



Funded by the European Union

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2018

ISSUE 4

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 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
- Empowering CSOs and the media in the fight against corruption and criminal justice reforms

The four-year programme (2017-21) 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 September to November 2018.

Summary of key activities include:

Criminal justice system:

- Strengthening the application of sentencing guidelines at the Judiciary in Lagos State
- Progress made towards passing the Administration of Criminal Justice laws in Adamawa and Kano States
- Expanding the Network of Justice Sector Reform Teams to 27 states

Access to justice:

- Disability Rights Bill passed in Anambra State
- Secretariat for the SBGV response team commissioned in FCT
- Sex offenders register developed in FCT



Participants at a training on the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act in Abuja
Credit: RoLAC

Curbing corruption:

- Code of Conduct Bureau revisits organisational strategy
- CSOs empowered to act on freedom of information in Kano and Adamawa States

CSO and media engagement:

- SARC network hosts biannual meeting
- Building the capacity of CSOs and the media on key legislation

Criminal justice system

Strengthening the application of sentencing guidelines at the Judiciary in Lagos State

RoLAC supported the Lagos State Criminal Justice Sector Reform Committee (CJSRC) to host a workshop for the Judiciary in Lagos State. The aim was to raise awareness about the recently issued Practice Direction on Sentencing Guidelines, as a way to improve the Judiciary's ability to comply with the provisions of the Administration of Criminal Justice Law. Over **143 judges and magistrates** participated in the workshop.

The Chief Judge of Lagos State, Justice Opeyemi Oke, signed off the guidelines in March 2018. The objective was to reduce arbitrariness and encourage uniformity in the sentencing of convicted person in the handling criminal cases. The guidelines are based on the premises of prevention, restraint, rehabilitation, deterrence, education of the public, restitution, and restoration.

Implemented by the British Council



Reactions from participants who benefited from the workshop on sentencing guidelines:

'It has been an interesting exercise. I thought that because I was part of the reform team, I knew it all. But I have learnt a lot and now understand what can influence your sentencing.' **Hon. Justice Opanwo**

'I am very grateful for the opportunity to attend this training. I had looked at the guidelines in my chambers and dropped it. But now I can tie the loose ends together. Now I understand that we have to pause and balance the interest of the victim, offender and society. It's not just about imprisonment. Please let's all use the guidelines' **Magistrate Joy Ugbomoiko**

Progress made towards passing the Administration of Criminal Justice legislation in Adamawa and Kano States

The Administration of Criminal Justice (ACJ) legislation was recently passed in FCT and Lagos. Adamawa and Kano States are accelerating their actions to join them.

In **Adamawa**, following a number of public hearings and committee deliberations, the ACJ bill was passed by the State House of Assembly. It is now awaiting the Governor's approval, with RoLAC supporting advocacy efforts to speed it through. Over **349 people have been directly engaged** in the process (from May 2017 to date). In **Kano**, the ACJ Bill went through first and second readings at the State House of Assembly. It is now at the committee stage. RoLAC supported a sensitisation workshop for civil society groups in Kano and a dedicated meeting for the House to review the Bill. At the meeting, the Deputy Speaker made a commitment to ensure the Bill was passed in 2018.

Over **198 people have been directly engaged** in the process (from Nov 2017 to date). The Kano ACJ Law features some unique elements. It will be the first of the sharia practicing states in Northern Nigeria to merge the sharia criminal procedure and the English-based criminal procedure into one law.



Members of the Kano State House of Assembly at the review of the ACJ Bill in Abuja
Credit: Mujtaba Adamu, Kano State House of Assembly

Twenty-seven states now represented in the Network of Justice Sector Reform Teams

The Justice Sector Reform Teams (JSRTs) are oversight bodies comprised of justice sector institutions at the state-level to implement reforms. A national conference is hosted for JSRTs bi-annually and is coordinated by the Federal Justice Sector Reform Coordination Committee (FJSRCC). The platform enables the teams to learn from each other's experiences of championing justice reforms. The initiative is supported by RoLAC.

In November 2018, the conference was held in Benin City, Edo State. Shortly before the event, the Borno State JSRT was welcomed to the network, which now has **27 member states** represented in the Network. During the conference, the teams from Lagos, Ondo and Delta states promoted the benefits of specialized courts. The Plateau State JSRT presented how improved relations between the State's Attorney-General and Chief Judge facilitated prison decongestion.



Commissioner for Wealth Creation & Representative of the Governor of Edo State (left), Director Public Prosecution of the Federation (right), and Solicitor General & Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Justice (centre)
Credit: Kasimu L. Aliu

The conference called on members to adopt funding strategies towards the sustainability of the network. The Chief Judge of Ogun State, Justice Dipeolu Mosunmola, and the Speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Joshua Izang Madaki were appointed JSRT Ambassadors with the mandate of advancing the cause of the network in two key entities: the Conference of Speakers and the Body of Chief Judges. Furthermore, the Rt. Hon. Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly publicly made a commitment that the state would provide ongoing funding for the JSRT.

