



Civil Society Efforts

in Transparency, Accountability
and Good Governance in Nigeria

JOINBODI COHORT

Supported by John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur
Foundation's Expedited Grantmaking (X-Grants) Program



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Executive Summary



I. Introduction

In Nigeria, civil society that began to flourish from the mid-1980s served to quicken the exit of the military in government and the subsequent inauguration of civil rule in May 1999. This led to an increase in the visibility of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the country. Its visibility in the democratic process notwithstanding, Nigeria's dynamic and expansive civil society has inspired a rather disruptive report on 'fake society' or 'briefcase' NGOs. The closing, shrinking, and shifting space of civil society in Nigeria is also evidenced in restrictive legislative proposals, such as the Digital Rights and Online Freedom Bill or 'Hate Speech Bill' (2017), the Protection from Internet Falsehoods, Manipulations and Other Related Matters Bill or 'Social Media Bill' (2019), the Civil Society Regulatory Commission Bill or

This research also considered the key reforms undertaken by the Nigerian government with open government as a departing point and extended to anti-corruption, asset recovery, electoral integrity, whistleblowing, fiscal transparency, extractive transparency, judicial transparency, and freedom of information.

'NGO Bill' (2019), the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020 (CAMA 2020), and the Control of Infectious Diseases Act (2020).

This research also considered the key reforms undertaken by the Nigerian government with open

government as a departing point and extended to anti-corruption, asset recovery, electoral integrity, whistleblowing, fiscal transparency, extractive transparency, judicial transparency, and freedom of information. Other key reforms are open contracting and procurement, income and asset disclosure, as well as gender equality and social inclusion. This research aims to produce a marker for the new Nigerian government in advancing the issues of transparency, accountability, and good governance.

II. Key Findings

The fieldwork instruments were designed to address the issues of CSOs and behavioral change in government, CSOs and information exchange, access to governmental information, governmental domains and transparency, civil society and policy advocacy, CSOs' support for accountability in government, alternative accountability programs, public institutions and future impacts, civil society and good governance, as well as identifiable gaps and challenges of CSOs' advocacy. The key findings are highlighted below.

1. There are behavioral changes amongst government officials as a result of CSOs' interventions, such as public interest litigations, policy advisories, and influential engagement. A most recent behavioral change was found in a serving minister's apology and expressed commitment toward addressing gender-based violence and sextortion.

2. CSOs played a unique role in the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act (2011), which is redefining the rules of engagement in access to information, and the Nigerian Federal Government would oblige information requests if it does not concern sensitive fiscal matters and national security. Therefore, context matters.

3. Empowering citizens with government information will position them to serve as watchdogs to government officials. Some citizens operate in civil society, the media space, the knowledge space (e.g., researchers), and the opinion formation space (e.g., columnists and writers). In sum, every citizen should have access to government information.

The purpose of civil society engagement is to promote accountability, that is, enabling the right of citizens to demand accountability.

4. The domains of government that have benefitted from CSOs' interventions in transparency matters include the federal government (particularly the executive and judicial branches). There is no transparency in the legislative branch of government and no accountability in the state and local governments. Sadly, the local government is under the direct control of their state governors.

5. Through CSOs' advocacy, public

officers are compelled to release more tangible information. Policy advocacy by CSOs led to the adoption of the Bureau of Public Procurement as part of the legal framework established by the subnational governments.

6. The purpose of civil society engagement is accountability, that is, to raise voices as active citizens for the promotion of accountability. CSOs have supported several public institutions to attain accountability, such as standard electoral processes by the Independent National Electoral Commission and improved operations of the Police, the Judiciary, and the Bureau of Public Procurement.

7. Regarding alternative accountability programs, CSOs have consistently engaged the government in possible reductions in the cost of governance, such as advocacy for unicameral legislature, via alteration of the fundamental laws of the land.

8. HEDA Resource Centre's legal action against the Attorney General and Minister of Justice of the Federation at the ECOWAS Court signposts public institutions and future impacts. The purpose was to address the Attorney General's failure to hold accountable the multinational oil corporations flaring gas in the oil-producing Niger Delta Area.

