

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 four-year programme (2017-21) is funded by the European Union and implemented by the British Council.

KEY ACTIVITIES

This newsletter highlights activities undertaken between January to March 2020.

Summary of key activities:

Criminal justice system:

- Magistrates' inspection visits to detention facilities yielding results as some detainees were released
- Police step down ACJL training to increase capacity at divisional levels
- Over 200 lawyers benefit from ethics training

Access to justice:

- 'Wall of Women' unveiled to commemorate International Women's Day
- Police family support units established in Abuja

Curbing corruption:

- Code of conduct bureau reforms asset declaration to prevent corruption supported

CSO and media engagement:

- Federal government commits to establish National Disability Commission



Stakeholders next to the *Wall for Women* making the 'Each for Equal' pose at the International Women's Day event. Source: RoLAC

What is the Each for Equal pose? Stand in a group together with your arms out front at the right angle to the body, elbows bent and palms down to make an **equal** sign to show that you are committing to being '**each for equal**' and that you will challenge the status quo and help forge women's **equality**.

COVID-19 RESPONSES

Supporting justice stakeholders to navigate the pandemic

The Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) Programme is rapidly responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Efforts are currently underway to support programme stakeholders to pivot activities accordingly, including:

- Technical support to RoLAC focal states to improve/develop regulations on the restriction of movements following COVID-19 lockdowns
- Support CSO targeted messages to government and service providers on how to make the COVID-19 response inclusive for persons with disability (PWDs)
- Support non-state actors to provide oversight roles to ensure more equitable and inclusive distribution of COVID-19 palliatives and other reliefs
- Support the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities to inspect COVID-19 isolation facilities to ensure accessibility to PWDs in Anambra

- Support the decongestion of inmates in correctional facilities and other detention facilities to reduce risk of spread of COVID-19 among detainees
- Provide health awareness and basic protection gears for justice sector stakeholders to reduce risk of COVID-19 spread

More detail about these activities will be reported on in the next issue of the newsletter.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Magistrates' inspection visits to detention facilities yielding results

In line with Section 34 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA), State Magistrates are now increasingly inspecting detention facilities across the states. This is as a result of training for the Magistrates and the Divisional Police Officers (DPOs) and advocacy visits to the heads of agencies, supported by RoLAC.

Section 34 of the Act aims to reduce the pretrial detention of suspects by improving transparency and efficiency in the disposal of criminal cases. The Act states that Chief Magistrates or other designated Magistrates conduct inspections of police stations or other places of detention within their territorial jurisdiction other than the prison. The Magistrate may: (a) call for, and inspect, the record of arrests; (b) direct the arraignment of a suspect; and (c) where bail has been refused, grant bail to any suspect where appropriate, if the offence for which the suspect is held is within the jurisdiction of the Magistrate.

The Administration of Criminal Justice Laws (ACJL) of the states have provisions like Section 34 of the Act and requires Magistrates to conduct visits monthly.

Following the piloting of the inspection visits in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), replication training was held in Lagos, Anambra, Edo, Kano, and Adamawa states. The training was facilitated by Magistrates in the FCT with experience inspecting detention facilities.

Following the training, in Anambra state 10 Magistrates made the first round of visits to Police Divisions including the State Anti-Robbery (SARs) facility. During the visits, approximately 98 suspects (some of whom have been in detention for two weeks) were seen and interviewed; 44 of them were granted bail; and followed up to ensure they were released when they presented their sureties. Twenty-two suspects were outrightly discharged as they were cases of illegal arrests; while 32 cases, mostly from the SARS detention facility, were charged to court.

In Lagos, the SARS facility in Ikeja was also visited by a Magistrate accompanied by lawyers from the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) and the Office of the Public Defender to offer free legal assistance to detainees.

In Adamawa state, six of the trained Magistrates have commenced inspection visits to police stations within their jurisdiction. The Magistrates visited police stations and special police units like the Special Intelligence Bureau (SIB), which handles cybercrime and fraud related offences; the Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department (CIID), which handles capital offences like robbery, homicide, rape, and kidnapping. Seven persons including two women were released by the Magistrates, while the police were directed to charge four others to court. Some of the Magistrates

interviewed commended the reception they received from the officers at the facilities visited.

‘The innovative approach of magistrates visiting the police station to inspect the cells is a laudable one... This has reduced the number of people detained unnecessarily.’

Olabimpe Bamidele, NBA Ikorodu

Police step down training on the Administration of Criminal Justice Law

As part of efforts to advance the priorities of the Administration of Criminal Justice Law (ACJL), RoLAC supported capacity building workshops for police officers in its focal states and the FCT to create awareness, increase knowledge on specific provisions of the law, and develop skills and competence to implement or comply with the laws.

RoLAC's capacity building responds to gaps in knowledge and compliance with the ACJL by the police and other justice sector stakeholders, as confirmed by RoLAC's survey in 2018 and subsequently. It also responds to emerging demands to respect human rights in policing.

To reach more police officers and increase the benefits of the capacity building in a sustainable manner, trained police officers were encouraged to step down the training.