Access to justice

Disability Rights Bill passed in Anambra State

The Disability Rights Bill has been passed into law in Anambra State. The aim of the law is to promote the full integration of persons with disabilities into society, prohibit all forms of discrimination, and ensure equal opportunities. The law also establishes a Disability Rights Commission to oversee implementation of the Bill.

'History been made in Anambra State with the passage of the Disability Rights Bill. With the support of RoLAC, the five-year journey has ended. The disability community is grateful to RoLAC. We look forward to more assistance to support the sensitisation of the bill.'
President, Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities

The Bill was first presented to the State House of Assembly in 2013 (during the 5th Assembly) but was stalled and could not be passed. It was re-presented in 2015 (during the 6th Assembly). With RoLAC support, the Joint National Association of Persons with Disability (Anambra State Chapter) and the Office of the Governor on Disability Matters made concerted efforts to promote the passage of the legislation. Discussions led to meetings with the leadership of the State House of Assembly and eventually the [passage of the Bill on September 13, 2018](#). Over [50 persons from the disability community](#) were present at the State Assembly to witness the passage of the Bill. Anambra State is the first in the South East to pass a Disability Law.

Secretariat for the SGBV response team commissioned in FCT

The secretariat for the sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) response team in FCT is now fully functional, thanks to RoLAC support. The response team is a group of government and non-government bodies that collaborate on SGBV issues. The secretariat now operates a helpline to counsel survivors of gender-based violence. Furthermore, a data management template was developed to support record keeping and tracking of referrals.

Between January and September 2018, the secretariat attended to [47 clients](#), provided [counselling to 23 clients](#), and [referred 15 clients to other agencies](#) including the police, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) and health care institutions. The secretariat has the potential to play a pivotal role in the prosecution of offenders.



Commissioning of the SGBV RT Secretariat
Credit: Uchenna Nwokedi, RoLAC

Sex offenders register developed in FCT

In November, RoLAC and the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) organised a meeting for service providers in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) to advance the implementation of the VAPP Act 2015. Over [60 stakeholders \(40 women\)](#) participated in the meeting, including representatives from civil society, NAPTIP, the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, the Federal Ministry of Education, the Federal Ministry of Health, the Legal Aid Council, and others.

The aim was to develop three key documents: (1) Sexual Offender Register (a list of registered offenders - an important public safety tool to help prevent re-offending), (2) Service Providers Register (a list of approved and registered organisations that deliver services to victims of violence), and (3) associated guidelines to standardise the operations of service providers - as provided by Sections 1(4) and 40 of the VAPP Act 2015.

'The secretariat will be critical in the prosecution of offences under the Act and serve as a tool for apprehending offenders'

Dame Julie Okah-Donli, Director General, NAPTIP

'This intervention is very timely. We need to ensure the proper coordination and documentation of cases of sexual violence'

Agnes Hart, Director Gender, Social Development Secretariat

Curbing corruption

Code of Conduct Bureau revisits organisational strategy

The Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) has a new Board of Directors tasked with reviewing the organisation's existing strategy and developing a [new five-year strategic plan](#) (2019 to 2023). The review commenced with a roundtable for all new and old board members and over 10 directors/heads of department.

Prior to the meeting, the RoLAC team visited the new Chairman and Board Members to prioritise areas of implementation of the existing strategy that

was developed three years ago. Earlier in 2018, RoLAC supported the Presidential

Advisory Council on anti-corruption to facilitate a peer review of the strategic plans of various anti-corruption agencies. The CCB highlighted the lack of a functional board as their biggest challenge for strategy implementation and organisational effectiveness. This provided the basis for the intervention.

'This support will help reposition the CCB to be the foremost anti-corruption agency. This workshop is a step forward towards the main objective of establishing CCB'

**Prof. Mohammed Isah,
Chairman, Code of Conduct Bureau**



New CCB management board
Credit: Joseph Abechi, CCB media crew

CSOs empowered to act on freedom of information in Kano and Adamawa States

In partnership with the Freedom of Information (FoI) Coalition in Nigeria and the FOI Unit of the Federal Ministry of Justice, RoLAC hosted a workshop for representatives of public institutions and civil society organisations. The objective was to increase citizens' demand for accountability and transparency from public institutions, through enhanced awareness and capacity on the effective use of the FOI Act on the demand side (civil society); and to improve compliance and implementation of the FOI Act on the supply side (public institutions). An earlier study on the level of compliance and use of the FOI Act in Kano and Adamawa States highlighted a lack of general knowledge about the Act and how to use it. This evidence formed the basis for the training.

Thirty civil society representatives (journalists, legal practitioners and community-based organisations) and 30 information desk officers from selected MDAs from RoLAC's focal states participated in the workshop. The highlights of the training included practical writing exercises (FOI requests by civil society participants and responses by participants from public institutions), experience sharing, question and answer sessions, and others.