9. Civil society in Nigeria has contributed immensely to technology-driven governance. For

example, BudgIT Foundation has succeeded in pushing governments to bring budget operations to some measure of digitalization and engagement in social media.

10. The challenges highlighted by the interviewed stakeholders include financial and human resources, time lag on some cases in court, women inclusion in governance, constituency projects, and local government autonomy.

11. The risks involved in CSOs' efforts were also highlighted by the stakeholders and include eroding civil liberties, impunity in public services (such as the rigging of the electoral process), attacks (physical, legal, and media), threats to organizations' leadership, work and existence, as well as the lives of staff.

III. Key Recommendations

In the light of the earlier evidence, we recommend the following:

A. General

1. Heighten OGP Implementation: CSOs should continue to leverage existing international commitments, such as the Open Government Partnership (OGP), a major co-creation tool for engaging governments and other non-state actors toward realizing effective governance in Nigeria.

2. Combat Corruption through Advocacy for Financial Intelligence: Civil society energies should be directed at advocacy

for the full implementation of the Nigerian Financial Intelligence's guidelines, including support for the institutionalization of financial autonomy in the local governments. Also, action research is needed for the achievement of SDGs 16, Target 5, 'substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms,' by all tiers of the Nigerian government. This will enable CSOs to hold elected officials accountable to promote a peaceful and inclusive Nigerian society.

3. Sustain Digital Platforms for Effective Governance: CSOs should work toward improving online platforms for issue reporting, data collection, and project review. While CSOs have built civic technology tools, efforts must be geared towards sustaining their impact beyond the Joinbodi program. The adoption of artificial intelligence will also strengthen effective governance and the use of technology.

4. Heighten Budgets Transparency and Promote Inclusive Budgeting: The positive transparency practices occurring at the federal level (e.g., publishing budget details) need to be pushed for replication at the subnational and local government levels. In the post-SFTAS environment, all states and local governments should be encouraged to adopt inclusive budgeting. This will entail needs-based community development plans to encourage the judicious use of resources.

5. Debt Transparency and Management: CSOs should continue to reinforce strategies to advocate for public debt transparency. This will help stem the

tide of borrowing away the country's future as increasing indebtedness by national and subnational governments is limiting the country's strength to provide basic social services.

6. Climate Change-related

Advocacy: CSOs should continue to heighten awareness about climate change challenges, advocate the adoption of new climate change resilience approaches, push for the implementation of post-COP 28 agreements, and encourage civic actors' participation in climate change financing processes. This is a new frontier of advocacy that should be embraced by CSOs due to the enormous funding from the global level. Improvements in access to information and transparency in the electoral processes should be replicated in local government elections across the country.

B. Preservation and Scaling Up

1. Perceptively, the scope of interventions by members of the 'Joinbodi Cohort' can be found in pockets of states, whereas a critical mass is needed for scaling up. This would require reaching at least four states in each of the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria, amounting to 24 states of the federation.

2. Engaging more with the states and local governments would help to unearth how around 52% of the Federal Allocation is domiciled. Applied to the branches of government at the state level, there should be more engagement with the executive branch of government.

3. Scaling up and preserving the progress made would hinge on a favorable operational environment for civil society, including support for their actions. The major support would be from development

partners who value and understand the enormity of the work that civil society does and the implications of such work.

4. There is a need for proper coordination and interfacing as a cohort, regular meetings, and group presentations at international fora, such as the cohort's presentation at the OGP meeting held in Estonian.

5. 'Joinbodi Cohort' should coordinate and work together toward knowledge sharing and ensure that organizations and personnel work together.

6. There should be opportunities for engagement with the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly on developing frameworks for needs assessment before budget preparation and formulation, as well as constituency project implementation.

C. Risk Mitigation

1. The identifiable risks can be mitigated by increasing the consciousness of international partners to deploy their diplomatic influence to support the CSOs in dealing with the numerous risks to their work and existence.

