecting children in Africa, especially in Nigeria.”

Aderonke Oyelakin, CPN Coordinator, Lagos



Children at event to commemorate the Day of the African Child.
Source: EU Nigeria

FACTS & FIGURES:

Total number of direct beneficiaries

(Jul 2017- Mar 2022)

Justice reforms

33,793

Access to justice

39,538

Curbing corruption

18,036

CSO & media

65,758

OTHER ACTIVITIES COMPLETED WITHIN THE PERIOD

- Development and deployment of the e-archive for the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission
- Organisational assessment for the Independent Corrupt Practice Commission
- Launch of the Sexual Offender Database by the Ministry of Justice in Kano
- Training of court staff on ethics and code of conduct

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- Development of practice direction for courts on the issuance of Protection Orders for SGBV cases
- Deployment of a Bail Information Management System for Lagos state
- Launch of the police statement taking room in Edo state
- Sensitization workshop for traditional rulers in Edo state on restorative justice
- Advocacy for passage of Disability Rights Bill in Edo state

Find out more

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