

SPECIAL BULLETIN

AGENTS FOR
CITIZEN-DRIVEN
TRANSFORMATION

MANAGING
CONFLICT
IN NIGERIA

RULE OF
LAW AND
ANTI-CORRUPTION

Compilation of Programme Activities: 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence



December 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tackling SGBV in Nigeria: An integral part of programming

The three European Union (EU) funded programmes implemented by the British Council in Nigeria: Agents for Citizen-driven Transformation (ACT), Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC), and Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN), have components of work designed to tackle sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as an integral part of their objectives.

In the last three years, RoLAC has carried out extensive work on SGBV across many states in Nigeria, including supporting and promoting the establishment of Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) - an initiative pioneered by the British Council Programme in Nigeria. As of December 2020, there were 29 SARCs in Nigeria, across 17 states and the FCT, many of which were established by Justice for All (J4A), MCN, RoLAC and Spotlight Initiatives. Between July 2013 and September 2020, the SARCs have assisted over 15,000 victims of sexual assault (over 70% of victims being under 18 years of age). The Programme's efforts have also led to the establishment of the National Sex Offender and Service Provider Register in November 2019, thereby facilitating multi-agency coordination to strengthen the justice delivery process: from the point of reporting of sexual assault, through the process of investigation, prosecution, conviction, and capturing details of convicted perpetrators of sexual assault on the Sex Offenders Register.

The MCN Programme has worked to ensure access to SARCs by the survivors of sexual assault in the North East States (Borno, Damaturu, and Adamawa), and collaborated with RoLAC to provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the SARCs to ensure they remain open and safely accessible to providing services to victims, survivors, and witnesses of sexual assaults throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Similarly, the ACT Programme has provided advocacy and visibility support to CSOs and media organisations working on gender-based violence in selected states to highlight their work during the pandemic to ensure continued support to victims.

16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign 2020

It is with the momentum created around gender-based violence by the above that the EU-funded British Council Programmes in 2020 joined the world for the 5th time to commemorate the annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. The 2020 campaign was unique due to the complications occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic, which imposed nationwide restrictions keeping citizens inside their homes due to the lockdown measures introduced to curb the spread of the virus. The resultant reports have shown alarming increases in the already existing violence against women and girls.



Rally for the 16 Days of Activism 2020 supported the EU-funded British Council programmes in Nigeria. Source: Humanitarian Innovation Foundation

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an annual international campaign that kicks off on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and runs until 10 December, Human Rights Day.

It serves as a time to raise awareness and increase momentum toward ending violence against women and girls worldwide.

The global theme for the 2020 campaign was: "Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!".

The three European Union and British Council programmes: ACT, RoLAC, and MCN, therefore packaged various activities in a coordinated manner leveraging on their previous work on gender-based issues to commemorate the 2020 16 Days of Activism in calling for national actions to increase awareness, galvanise advocacy efforts, and share knowledge and innovations on SGBV.

This bulletin highlights the activities undertaken by the three programmes in commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism from November 25 to December 10, 2020.

AGENTS FOR CITIZEN-DRIVEN TRANSFORMATION (ACT)

‘Share to Support and Prevent’: CSO and Media Dialogue on SGBV

On 8th December, the Agents for Citizen-driven Transformation (ACT) Programme, in collaboration with the Rule of Law and Anti-corruption (RoLAC) Programme, facilitated a one-day dialogue session with civil society organisations (CSOs) on their advocacy response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) during the COVID-19 pandemic. The event named, ‘Share to Support and Prevent’, showcased the resilience and gains of the programme’s CSOs and media partners. The event was held in conjunction with the 16 Days of Activism Campaign 2020.

The session highlighted the unique experiences of the CSOs and media partners in the programme’s focal areas: Kano, Lagos, Sokoto, Rivers, Adamawa and the FCT. It provided a platform to share different approaches and innovations to confront the issues of SGBV. The participants also shared the challenges they face and how they resolve them to achieve results with specific reference to their engagement on this issue during the COVID-19 pandemic.

An outcome from the event was the compilation of stories and testimonies of survivors from CSOs and media partners leading on SGBV advocacy. Infographics with key SGBV data were also produced to enhance the advocacy efforts.

The event enhanced the visibility of the important roles and responsibilities of CSOs as agents of change. A key outcome was the recommendation of follow-on actions required by stakeholders across several sectors including CSOs, the media and government agencies.

