

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.



EU delegation visits the Idera SARC in Lagos state. Source: HerStoryOurStory

KEY ACTIVITIES

This newsletter highlights activities undertaken between July to September 2022.

Summary of key activities:

Criminal justice system:

- Statement taking room established in Edo State

Access to justice:

- Child Protection Bill passes into law in Adamawa State
- Nigeria Correctional Service inaugurates National Parole Board
- Mental Health Board and Protocol established
- Disability Rights Law unveiled in local languages
- New Child and Teen Support Centre to benefit survivors of sexual and gender-based violence

Curbing corruption:

- New investigators trained on financial intelligence

Civil society and media:

- EU visits Idera SARC and pledges continued support

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS

Statement taking room established in Edo State

Human rights abuses that occur in the criminal justice process – in particular during suspect interrogation – have been identified by stakeholders as one of the hindrances to the effective justice delivery in Nigeria. To address these abuses, section 15(4) of the Edo State Administration of Criminal Justice Law requires that the suspect's statement should be recorded electronically on a video compact disc or any other retrievable audio-visual device.

To enhance police compliance with the law and to discourage investigators from using torture to obtain confessional statements from crime suspects, RoLAC supported the Nigerian Police in Edo State to establish the first-ever Statement Taking Room (STR) at the Criminal Investigation Department. The STR was launched on 15 August 2022. The event was attended by the Honourable Chief Judge of Edo State (represented by Hon Justice Mary Itsueli), the Edo State Commissioner of Police (represented by the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Dantawaye Millar Gajere), representatives of the Ministries of Justice and

Communications, the Justice Sector Reform Team, the Nigerian Bar Association, and civil society.

The STR is equipped with electronic devices for recording suspects' interviews. It provides an enabling environment to ensure that crime suspects are not subjected to torture or other forms of human rights abuses by crime investigators when giving statements.

RoLAC also trained 50 Investigating Police Officers (IPOs) on how to use the STR effectively and on human rights compliant interview techniques. The IPOs were also sensitised on the Anti-Torture Act.

“I enjoin the police to make good use of the equipment.”

Hon. Justice Joe Itsebaga Acha, Chief Judge, Edo State

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Child Protection Bill passes into law in Adamawa State

The Adamawa State House of Assembly has passed the Child Protection Bill into law. The bill - validated and presented to the House in 2021 with support from RoLAC - sets out the rights and responsibilities of a child in Adamawa and provides for a system of child justice administration, care, and supervision, amongst other things.

Prior to RoLAC's intervention in 2021, the bill was placed before the Adamawa State House of Assembly three times for adoption by previous administrations in the state, but it was never passed. In 2021 - after a series of stakeholder engagements and advocacy - the Child Protection Network, the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), and other CSOs presented the Bill to the House for adoption. The Bill was deliberated upon and a second reading was held on 7 December 2021.

In March 2022, RoLAC supported the public hearing of the Bill, which received a buy-in and acceptance from critical stakeholders, such as the speaker and principal officers of the House of Assembly, the Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, the Ministry of Women Affairs, the Judiciary (represented by the Chief Judge), all seven first class Chiefs in the state, the Chairmen of the Muslim Council and Christian Association of Nigeria, CSOs, representatives of donor agencies, and members of the public.

In Adamawa State, there are thousands of vulnerable children, including beggars, hawkers, and out-of-school children. While the state has the Children and Young Persons Law 1987, it focuses more on criminal justice administration and not necessarily specific on child's rights and responsibilities. Hence the need to adapt the Child Rights Act with a view to having legislation that will incorporate all the rights and responsibilities of children, consolidate all laws relating to children into one single piece of legislation, as well as specify the duties and obligations of government, parents, service providers, and others.

On 8 August 2022, the House adopted the report of the public hearing and passed the bill into law with the support of 23 (out of 25) members. The House has transmitted the Bill to the Governor for his assent.

“We must sincerely thank RoLAC for its support, which resulted in the buy-in of critical stakeholders and the ultimate passage of the bill. Many organisations have tried in the past but failed. The Child Protection Network will continue to follow-up with the Governor to accelerate assent to the bill.”

Chief Sunday Kadiri, Coordinator, Child Protection Network, Adamawa State

Nigeria Correctional Service inaugurates National Parole Board

There was a turning point in Nigeria's non-custodial regime on 25 August 2022 with the inauguration of the National Parole Board for the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS). The Board was launched by the NCoS Controller General, Haliru Nababa, at the organisation's headquarters in Abuja.

Parole is the temporary or permanent release of a prisoner before the expiry of a sentence, on the promise of good behaviour. The passage of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019 ushered in the non-custodial forms of punishment for offenders. Section 40 of the Act empowers the Controller General to establish the National Parole Board and appoint its board members to administer the parole process. The National Parole Board is responsible for determining parole eligibility of applicants, setting conditions that will guide the release of applicants to the society, and revoke any paroles granted to an applicant when these conditions are violated.

