

# RULE OF LAW AND ANTI-CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

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

Our main objective was 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 worked at the federal level and in Lagos, Kano, Anambra, Edo, and Adamawa states.

## Our work focused 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 programme was delivered from 2017 to March 2023.

This Special Edition of the RoLAC Newsletter highlights the dissemination and programme closure events that were held across five focal states and the FCT.



## ADAMAWA STATE

### Stakeholders applaud increased implementation of laws

The Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) Programme held a dissemination and closeout event in Yola (Adamawa State) to showcase the results of the programme and promote sustainability and replication. Panellists were unanimous that the programme has greatly strengthened justice sector operations in the state. They specifically noted that women, children and persons with disabilities now have more access to justice in addition to the remarkable improvement in the performance of anti-corruption agencies in the state.

Speaking on the need to *increase accountability and access to justice in Adamawa State in 2023 and beyond*, the panellists expressed total confidence in the capacity of Adamawa justice sector to sustain the gains and achievements of the RoLAC programme if adequately funded. Justice Samuel Kyanson of the Adamawa State High Court stated that, with the support of RoLAC, the Administration of Criminal Justice Law (ACJL) is currently being fully implemented in courts across the state and leading to increased synergy among justice sector agencies, government and CSOs. He highlighted that RoLAC equipped judges with the ACJL, plea bargain manuals and the thematic summaries of the ACJL relating to the work of prosecutors, defence lawyers, courts, and tribunals.

Former chairman of the Nigeria Bar Association in Adamawa State, Barrister Eva O. Odo commended the state government for collaborating with RoLAC to fast track the passage of the Child Protection Law (CPL) in 2022. He noted the passage was a demonstration of the state's commitment to ensuring that the implementation of the law aligns with global best practises. He stressed the need to scale up engagements with communities to raise awareness on the provisions of the law and to take advantage of its provisions. Barrister Kowoabo Takoni of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (Adamawa State chapter) observed that the passage and implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law has greatly enhanced the quality of justice and social welfare services to victims of sexual and gender-based violence; while engagements with traditional rulers helped to promote the rights of people with disabilities and drastically reduce incidences of SGBV in the state. A Director in the State Ministry of Women Affairs, Edward Yadzugwa, assured that the ministry will continue to intensify efforts to ensure budget provisions are made to sustain various reforms.

The Governor of Adamawa State, Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri, who was represented by the Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Afraimu Jingi, observed that to ensure corruption is stamped out of government operations, every ministry and parastatal should have an anti-corruption unit to monitor the activities of officials. He applauded the good work of RoLAC in the state particularly the support to the CRL. In his words, "The Child Rights Law is one of the achievements of RoLAC in Adamawa. The organisation sponsored many laws in the state that have direct bearing on humanity."

The closeout event was held at the American University Hotel AUN, Yola on the 30th of January 2023. Participants were drawn from a broad spectrum of partners across the state, including representatives of the Justice Sector Reform Teams from Bauchi, Gombe, and Taraba states.

**"We need to scale up our engagements with local communities so that they can know more about the Child Protection Law. This will enable them to take advantage of it."**

Barrister Eva O. Odo, Former Chair, Nigeria Bar Association, Adamawa



Stakeholders at the closeout event in Adamawa. Source: RoLAC

## LAGOS STATE

### Criminal justice stakeholders call for increased awareness of reforms in the justice system

RoLAC held a dissemination, lesson learning and close-out event in Lagos on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023. Participants were drawn from the Lagos State Judiciary, Ministry of Justice; the State Commands of the Nigeria Police Force and Nigerian Correctional Service; academia; the Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning; civil society organisations; and the media.

The event featured presentations of key achievements by the RoLAC team and a panel discussion. The panellists included Tolu Aderiye representing the Attorney General of Lagos State; Associate Professor Akeem Bello of the Faculty of Law, University of Lagos; Dare Dairo, General Manager, Lagos State Office of Disability Affairs; Dr Abiola Afolabi Akiyode, a leading civil society leader; and Joseph Otteh, a justice reform expert. The panellists discussed issues around increasing accountability and access to justice in the state in 2023 and beyond.