The event was held virtually, which enabled wide engagement. It was streamed live on the [Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria](#)

“For survivors of SGBV to get justice, the culture of silence must be dealt with.”

Bukola Afeni, reporter, Newsday Online

“We have come up with innovations to address and eliminate the plight of children during the pandemic lockdown. Some include a robust synergy between CSOs, the media, security operatives, women groups, traditional and religious leaders.”

Mainasara Umar, Child Protection Network, Sokoto

Media coverage:

[‘How Covid-19 lockdown fuelled gender-based violence — CSOs’](#), Premium Times Nigeria, 14 December 2020

[‘Championing Advocacy against Sexual and Gender-based Violence’](#), This Day, 17 December 2020

[‘Make determined effort to end gender-based violence, CSOs tell FG’](#), The Cable, 10 December 2020

[‘CSOs seek religious, traditional support for sexual violence survivors’](#), Metro, 9 December 2020

[‘CSOs advocate religious, traditional support systems for SGBV survivors’](#), News Diary Online, 9 December 2020



Advocacy materials produced by CSO partners with ACT support. Source: ACT

and reported on by several radio stations, newspapers, and online platforms. Many of these reports captured how ACT-supported CSO and media partners were on the frontline and shared stories of resilience and progress in their advocacy work on SGBV.

Over 60 representatives participated in the event, including six CSO partners, the Mirabel Centre (Sexual Assault Referral Centre in Lagos), two media organisations (Arewa Radio and News online), and the Nigerian Bar Association (FCT Branch).

The ACT Programme is currently reviewing the stories shared at the event with a view to supporting the CSOs and media partners to turn them into knowledge products for continued advocacy.

MANAGING CONFLICT IN NIGERIA (MCN)

Quiz competition on sexual and gender-based violence for secondary schools

The Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme supported the Humanitarian Innovation Foundation (HIF) to organise a quiz competition on SGBV. This was part of the public awareness and sensitization campaign among students at secondary schools who are among the most vulnerable population for SGBV.

The quiz competition featured 48 students and 32 teachers from 16 schools in Maiduguri, Damaturu, and Yola. The competition took place from 25th November to 10th December with four rounds of quizzes. This enabled the schools to have adequate time for meaningful participation. The quiz competition tested the knowledge of the students on sexual offences, how to prevent it, and the required action when it occurs. It also incited the students to research GBV and SGBV, and create awareness among the teams and the schools.

The winning school was the Federal Government Girls College in Yola and prizes were awarded to the top three schools in the competition at the closing ceremony.

During the quiz competition, the students also lent their voices to create awareness on the ills of GBV through video and pictures, which were then disseminated on the HIF's social media channels [here](#). Watch the 'Students Speak' video produced by HIF with MCN support [here](#).

“We should create awareness. Any gender violence case should be taken seriously.”

Student

Promoting the adoption of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act

In Adamawa state, the MCN Programme supported a rally of civil society groups led by the Humanitarian Innovation Foundation (HIF). The rally was held on the 3rd December and aimed to sensitise the members of the State House of Assembly on the 16 Days of Activism on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Members of the House of Assembly, led by the Speaker of the House, Honourable Aminu Iya Abbas, were specially dressed in orange face caps in solidarity.

The speaker promised to commence legislative processes for the passage of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAAP) Act and invited the HIF team to the public readings of the bill, which commenced in the first week of December. The bill has currently passed its first and second readings. The HIF team attended both readings at the State House of Assembly.

“The matter of SGBV is a very serious issue that plagues our community. As your elected representatives, we shall treat it with all seriousness. Seeing the youth lead this campaign is admirable and one which we have listened and will take action on.”

Hon. Aminu Iya Abbas, Speaker, Adamawa State House of Assembly

In Yobe state, the MCN Programme supported FIDA and other partners to organise a capacity building workshop for members of the State House of Assembly on the domestication of the VAPP. Following the sensitization, the MCN Programme had also earlier supported the State House of Assembly to organise a public hearing on the VAPP Bill. After the public hearing, the legislature adopted the Bill for second hearing.