At the inauguration ceremony, the Controller General charged the Board members to be patriotic in the discharge of their duties and to approach their assignments seriously and diligently. He said each member was painstakingly selected and expressed confidence in their ability to deliver a parole system that the country will be proud of.

The Chairman of the Board, Hon Justice Sulieman Galadima (Rtd), assured of the Board's determination and commitment to deliver and make the country proud.

RoLAC's National Programme Manager, Danladi Plang, commended the Controller General and management of the NCoS for their commitment and effort to implement the various sections of the Act 2019 despite limited resources. He also commended members of the Parole Board for accepting the responsibility of catering to offenders who will genuinely seek an opportunity to return to society.

The RoLAC Programme actively supported the passage of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act through its legislative journey and continues to support the implementation of the law, especially its non-custodial measures. This includes the development of standing orders, training manuals, training of non-custodial officers, and training of trainers at the various NCoS training schools. The creation of the Parole Board will increase compliance with provisions of the law and other relevant criminal justice laws leading to a reduction in prison congestion.

“Parole as a non-custodial sentencing option helps to decongest custodial centres and reduce administrative costs. The inauguration of the parole board underscores the zeal and commitment of the service to the Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2018.”

Haliru Nababa, Controller General, Nigerian Correctional Service

Mental Health Board and Protocol established

On 25 August 2022, functional systems were established to protect the rights of persons with mental disabilities who have fallen in conflict with the law and committed as inmates to any of the Nigerian Correctional Services (NCoS) centres. The Comptroller General of the NCoS, Haliru Nababa, made a public presentation of the Mental Health Protocols for inmates of custodial centres and inaugurated the Mental Health Review Board across the states of the federation.

The Mental Health Protocol was the result of weeks of collaboration and effort between RoLAC, the Prisoners Rehabilitation Welfare and Action and the NCoS, in developing, reviewing, and validating the protocol. It will serve as a guideline in the implementation of sections 23 and 24 of the NCoS Act. The protocol will also promote, among other things, the early identification of cases of mental illness in custody; suitable and timely interventions for the management and treatment of inmates with mental issues; specific guidelines for mental health assessment of suspects, detainees/inmates; the diagnosis and treatment of inmates with mental disabilities; and appropriate measures, including referral and/or diversion of suspects, detainees/inmates with mental disabilities.

The newly inaugurated Mental Health Review Board is created by the NCoS Act 2019 to ensure the regular assessment of the mental state of inmates. It is comprised of psychologists, psychiatrists, and clinical and social workers.

RoLAC is committed to training the newly inaugurated board to aid its seamless operation, as well as the implementation of the protocols in the coming months.

“A mere change of name from the Nigerian Prisons Service to the Nigerian Correctional Service is not enough to produce the desired transformation. There must be actionable steps. This is evidenced with the creation of the board.”

Rtd. Justice Suleiman Galadima, Chairperson, Mental Health Review Board

Disability Rights Law unveiled in local languages

Since the passage of the Disability Rights Law in Anambra State in 2018, efforts have been made to create awareness, and increase the understanding of the law by institutions, organisations and individuals. For instance, the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD) in the state, with the support of RoLAC, engaged in advocacy visits to private and public organisations to increase the visibility of the law and give recognition to the rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs) as contained in the law. As a result, some institutions like the National Human Rights Commission, the Legal Aid Council of Nigeria, and Anambra State Health Insurance Agency established dedicated desks for handling PWD issues.

Despite these efforts an assessment recently carried out by JONAPWD revealed that the knowledge of the law and its contents is still very low among PWDs and the public. This has greatly affected the speedy implementation of the law.

To address this, JONAPWD translated the Disability Right Law into Igbo and Pidgin and made them available in simplified and accessible formats. Over 1,000 copies of the abridged versions were shared with the public. An additional 500 audio

versions in each language were distributed on USB branded scan disks to the disability community. It is hoped that these tools will create a better understanding and increase awareness about the law among the disability community and mobilise support for its speedy implementation.

"The struggles of persons with disabilities in Anambra State has been put to rest with the Disability Rights Law."

Comrade Ugochukwu Okeke, President, JONAPWD, Anambra State Chapter

"With the Anambra State Disability Rights Law, no matter who we are or where we come from or the nature of our disabilities, we are now entitled to basic human rights."

Ikele Chinenye, Member, JONAPWD, Anambra State Chapter



Local advocacy about the Disability Rights Law. Source: Disability Rights and Advocacy Centre

New Child and Teen Support Centre to benefit survivors of sexual and gender-based violence

The Child and Teen Survivor Support (CTSC) Centre was established by SOAR Initiative in 2020 with RoLAC support. It is continually working to provide quality and child survivor-centred services to enable children who are survivors of SGBV to heal better. The CTSC was borne of the need to find better ways to support survivors of child sexual abuse, create a safe space for them, and provide free child-centred services (psychosocial, accompaniment, medicals, access to legal justice, and family counselling).