2. The valid response to insecurity is to do security assessments during project implementation. There should be legal protection for civil society actors and their rights.

3. Another risk mitigation would be to ensure that the law works for everyone. The internet should be safe for CSOs and actors.

4. There is a need for security measures for CSO activists and personnel who serve on the frontline of propagating transparency, accountability, and good governance.

Chapter 1

Introduction



1.1. Research Rationale and Objectives

Civil society is a concept loosely applied in describing the academia, ethnic militia, labor, mass media, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)¹, and it is ideologically laden with Western liberalism.² Civil society is a space distinct from the state and market, between the private and public spheres, whose individuals and groups voluntarily unite to pursue their interests and values in a collective way.³

Globally, civil society plays unique roles in advancing the rights of all people irrespective of ethnicity, religion, gender, or indigeneity. Civil society actors are advocates for the development and adoption

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of affirmative action programs designed to protect weak and vulnerable groups in society, but their disposition could also be perceived as enemies of policy diffusion, depending on the operational environment.⁴ Civil society conscientiously works for the resolution of contradictions inherent in fundamental laws, thereby addressing governance challenges.

The decade of uncritical use of civil society concept witnessed its synonym with all things ‘virtuous,’ ‘progressive,’ ‘democratic,’ and ‘just.’⁵ This is understandable. “The ‘magical’ claims for civil society as a panacea have lost both their strategic importance and their ideological currency in both.”⁶ Since the late 1980s, however, there has been a resurgence of the concept of civil society amongst public intellectuals. According to the British political philosopher, John Keane, the resurgence stems from seven overlapping concerns, events, or processes.⁷

These include the use of the term by dissidents in Eastern European communist societies arising from the effective crushing of the Prague Spring; the increased awareness and use of computer-mediated communications within network-based movements and organizations; the rising concern with the ecological consequences of unfettered growth; the fall of the Berlin wall and the new hope of a progressive post-communist political order; the rise of neo-liberal economies and concern with the problems of unfettered market capitalism; the disillusionment of post-colonial progress; and the emergence of collapsed states and new uncivil wars. Curiously, the wars are “not fought exclusively between armies for territory but involving civilians targeted for being the wrong ethnicity.”⁸

In their contribution to the conceptual development of civil society, McFaul and Treyger addressed two concerns: identity and functions. The identity of

1. Utbhenin (2012)
2. Ikelegbe (2003)
3. McFaul, & Treyger (2004)
4. Utbhenin (2013)
5. Stubbs (2007)
6. Ibid.
7. Keane (2003)
8. Stubbs, Op cit., 217

civil society actors is important in considering who can be part of it. In general, associations formed to protect human rights, the environment, and various disadvantaged groups have been the focus. These are mainly NGOs, but their legal status should not suffice; openness, respect for diversity, or a shared set of norms should take center stage. The focus on the functions of civil society explains its desirability within the context of democratization, and civil society is a vital ingredient in transitions to and consolidations of democracy.⁹

On his part, Michael Edwards identifies three legitimate theoretical positions of civil society, namely, the associational life, the good society, and the public sphere. The associational model considers civil society as an integral part of society different from the state and

An identifiable source of pressure that led to the exit of the military in government and the subsequent inauguration of civil rule in May 1999 was the extensive mobilization by civil society.

market and formed to advance common interests and facilitate collective action. The good society position is at the level of service rather than self-interest and serves as a breeding ground for attitudes and values, such as cooperation, trust, tolerance, and non-violence. The public sphere infers that civil society is a platform for deliberation, dialogue, and citizenship activism for the pursuit of common interest.¹⁰

In Africa, civil society had served as a landmark for restructuring the continent's political life.¹¹ In Africa's early 1990s, civil society was a platform for advocacy, protest, and resistance against excesses and abuse of state power. Civil society began to flourish in Nigeria with the increasing decline in government legitimacy from the mid-1980s. Thus, civil society space was partly inspired by their remarkable vibrancy in response to the distress of despotism and their advocacy for constitutionalism.¹² An identifiable source of pressure that led to the exit of the military in government and the subsequent inauguration of civil rule in May 1999 was the extensive mobilization by civil society.¹³