While highlighting the work of RoLAC in the state, Mrs Aderiye noted that Lagos is often seen as a model for other states in justice reform in Nigeria. She continued that there is the need to increase awareness about reforms within the justice system. For instance, she observed that "the restorative justice system (in the state) has not seen a lot of applications". Stakeholders at the event called for increased awareness and patronage of the restorative justice system in the state

Associate Professor, Akeem Bello, stated that there should be increased citizen demand for reforms. He said there is need to improve the uptake of plea bargains and questioned why lawyers – in some cases – refuse to apply for plea bargains for their clients. He questioned whether this was for their own benefit or the benefit of the client.

RoLAC's National Programme Manager, Danladi Plang, welcomed participants and expressed his gratitude for the cooperation received from all stakeholders and partners over



the years. Goodwill messages were given by the Honourable Minister of State for Budget and Economic Planning (represented by Zainab Bala), and the Solicitor General and Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Justice. Opening remarks was made by the Chief Judge of Lagos State represented by Justice J. Shonaike.

RoLAC's Component Team Leads presented data from the inception of the project through to 2023 highlighting key outputs, achievements, challenges, and lessons learnt in the course of the programme. Some of the results presented by the RoLAC Component Leads were the deployment of a bail information management in the judiciary; and assistance provided by the Child Protection Network (783 cases of child abuse, including neglect and sexual abuse with 193 of the cases referred to the police or other services teams).

The team made a case for sustainability of the programme's activities in Lagos State based on the positive results. The call for an extension of the programme in the state was supported by beneficiaries of the different interventions in their testimonials on the impact of the programme.

A highpoint of the event was the presentation of the intervention documents by RoLAC Operations Manager, Sanjiv Malhotra, to the representative of the Chief Judge.

Suggestions for improving access to justice in Lagos included making court rooms more amenable for persons with disabilities, and the need to have a "self-cleansing system" for the judiciary. The issue of the low pay of lower-level workers in the justice sector in the state was raised. It was noted that this affects efficacy in the justice system. A slogan that is commonly heard amongst low level workers is that "Lagos state pretends to pay and we also pretend to work".

**“The whole idea of the justice system is to preserve humanity in the criminal sector so we will not revert to jungle justice. That someone is blind does not mean they are above the law.”**

Dare Dairo, General Manager, Lagos State Office of Disability Affairs



Group photo at the closeout event in Lagos. Source: RoLAC

## EDO STATE

### Stakeholders express need to tackle corruption at all levels

The justice sector in Edo State has recorded significant achievements because of the numerous initiatives promoted by RoLAC. Stakeholders made this known at the dissemination, lesson learning and closeout event organised as part of activities to formally close the programme. The event took place at Protea Hotel Benin City on the 26th of January 2023.

The State Director of Public Prosecution, Kingsley Odabi, highlighted some of the gains of the programme in the state. This included the institutionalisation of plea bargains including the development of a manual; the development and adoption of sentencing guidelines on section 40 of the ACJL; training and retraining of judicial officers, prosecutors and other justice actors on the guidelines, which he described as a first of its kind in the state.

Melody Omase Esq. of the Citizens Mediation Centre commended the passage of the Disability Rights Bill and called for its full implementation and setting up of a Disability Commission.

Stakeholders also agreed that RoLAC's work with the Edo State Public Procurement Agency has made great impact. Notable is the support for the review of the Edo State Public Procurement Law, one of the pre-requisites for the state to meet the performance indicators for accessing grants under the World Bank's State Fiscal Transparency, Accountability, and Sustainability Programme. The Director of the Edo State Public Procurement Agency, while thanking RoLAC for supporting the agency, highlighted that the "get-rich-quick syndrome" had permeated all sectors of society and called for reorientation of citizens at all levels including the education system, whilst ensuring that key population groups drive the anti-corruption reforms in the state.