Winners of the quiz competition from the Federal Government Girls College in Yola. Source: Humanitarian Innovation Foundation



CSOs hits the streets to raise awareness of 16 Days of Activism and advocate for the passage of VAAP Act. Source: Humanitarian Innovation Foundation



The Speaker of the Adamawa State House of Assembly announces support for the VAAP Act. Source: Humanitarian Innovation Foundation

Protocol for the investigation and prosecution of cases of sexual and gender-based violence

The Yobe State Government has formally adopted the Standard Operating Procedures for the investigation and prosecution of sexual offences. The public presentation of the protocol held on 25th November 2020 as part of the activities to commemorate the 2020 16 Days of Activism on ending sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Speaking at the event, the Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice of the State Alhaji Sale Samanja commended the MCN Programme for supporting the state to develop the protocol and for also training investigators and prosecutors in the state on effective investigation and prosecution of SGBV cases. Yobe is the first state in the country to have developed the protocol.

“The protocol is the first of its kind in Nigeria and a great resource for addressing SGBV. We have started sharing experiences with some neighbouring states who are interested in replicating the initiative.”

Hon. Sale Samanja, Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Yobe State

While speaking as a panelist at the National SARC Network meeting held in Abuja on 9-10 December 2020, the Attorney General reported that Yobe has started sharing experiences with three states that have engaged with Yobe to replicate the protocol. The event was co-organised by ROLAC and MCN Programmes.

Webinars to commemorate the 16 Days of Activism Campaign

Access to justice for survivors of SGBV

On 2nd December, the MCN Programme provided support for stakeholders in Yobe State to convene a webinar on access to justice for survivors of SGBV. The virtual dialogue focused on challenges of access to justice for survivors of SGBV and their families. The event explored ways of achieving effective justice delivery for survivors. Panelists included the Chief Registrar of Sharia Court, the Police Public Relations Officer, the Director of Public Prosecution in Ministry of Justice, the Director of Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, and the State Chairperson of International Federation of Women Lawyers.

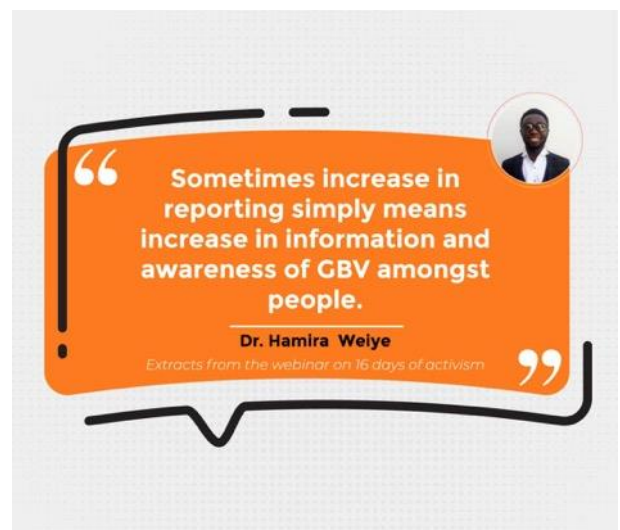
‘Awareness and Accountability’ - Action required to address SGBV

On 7th December 2020, the Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF) organised a webinar on the action required to address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Speakers included Dr. Hamira Welye (Programme Analyst with the UNFPA), Kiki Mordi (journalist and filmmaker, known for the award-winning BBC Africa Eye documentary on “Sex for Grades”), Farida Adamu (Senior Programme Manager at the Election Network and co-founder of ResearchNg), Asmau Leo (Executive Director for the Center for Nonviolence and Gender Advocacy in Nigeria), and Joy Aderele (Programme Director, ENGINE II programme on gender transformation implemented by Mercy Corp).

The speakers provided suggestions for actions that can be taken to hold governing bodies accountable for ensuring GBV ends. Several important questions were raised by the participants on actions that would be fruitful in the bid to end GBV and SGBV in Nigeria and the panelists provided insights based on their experience on which actions would yield the most results.

Protection of survivors and access to justice

On 8th December 2020, the MCN Programme collaborated with the Peace Ambassadors Centre for Humanitarian Aid and Empowerment to organise a webinar on the ‘protection of survivors and access to justice’. Speakers included Hajija Zuwaira Gambo (Honourable Commissioner of Borno State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development), Dr. Zainab Chellube, (Community Engagement Manager, PACHAE); Mary Stephen (Head of Gender Desk, Borno State Police Command), and Abba Mallam Umate (Chairman, Nigerian Bar Association, Borno state chapter). Speakers identified key challenges affecting access to justice, such as delays in reporting of SGBV incidences, legal technicalities, unaffordable costs of legal services, and inadequate facilities for investigators and facilitators. Over 50 participants attended the online event from various CSO groups, as well as gender and human rights activists.