Recent reports from the centre show that 377 survivors of SGBV and Child Sexual Abuse have received various forms of assistance. The centre has continued to function notwithstanding the end of the RoLAC grant to SOAR in April 2021. A total of 15 SGBV cases were handled in July 2022 alone.

“I felt there was no hope for the future. I was helpless and broken. But after the therapy sessions with SOAR, I have been healed. Today, I oversee my life and understand that my mum loves me a lot.”

Teen survivor and beneficiary of the CTSC

CURBING CORRUPTION

New investigators trained on financial intelligence

The Nigeria Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), in collaboration with RoLAC, delivered a two-week intermediate course on financial intelligence investigations and anti-money laundering. Over 74 recently recruited officers benefitted from the training, which was conducted from 18-29 July 2022.

The training focused on improving the knowledge and skills of officers in monitoring the flow of funds in conventional and sometimes unconventional financial systems. The aim was to identify suspicious activities of organised crime agents executed in ways to evade authorities. This covert approach has been widely reported as the mainstay of small and large terrorist operations, drugs and human traffickers, and corrupt government/public officials for many years. Due to the increased scrutiny by law enforcement agencies, new and sophisticated approaches have necessitated various levels of capacity building. This also includes refresher courses to keep gatekeepers like the NFIU abreast with new trends.

The training was interactive with modules on establishing an intelligence cycle; thinking critically and analytically; setting and identifying indicators of financial fraud; differentiating between informal and electronic value/funds transfer systems; analysing bank and business records; and producing strategic assessments for action. The NFIU Director and CEO, Modibbo Hamman Tukur, represented by the Head of Human Resources, Fatima Bukar. She noted that the trainings are of huge significance to the work of the NFIU.

Since its reorganisation in 2018 as an autonomous agency and following previous basic courses and other related capacity-building events supported by RoLAC, the NFIU has progressively improved in intelligence sharing and coordination of anti-corruption information dissemination locally and internationally. This can be seen in its year-on-year performance returns since 2019. It is expected that the impact of this training will lead to even more intelligence reports being shared and more agencies interacting with in the coming year.

“These trainings are of huge importance to the work we do at the NFIU.”

Fatima Bukar, Head of Human Resources, NFIU

CSO AND MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

EU visits Idera SARC and pledges continued support for SGBV

The European Union (EU) has made a commitment to continue to support measures to increase access to justice for victims of sexual violence. The commitment was made by the EU's Managing Director for Africa, Rita Laranjinha, when she visited Idera Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in Lagos on 19 July 2022. She was accompanied by the EU Ambassador to Nigeria, Samuela Isopi, along with other EU delegates.

The EU delegation was received at the Centre by the Medical Director of Alimosho General Hospital, Dr Ayo Soyinka, as well as representatives from the Ministry of Health, doctors, counsellors, and the RoLAC team.

The Idera SARC was established in Alimosho General Hospital by RoLAC in March 2021. Since then, it has contributed to better justice outcomes for survivors of SGBV in Lagos state. Between March 2021 and June 2022, the SARC provided services free of charge to 137 survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. Over 75% of the survivors were girls under 17 years old. Out of the cases reported, arrests have been made in 57% of those cases, with 16% undergoing prosecution and conviction secured in one.

The Idera Centre is the third SARC established in Lagos. All three SARCs (Idera, Mirabel, WARIF) have received some degree of support from RoLAC.

“It is important for us to join forces in the struggle against sexual violence. We will put resources together and partner with relevant stakeholders for justice to be served.”

Rita Laranjinha, Managing Director for Africa, European Union



EU delegation visits the Idera SARC in Lagos state. Source: HerStoryOurStory

FACTS & FIGURES:

Total number of direct beneficiaries

(Jul 2017- Sept 2022)

Justice reforms

35,261

Access to justice

41,977

Curbing corruption

18,619

CSO & media

66,682

OTHER ACTIVITIES COMPLETED WITHIN THE PERIOD

- Train Nigeria Police Officers on the Standard Operating Procedures on handling of suspects in police custody
- Train officers on the Code of Conduct Bureau's Online Asset Declaration System
- Roundtable advocacy with the Kano Ulama (Islamic Scholars) to address concerns and obtain buy-in for the passage of the Child Protection Bill
- Conduct corruption risk assessment in the Law Reform Commission
- Inaugurate the Oyo State Justice Reform Team

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- Validate paralegal training curriculum for universities
- Train Adamawa State Judiciary employees on Ethics and Code of Conduct
- Roundtable on the Bureau of Public Procurement's Open Contract in Data Standards and National Open Contracting Portal (southern zone)
- Conduct survey by the Nigerian Bar Association (Awka branch) and the Anambra State Justice Sector Reform Team to a measure level of compliance with bail by the police

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