In Anambra state, the Justice Reform Team agreed with the Commissioner of Police to commence one-day monthly sensitization exercise for 90 DPOs and Senior Police Officers. It was also agreed that that the step down on the ACJL and other relevant legislations, such as the Violence against Persons Prohibition Law and Child's Rights Law, be embedded in the weekly lecture of the divisions.

The step-down training has since commenced and approximately 150 medium and low-ranking police officers from five different police divisions in the state (Oyi, Amichi, Awka B Division, Onitsha and Ogidi) have so far benefited from the training.

In Kano state, a similar step-down training on the key provisions of the ACJL was carried out at the divisional level by the police officers who were trained earlier by RoLAC. Eleven police divisions and a total of 193 police officers benefitted from the training.

‘This training is so different from the others I have been attending. I will use the knowledge from the training on a case I am currently handling.’

Ossai Lazarus, Inspector of Police, Anambra state

Over 200+ lawyers trained in ethics

Lawyers play a key role in the criminal justice system including serving as prosecutors or defence counsels in criminal cases such as corruption, sexual assault, etc. Enhancing integrity and accountability in the legal profession through the adherence to rules of professional conduct can help reduce corrupt practices in the criminal justice system.

As part of RoLAC's support for corruption prevention, the programme collaborated with the Justice Reform Teams and the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) branches in RoLAC focal states to train their members on the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for lawyers within their jurisdiction. The training examined the ethical dilemmas that lawyers face and the decisions they need to make, which can either serve or compromise the justice system. Also, the socio-cultural context that accentuates professional and personal ethical dilemmas were also reviewed to help lawyers come to terms with pathways to remain ethically compliant and still uphold the civic rights of the persons and communities they serve.

Over 200 lawyers have benefitted from the training. Pre and post training surveys revealed that most of the lawyers were receiving such a training for the first time since leaving the law school. The training modules are expected to be included in the NBA mandatory continuing legal education training to cover all lawyers in the country.

To further sustain this, RoLAC is working with the NBA at the national level to review the rules of professional conduct and the disciplinary process for lawyers towards strengthening and making them more effective. To this end, two regional conferences have taken place in Lagos (for the Southwest) and Benin (for the South South) to review the rules and procedures.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Police family support units established in Abuja

RoLAC supported the Nigeria Police Force to establish two Family Support Units (FSUs) in Apo and Kubwa police stations. The FSUs were formally handed over to the Divisional Police Officers of each station, which was witnessed by traditional and religious leaders, members of the Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC), and officers of the Nigeria Police Force.

The selection of Apo and Kubwa police stations was informed by the high number of cases from those areas and also the availability of spaces within the police stations for an FSU.

FSUs aim to improve the handling of children in contact with the law. They are specialised units within the Police Force set up to manage child offenders and cases of child abuse (i.e. children in conflict with the law and also children in contact with the law) in line with section 207 of the Child Rights Act (2003) Law. RoLAC's support for the establishment of FSUs aims to enhance access to justice for children and vulnerable youths.

'Wall of women' unveiled to commemorate International Women's Day

As part of RoLAC's broader [HerStoryOurStoryNG](#) campaign against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), the programme supported the commemoration of International Women's Day 2020 with a 30-day focus on the role citizens can

play in advancing equal rights for women, and to celebrate the achievements of women who promote gender equality at community and grassroots levels.

The celebration of IWD 2020 was launched with a press briefing by the Honourable Minister of Women Affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen. The briefing provided a platform for Nigerian stakeholders and international organisations to evaluate progress and challenges affecting the realisation of gender equality and women's rights, while reiterating their commitments to intensify efforts towards addressing gender inequalities.

During the 30-day campaign, other activities were carried out including the unveiling of the *Wall of Women* at four sites across the FCT, public engagement on social media promoting the theme [#EachforEqual](#), and a theatre presentation of the Aba Women's Riots of 1929, titled *August Meeting* which was attended by over 400 stakeholders, partners and friends of the European Union.

The *Wall of Women* was successful in celebrating gender champions in the community. Members of the public were invited to pin the names and achievements of champions on the wall throughout the month of March. Over 200 pins were posted in the first two weeks of the month alone. RoLAC supported this further on social media by publicising the profiles of some of the champions and linking them to the network of HerStoryOurStoryNG gender partners.

The IWD activities align with RoLAC's objectives of promoting the rights of women.



Stakeholders at the International Women's Day event making the 'Each for Equal' pose. Source: RoLAC

'Access to basic human rights for women and young girls continues to be threatened. Women work more hours and earn less. There is less than five percent of women representation in parliament. There is persistent child marriage and violence against women and girls. At this rate of change, the gender gap in economic participation and opportunity will not close for another 257 years... and the estimated time keeps increasing.'