Social media content to promote the ‘Awareness and Accountability’ webinar. Source: Humanitarian Innovation Foundation

‘United to end gender-based violence’: social media rally to commemorate 16 Days of Activism

In Adamawa State, the Humanitarian Innovation Foundation (HIF) organised a social media rally to raise awareness on social media platforms during the #16DaysofActivism #OrangeNorth campaigns. Social media influencers were tasked with promoting the campaign on their platforms. An influencer was selected for each major platform: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The influencers posted daily messages on SGBV awareness and activities marking the 16 Days of Activism. The “Orange the World” gift boxes were created to boost awareness of the campaign. The boxes included IEC materials and branded caps and shirts with messages on the theme of the 2020 16 Days of Activism.



Social media influencers campaign for the 16 Days of Activism
Source: Humanitarian Innovation Foundation

Training for social media influencers on sexual and gender-based violence

The MCN Programme organised a capacity building programme for social media influencers. The workshop, held on 2nd December, focused on using social media to create awareness about the importance of the 16 Days of Activism campaign and to stimulate conversation around sexual and gender-based violence. The young influencers were trained on the factors accounting for the rising cases of SGBV, ways to identify suspected online predators, warning signs of online sexual offences, and mechanisms for tracking, monitoring, and reporting of suspected cases of violence in social media platforms and networks.



Social media content to promote the 16 Days of Activism Campaign. Source: Humanitarian Innovation Foundation

Traditional council holds rally to raise awareness on sexual and gender-based violence

In collaboration with the Ministry of Women Affairs, FIDA and other relevant stakeholders in the MCN supported SARC Steering Committee, the Bade Emirate Council organised a one-day rally to raise awareness of communities on increasing cases of SGBV in the traditional council. The rally, held on 5th December 2020 in Bade Yobe State, was attended by Traditional Rulers from districts and villages in the Bade Emirate Council. The Emir used the opportunity of the Rally to launch a foundation that will work with other stakeholders to continue sensitizing the public on sexual and gender-based violence in Bade and Jakusko local government areas (LGAs).



16 Days of Activism Rally. Source: HerStoryOurStory

RULE OF LAW AND ANTI-CORRUPTION (ROLAC)

Launch of Awyetu SARC

The Sexual Assault Referral Centre for the FCT, known as the Awyetu SARC, was commissioned on November 25 at the Bwari General Hospital. The SARC is the first in the nation's capital city, and the 29th in the country. The SARC was formally commissioned by the FCT Minister of State; with traditional rulers, CSOs; representatives of security agencies, EU Delegation representatives and the Australian High Commissioner to Nigeria in attendance. The SARC will serve as a one stop centre where survivors of sexual assault in FCT can receive immediate emergency medical treatment, counselling and follow up support services free of charge. In addition, medical staff of the SARC who have been trained in forensic medical examination and documentation, will also provide medical reports to the police to support the prosecution of rape cases in court. Since its commissioning, the SARC has commenced the provision of services to survivors. The Awyetu SARC was established with funding from the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) Programme.



Dr Osayande Osagie (Chief Medical Director, Bwari General Hospital) at the launch of the Awyetu SARC. Source: RoLAC

Media coverage:

[15,800 Sexual Assault Victims Assisted In Nigeria In One Year – ROLAC](#), The Daily Trust, 27 Nov 2020

SARC Network Conference

The 6th Conference of Sexual Assault Referral Centres' (SARCs) Network held from 9-10 December 2020 with support from the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) Programme.

Established in 2016, the network aims to promote best practice in the establishment and operation of SARCs, to address an increase in sexual and gender-based violence in Nigeria.

The network facilitates an exchange of ideas, shares lessons learned, and promotes dialogue among SARCs, government institutions, and other stakeholders to strengthen support services provided to survivors of sexual violence.

The conference was attended by civil society and government representatives, including the Vice President of Nigeria: Professor Yemi Osinbajo (SAN) GCON; the Wives of the Governors of Ekiti, Kebbi and Ondo states; and Commissioners of the Ministries of Women Affairs, Justice and Health.



Panelists at the 2020 SARC Network Conference. Source: RoLAC

The highlight of the conference was the panel sessions on legislating, investigating and prosecuting sexual crimes – challenges and opportunities, and a visit to the new Awyetu SARC by the First Lady of Ondo State, Her Excellency Arabinrin Betty-Anyanwu Akeredolu.

“The SARCs will go a long way in curbing the menace of rape...”