RoLAC's Anti-Corruption Lead, Emanuel Uche, spoke on the need to enhance the ability of the state to address corruption in the criminal justice sector and public procurement. He referred to the development of the State Integrity and Accountability Strategy and various workshops and trainings for stakeholders in the public procurement sector as sustainable milestones.

Chairman of Nigerian Bar Association (Edo State), Nosa Osagie, stressed the need for lawyers to be sensitised on "delays and inefficiencies in criminal trials". He noted that CSOs have a huge role to play in addressing the abuse of constitutional rights. Irenose Ihensekhien of the Ministry of Youth and Gender revealed that special courts have been established to address SGBV cases and dispose of them on time. She added that modalities were in place to locate sexual assault referral centres in all local governments areas of the state to improve the quality of service to women and children survivors of SGBV.

The event was attended by justice and anti-corruption actors in Edo State as well as representatives of the justice reform teams (JSRT) from neighbouring Akwa-Ibom, Cross River and Delta states. The Secretary of the Administration of Criminal Justice Monitoring Committee (ACJMC) in Cross River State (who represented the JSRT) commended RoLAC for the progress made so far and revealed that Cross River State has been struggling with the idea of SARC and sought the help of RoLAC to enhance the process.



High table at the closeout event in Edo. Source: RoLAC

# ANAMBRA STATE

## RoLAC influenced approach to persons with disabilities

RoLAC hosted a closeout event on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February 2023 at the Finnotel Classique Hotel, Awka. The event was attended by participants from Anambra State, and representatives from the southeast states of Enugu and Abia.

At the event, the Head of Service of Anambra State, Theodora O. Igwegbe, advocated for greater participation of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the fight against corruption. She noted that for the fight against corruption to be sustainable, a wholistic and inclusive approach for citizen participation is required.

Dr Mike Anyiadiegwu chaired a panel discussion and acknowledged that criminal justice providers in the state have benefitted from RoLAC's interventions. The State VAPP Coordinator, Nkiruka Okoye, noted that efforts to ensure that victims of SGBV have access to justice and appropriate services have been enhanced greatly by RoLAC, but there are still areas of need. She advocated for the collaboration of traditional institutions, CSOs and government to improve access to justice for PWDs, women and children.

The RoLAC National Programme Manager, Danladi Plang, welcomed guests and thanked all partners for the support over the years. RoLAC Component Leads presented milestones over the six years of implementation, including the reduction in time for the trial of criminal cases; the increase in number of cases of SGBV being reported through the SARC; the passage of the revised procurement law of the state; and the implementation of state anti-corruption strategy.

A key highlight was the presentation of an Award of Excellence to the RoLAC National Programme Manager and the RoLAC State Team by the Network of Persons with Disabilities.

### **“RoLAC has changed the charity-based approach of handling persons with disabilities to a human-rights approach.”**

Ernest Ugochukwu Okeke, President, Joint Association of Persons with Disabilities



Group photo at the closeout event in Anambra. Source: RoLAC

# FCT

## RoLAC closes with distinction after six years of project delivery

The RoLAC Programme formally closed with a dissemination and lesson learning event in Abuja. The main objective was to share success stories and challenges and provide opportunities

for stakeholders and beneficiaries to interact on how key initiatives supported by RoLAC can be sustained and future interventions better delivered.

The event was attended by the Head of Delegation of the European Union to Nigeria and ECOWAS; the Executive Secretary of the National Commission for Persons Living With Disabilities; the Director General of the Legal Aid Council; the representative of the International Committee for Red Cross; the head of the Technical Unit on Governance and Anti-Corruption; and heads of CSOs.