As a result of the training, participants now have a better understanding of the provisions and their application, and the obligations of public institutions. There is evidence that CSOs have commenced sending FOI requests to government agencies and officials.

'I'm motivated by the confidence the training gave me to demand for information from any official and the fact that my demand is guaranteed and backed by the constitution.'

Muhammad Yahya, Budget Tracking Group

In Kano, the Budget Tracking Group (BTG), a local CSO, was concerned with how state budget was being used. In the past, getting information from state institutions has always been difficult. BTG was not aware of the provisions of the FOI and methods for requesting information from state institutions. Two weeks after the training, the CSO made a request to the member representing its constituency (Rogo LGA) in the state assembly and requested details on the expenditure of constituency project funds.

CSO and media engagement

SARC Network hosts biannual meeting

With funding from the European Union and the United States Agency for International Development, RoLAC and Pathfinder International are collaborating to enhance the quality of service delivered by Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) and to replicate the SARC initiative across Nigeria.

SARCs are a response to gaps in social support and effective justice services for victims of sexual assault in Nigeria, providing free immediate emergency medical treatment, counselling and follow up support to survivors of rape and sexual assault. By the end of October 2018, there were 11 established SARCs in 10 states (Adamawa, Akwa-Ibom, Borno, Enugu, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Lagos, Niger and Yobe states).

Since the first SARC opened in 2012, over 6,700 survivors of sexual assault have received support from the SARCs (60% of whom are girls under 14 years old). In addition to the services provided to survivors, SARC medical staff are trained in forensic medical examination and documentation, so they can provide medical reports to support the prosecution of rape cases in court. Since the Rayuwa SARC in Niger State was established, 212 rape cases have been prosecuted, resulting in 23 convictions.

Stakeholders recognised the need for a platform that would facilitate information exchange, lesson sharing, and greater dialogue among SARCs, government institutions and other stakeholders. The SARC Network was inaugurated in April 2016 with the aim of promoting best practice in the establishment and operation of SARCs or similar services and engaging more broadly across society to address the culture of silence and rape stigma. The Network meets bi-annually.

In September 2018, the fourth SARC Network meeting was held in Abuja. It brought together all SARCs and a broad selection of stakeholders from 13 states and the FCT, including representatives of Ministries of Health, Gender/Women's Affairs and Justice along with representatives from the office of the Vice President, the police, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), and civil society. The SARC Managers and Steering Committees reported on results achieved over the past year. The SARCs in Borno, Enugu, Kano, Jigawa, Lagos and Enugu reported an increase in client numbers, as a result of a focus on awareness raising and public sensitisation.

'The SARC Network supports best practice and a model national referral mechanism within the context of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act 2015, which stipulates: Every victim is entitled to receive the necessary materials, comprehensive medical, psychological, social and legal assistance through governmental agencies and/or non-governmental agencies providing such assistance.'

'The Network supports all SARCs and response services that provide the much needed professional and integrated confidential support services to survivors of sexual violence to aid their recovery, obtain redress, and enable reintegration into society following traumatic experience that they have had.'

'I urge state governments to reach out to the SARC Network and leverage its technical expertise to replicate the SARC in other states'
**Professor Joy Ezeilo, Chairperson,
SARC Network**

For the first time, the meeting considered what actions could be taken to enhance service delivery, support and response to persons with disabilities (PWDs) who have been victims of sexual assault. It is expected that between now and the next meeting, SARCAs would not only have begun implementing agreed actions but would also be able to report specific ways in which their services are now more tailored to the needs of PWDs.

Building the capacity of CSOs and the media on key legislations

In November, RoLAC supported a workshop for CSOs and the media to raise awareness about key laws that protect women, children and persons living with disabilities (PWDs). Over 78 stakeholders (51 female) participated in the workshop, which focused on the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act 2015, the Child Rights Act, and the Administration of Criminal Justice Act. The aim was to enhance the capacity of CSOs and media organisations to monitor compliance with these laws and to hold justice and support service providers to account.



Participants at a training on key legislation in Abuja
Credit: RoLAC

Key outcomes from the workshop included the development of advocacy plans for service providers and implementation agencies; and media strategies to enable more specific and targeted reporting on SGBV issues. The participants acknowledged that the training deepened their knowledge of laws. The case studies provided concrete examples to help participants better understand the issues and revealed how a stronger understanding of the laws can benefit the public through more accurate and informed reporting.

Upcoming activity

- Develop a plea bargain manual in Lagos State and train prosecutors and judiciary on the manual
- Establish case management systems for the Anambra State Ministry of Justice and Judiciary
- Launch the Anambra State Child Rights Implementation Committee
- Train family court assessors and social workers
- Build capacity for the Extractive Industries Fraud Awareness Units of the ACAs in partnership with Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI)
- Review the procurement regulations and tools for Kano and Anambra States
- Host a roundtable/policy dialogue on sexual violence and persons with disabilities within the context of the Special Persons Law

Find out more

Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC)

Email: RoLAC@ng.britishcouncil.org

Web: 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)