Comfort Lamptey, UN Women, Country Representative

CURBING CORRUPTION

Code of Conduct Bureau reforms asset declaration

The Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), with support from RoLAC, organised an awareness/consultative seminar to raise awareness with public officers on reforms in asset declaration and the code of conduct for public servants. The dialogue commenced with an overview and demonstration of the Online Asset Declaration System (OADS) and a presentation of the proposed improvements on the CCB's enabling laws and code of ethics for public officials. These reforms when fully implemented will help improve Nigeria's corruption prevention thrust. It is envisaged that through technology and upgrading of outdated ethical codes to reflect global best practices and current trends in public service, the inadequacies previously experienced in tracing, tracking and verifying assets declared by public officers will be effectively addressed.

Although the OADS process commenced in 2012 through a predecessor programme, RoLAC provided technical guidance on diversification of various kinds of assets declared on the online portal to reflect current realities. The OADS makes the asset declaration process more transparent and efficient; and can be done at any time by the declarants. It is expected that the convenience of filing assets will encourage more compliance with the asset declaration process.

Stakeholders at the event applauded RoLAC and other development partners' support of these reforms, while emphasizing their relevance in the fight against corruption. The Director-General of National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Inuwa Abdullahi, encouraged participants to support the CCB in fighting corruption using preventive measures. The Senate President who was represented by the Chairman, Senate Committee on Ethics and Privileges, Ayo Akinyelure, commended the CCB for undertaking the assignment and expressed confidence that the synergy of purpose and collaborations with relevant multi-lateral organisations, like the European Union and United Nations, will lead to eliminating corruption with time.

This intervention supports CCB's role towards implementing the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) 2017 – 2021.



Prof. Mohammed Isah, Chairman, Code of Conduct Bureau.
Source: RoLAC

'The Code of Conduct Bureau has done an enormous amount of work keeping records of over 5 million public workers. Stakeholders should support the Bureau to enable them to proactively prevent corruption in the country.'

Inuwa Abdullahi, Director General, National Information Technology Development Agency

CSO AND MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Federal government commits to establish National Disability Commission

The passage of the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act in January 2019 was a milestone achievement in the struggle of the disability community in Nigeria.

Section 31 of the Act provides for the establishment of a 'National Commission on Persons with Disabilities' to oversee the coordination of its implementation. However, a year after the signing of the Act by the Nigerian President, there is no demonstration of political will from the federal government to establish the commission.

This and other factors motivated the Centre for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) - with support from RoLAC - to organise a four-day event to commemorate the first anniversary of the passage of the Act, from January 13-17, 2020. The event drew participants from across the country including media executives, representatives from civil society organisations, government and international agencies, and organisations of persons with disabilities. As part of the activities, different video clips were presented on the processes that led to passage of the Act. And various sessions provided a platform for participants to appreciate the provisions of the laws and the constraints posed by the lack of its implementation.

A rally was organised to sensitize the public and the presidency on the need to start implementing the Act by constituting the Commission. The rally commenced from the Unity Fountain in Abuja and ended at the Office of the Secretary to Government of the Federation (SGF); where the CCD successfully secured commitment from the Office of the SGF (through the Permanent Secretary) to work with CCD to establish the National Commission on Persons with Disabilities.

'The Disability Commission and the five percent representation in employment provisions will be implemented by the current government.'

Yakubu Argungun – Mohammed, Clerk Senate Committee on Youth and Sports Development

FACTS & FIGURES:

Number of direct beneficiaries (Jul17-Dec19)

Justice reforms

8,532

Access to justice

15,134

Curbing corruption

7,232

CSO & media

2,961

OTHER ACTIVITIES COMPLETED DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

- Training of FCT Magistrates Court Senior Registrars on ACJA
- National Human Rights Commission South-South Zone public enquiry on cases of SGBV baseline
- Intermediate level training for prosecutors in Adamawa state
- Peer review roundtable on level of use of the Freedom of Information Act by MDAs
- Training of the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC) staff on data visualization (led by BudgIT Foundation)
- Community engagement to address child sexual abuses and training on project management to build capacity of staff to deliver project and engage communities sustainably (led by the Sexual Offences Awareness & Response Initiative)

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- Technical support to RoLAC focal states to improve/develop regulations on the restriction of movements following COVID-19 lockdowns
- Support CSO targeted messages to government and service providers on how to make the COVID-19 response inclusive for persons with disability (PWDs)
- Support non-state actors to provide oversight roles to ensure more equitable and inclusive distribution of COVID-19 palliatives and other reliefs
- Support the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities to inspect COVID-19 isolation facilities to ensure accessibility to PWDs in Anambra
- Support the decongestion of inmates in correctional facilities and other detention facilities to reduce risk of spread of COVID-19 among detainees
- Provide health awareness and basic protection gears for justice sector stakeholders to reduce risk of COVID-19

Find out more

The Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC)
RoLAC@ng.britishcouncil.org
www.justice-security.ng

Key contacts:

National Programme Manager: Danladi Plang (Danladi.Plang@ng.britishcouncil.org)
Operations Manager: Sanjiv Malhotra (Sanjiv.Malhotra@ng.britishcouncil.org)

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents are the sole responsibility of the programme and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union