Speakers lauded the achievements of the programme and called for beneficiaries to sustain it. In her welcome address, the Country Director of the British Council, Lucy Pearson, represented by Chikodi Onyemerela, highlighted some significant contributions of RoLAC, including the enactment and implementation of key laws (e.g. the Police Act, Nigeria Correctional Services Act, Proceeds of Crime Act, etc); the provision of legal assistance to 12,000 citizens; support to over 30,000 victims of SGBV; and promoting anti-corruption and state level reforms on procurement. She recognised and appreciated the partnership and contributions of the various state and non-state actors and the European Union (EU) for providing the funds.

The British Council Director for Open Societies in Sub-Sahara Africa, Richard Garrett, stated that the EU is interested in facilitating a corruption-free society and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of citizens. He urged partners to sustain the gains recorded and particularly for CSOs and young Nigerians to take ownership of the struggle.

The Executive Secretary of the National Commission for Persons with Disability noted that RoLAC has fostered inclusivity of PWDs and cited himself as a beneficiary. He said RoLAC has supported states to domesticate the law on prohibition of discrimination against persons with disability in 13 states and the process to domesticate the Act for other states is ongoing. He expressed the readiness of the commission to build on the gains of the programme to ensure its sustainability.

The Head of Delegation of the European Union to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Samuela Isopi, acknowledged that quality results have been achieved and improvements in justice sector reforms and prevention and prosecution of corruption attained. She noted some of the results including the enhanced implementation of relevant justice and anti-corruption laws; increased access to justice for SGBV survivors; the promotion of the rights of children in the struggle against sexual offences; and actions to curb corruption. She encouraged that results should be consolidated and advised that the respect to human rights, fundamental freedoms, and democratic principles must not be taken for granted. She informed the audience that the EU is committed to helping Nigeria deepen its democracy.

The Honourable Minister of State, Budget and National Planning, represented by Johnson Bareyei, applauded the achievements and recognised that the programme's objectives of enthroneing good governance in Nigeria through promoting the rule of law and curbing corruption was significantly achieved and encouraged all stakeholders of the programme to come up with ideas to ensure sustainability of the achievements. He expressed the commitment of the ministry to collaborate with the EU to implement its subsequent activities in Nigeria

The Attorney General of the Federation (represented by Leticia Ayoola-Daniels) highlighted the milestones and gains of the Federal Ministry of Justice (FMoJ) through the collaboration with RoLAC, including the establishment of 32 Justice Sector Reform Teams across the country; the development of justice sector reforms action plans; the development of legislative drafting manual; capacity building workshops for judges, police



officers; the development of a Plea Bargain Manual for the FMOJ; the establishment of SGBV courts in the FCT; and the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, among others. The Attorney General restated the commitment of the FMOJ to improving access to justice and full implementation of the Administration of the Criminal Justice Act through collaboration with RoLAC.

At the event, RoLAC presented a 500GB hard disk each to the Attorney General and the Minister of State for Finance Budget and National Planning with over 132 knowledge products such as how-to-guides, training manuals, case studies, impact reports, practice directions, and other strategic documents covering the work performed by RoLAC over six years.

Key results of the programme were presented by RoLAC's Component Team Leads. The presentations featured data from the inception of the project through to 2022 highlighting key outputs, achievements, challenges and lessons learnt. Across the components, 1.3million direct and indirect beneficiaries were reached; 32,000 offenders served community service following the introduction of non-custodial measures in the criminal justice system; more efficient measures were introduced for criminal trials such as plea bargains, restorative justice and the recording of confessional statements. Others include an increase in number of states that have passed the VAPP Act and SGBV survivors supported by SARC; a 100% increase in the number of convictions of corruption cases; and an increase in the value of assets recovered from corruption investigations and forfeited to the government.