Vice President of Nigeria: Professor Yemi Osinbajo (SAN) GCON



Tour of the new Awyetu SARC (left: First Lady of Ondo State, Her Excellency Arabinrin Betty-Anyanwu Akeredolu; right: Chief Medical Director, Bwari General Hospital, Dr Osayande Osagie). Source: Press Team, Office of the First Lady of Ondo State

“We cannot afford to fold our hands and watch our children being defiled and murdered, in some cases. We have to make sure we galvanise action in our respective states so that we can end the violence against women.”

The First Lady of Ondo State, Her Excellency Betty Akeredolu

Media coverage:

[‘How to end Gender-Based Violence — Osinbajo, RoLAC, Stakeholders’](#), The Eagle Online, 12 December 2020

[‘SARCs Conference: Osinbajo, RoLAC Call For Effective Justice System To End Gender Based Violence’](#), The Sentinel, 10 December 2020

[‘Gender-Based Violence: Osinbajo, Others Want Effective Justice System’](#), The Daily Trust, 12 Dec 2020

Support for Anambra state campaign on the elimination of SGBV

The RoLAC Programme and Christian Aid supported the Child Protection Network (CPN), the Anambra State Child's Rights Implementation Committee (ASCRI), and the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Implementation Committee (VAPP), in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, to carry out state-wide campaign activities on elimination of SGBV.

The objectives were to secure commitments to accelerate the implementation of actions to prevent and end violence against women, and to mobilise the citizens to be active participants in the fight to eradicate and commit to zero tolerance of SGBV.

The activities included:

- Targeted advocacy visits to key stakeholders – police, traditional and religious leaders Town Union heads, etc., to garner commitments
- Orange the State Road Show with the Association of Town Unions (Youth wing) and civil society actors
- Symposium on the *16 Facts of Gender Based Violence*
- Five media engagements and panel discussions on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and girls' rights and justice system in the state

Production and dissemination on social media of themed video content

To commemorate the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence 2020, the #HerStoryOurStoryNG campaign (initiated in 2018 to campaign against SGBV with RoLAC support) focused on producing and disseminating video content for a social media audience. The aim was to highlight some of the systemic, attitudinal and behavioural factors that sustain an ineffective response to sexual and gender based violence; as well as raise awareness about what government and civil society can do differently to bring about positive change.

All the videos, as well as themed infographics disseminated online, gained the campaign its highest direct engagement with a youth (age 15-40) demographic on social media and consequently our highest impact in terms of reach, to date.

The videos produced and disseminated include:

#RapeisNoJoke - Influencing popular culture for change: RoLAC brought together a community of 15 comedians who had accepted their individual culpability for perpetuating narratives that allow rape culture to persist, and were willing to lead by example, demonstrating their commitment to cease to publish content that compromises the fight against SGBV. As a first show of commitment the comedians jointly put together a combination of skits and public service announcement video to disseminate their message to their respective audiences. The skits and the videos generated over 3.5 million views and over 10,000 comments on social media – the largest number of views and comments and our most impactful engagement on social media since the HerStoryOurStoryNG campaign was initiated in 2018. Watch [here](#)

Education about the services that a SARC provides and call for more states to establish, fund and replicate SARCs in Nigeria: This video was disseminated on social media and was accompanied by a [contact directory](#) of the 29 existing SARCs in Nigeria. Watch [here](#)

Improving service delivery for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence: This video highlighted the key service delivery channels that are critical for ensuring the best justice outcomes and care for SGBV survivors. Watch [here](#)

EU delegation statement of commitment to the fight against SGBV in Nigeria: The video featured EU Ambassadors in Nigeria making commitments and support to the fight against SGBV. Watch [here](#)

Watch all the videos on the [#HerStoryOurStoryNG website](#).



Comedians who participated in the 'Rape is not a Joke' video. Source: #HerStoryOurStoryNG

'I am so glad this video was made... Together we can stand up and speak against sexual violence.'

@mydigitallawyer (comment on Instagram)

CONCLUSION

As the pioneers in the establishment of SARCs across the country, the British Council - through the three European-Union funded programmes: ACT, MCN and RoLAC - have increased public awareness on sexual and gender-based violence and the need for action to combat the issue/challenge. The work has also galvanised the support of state and non-state actors.

There is a now an opportunity to work with stakeholders to encourage multi-agency and multi-sector dialogue towards closing the gap in the delivery of sexual and gender-based violence response services in Nigeria.



Secondary school student at quiz competition. Source: Humanitarian Innovation Foundation



Social media advocacy led by CSOs. Source: Humanitarian Innovation Foundation