A key component of the event was the panel discussion on the topic of "Increasing accountability and access to justice in Nigeria in 2023 and beyond". It was anchored by Eze Onyekpere and two panellists: the Director General of National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Professor Fatima Waziri, and the Head of the Technical Unit on Governance and Anti-Corruption (TUGAR), Jane Adindu Onwumere. The NAPTIP Director General recommended that direct budgetary allocation for the implementation of the VAPP Act was required. She recalled that NAPTIP has been using the funds for trafficking in persons to cater for survivors of SGBV and VAPP Act implementation. She appealed for the establishment of more shelters for victims of trafficking in persons and SGBV since the only available shelter is over stretched. She said, "NAPTIP received 362 victims and survivors of SGBV and trafficking in persons in 2022. The provision of more SARC centres will build on the work RoLAC has been doing for the past six years".

The head of TUGAR said it is critical to have the youth and all stakeholders come together to join the fight against corruption. She highlighted that the voices of the youth are not heard and currently they have limited access and opportunities. To make progress, the youth should be fully involved in the process and have key roles which can consist of providing evidence-based data. They must be able to conduct evidence-based research that provides disaggregated data on key issues that resonates with the youth and including women. Data can drive the development of future interventions.

The panel session generated active questions and comments from all stakeholders, including Justice Josephine Obanor of the FCT High Court who emphasised the need for ethical re-orientation to curb corruption. She also recommended the re-introduction of civic education in primary to secondary schools; and for young people to be mainstreamed in government programmes to dissuade them from crime and corruption. She also recommended that evidence of victims of SGBV be represented in court by the prosecutor without subjecting the victims to re-traumatisation. Many victims find it traumatic to come to court and be questioned in front of the accused. She

recommended that the law needs to be amended to achieve the above procedure.

In his concluding remarks, the National Programme Manager, Danladi Plang, thanked all participants, stakeholders and partners for making the six years of the RoLAC memorable. He extended special appreciation to the EU, the Ministry of Budget as well as the Ministry of Justice and all other key partners who have contributed to the success of the programme.



Dignitaries at the closeout event in Abuja. Source: RoLAC

## KANO STATE

### RoLAC is mission accomplished

The Honourable Chief Judge of Kano State Nura Sagir Umar described the activities of RoLAC as "mission accomplished". He made the remark at the exit and lesson learnt dissemination event held in the state capital.

The Chief Judge described the history of RoLAC as his own history having been appointed to his position almost at the same time RoLAC set up office in Kano. He commended the steadfast nature with which the programme pursued the domestication of the Administration of Criminal Justice (ACJL) in 2019. He also cited the many workshops that RoLAC organised for magistrates and High Court Judges on the ACJL in the state.

The Chief Judge also highlighted RoLAC's work in other sectors such as anti-corruption, and access to justice for people living with disabilities, women, and children. He was particularly happy with the technical support provided on ways to reform children's correctional facilities in the state.

The exit event was organised to share the lessons learned by RoLAC in its six years of operation and to hand over some of the work to stakeholders for continuity.

The meeting was well attended by a cross section of partners and stakeholders who gave testimonials on how the activities of the programme have impacted their work. A representative of the Nigerian Police, CSP Abubakar Hamma, commented on how the training on the ACJL has helped him redirect officers in his division, which in turn, changed how the community now relates with his station. A staff of the Public Complaints and Anti-corruption Commission shared examples of how RoLAC addressed corrupt practices, which has helped some staff to blow the whistle on corrupt practices in their organisations. A CSO representative highlighted the impact of RoLAC's work on the Freedom of Information Act. He said the training strengthened CSO capacity and courage to demand for information from government institutions on suspect financial activities in the state.

Special guests from the neighbouring states of Jigawa, Katsina and Kaduna also attended the event, including Justice Sector Reform Teams and Solicitor Generals of the Ministries of Justice.

## FACTS & FIGURES:

Number of direct beneficiaries

Justice reforms

37,352

Access to justice

49,551

Curbing corruption

20,687

CSOs & media

68,221

## FACTS & FIGURES:

Total number of indirect beneficiaries

Direct

175,811

Indirect

1,127,426

TOTAL

1,303,247

### Find out more

**The Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC)**  
RoLAC@ng.britishcouncil.org  
[www.justice-security.ng](http://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