Further to Nigeria's democratization process, which commenced in May 1999, civil society became a platform for ethnic militancy against marginalization, with alternative hierarchies based on ethnicity, religion, or other factional identities.¹⁴ This is an apparent reference to the role of civil society in conflict analysis and, by extension, knowledge production.¹⁵ Also, the changing phases and motives of civil society in Nigeria had inspired policy and academic debates with a focus on how civil society could reasonably serve as a socio-political platform for achieving inter-group cum inter-ethnic harmony in the country.¹⁶

The visibility of civil society in Nigeria's democratization process has engendered studies on civil society and elections,¹⁷ and broadly, civil society and democratic tenets.¹⁸ Nigeria's dynamic and expansive civil society has also

9. McFaul, & Treyger
10. Edwards (2004)
11. Ikelegbe, Op cit.
12. PEFS (2004)
13. Orji, & Ikelegbe (2014)
14. Crisis Group (2006)
15. Uthman (2012)

inspired a rather disruptive report on ‘fake society,’ alluding to the ‘briefcase’ NGOs, which are “unregistered entities that lack any discernible track record and frequently make only one or two appearances (such as a press conference or a public protest) before evaporating.”¹⁹

Available literature notwithstanding, empirical studies on the efforts of civil society in advancing transparency, accountability, and good governance, broadly, are lacking. A unique opportunity for filling this gap in policy and practice is the ‘Joinbodi Cohort,’ a group of civil society organizations (CSOs) and media organizations under the ON Nigeria 2.0 Project, with funding from the John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Expedited Grantmaking (X-Grants) Program.

so far in the broad fields of transparency, accountability, and good governance; determine the applicable efforts for the preservation and improvement of the progress; and identify the gaps left in advocacy and agitation in the relevant project areas. BudgIT Foundation and other members of the Joinbodi Cohort’s commitment toward advancing transparency, accountability, and good governance in Nigeria will be served by this research.

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This research seeks to produce a marker for the new Nigerian government in advancing the issues of transparency, accountability, and good governance. The specific objectives are to ascertain the Nigerian civil society’s achievements

16. Imobighe (2003)
17. Oji, & Ikeligbo, Op cit.
18. Oki, & Alufu-Musa (2021)
19. Page (2021)



1.2. Conceptual Illumination

The major concepts underpinning this research are transparency, accountability, and good governance. These concepts are illuminated for application to the core areas of intervention by the 'Joinbodi Cohort.'

Transparency

Transparency is commonly defined as either "lifting the veil of secrecy"²⁰ or "the ability to look clearly through the windows of an institution."²¹ Transparency hinges on the idea that "the more closely we are watched, the better we behave."²² On a broader note, government transparency pertains to an institutional relation between an actor and a forum.²³ In demonstrating the good working

From Meijer's analysis, transparency can be explained as an institutional relation, information exchange, as well as in terms of workings and performance.

of an institution, the government easily opens up the working procedures not immediately visible to those not directly involved.²⁴ There are three identifiable elements of transparency, namely, an observer, something available to be observed, and a means or method for observation.²⁵ From Meijer's²⁶ analysis, the three elements build on the 'principal-agent theory' (i.e., a principal requires information about the agent to confirm whether the

agent is adhering to the contract or not).²⁷ From Meijer's²⁸ analysis, transparency can be explained as an institutional relation, information exchange, as well as in terms of workings and performance.

As an institutional relation, one actor (being the object of transparency) can be monitored, while the other actor (being the subject of transparency) monitors the first actor. The relation between the two actors can be analyzed in terms of rules, interactions, power, and so on. In application, the government as the object of transparency, is monitored by citizens and citizens in groups, such as professional stakeholders and interest groups. The institutional relation is helpful in determining civil society interventions that are leading to changes that may be considered as appropriate behavior. It will also serve in considering the external actors that should have access to government information.

Second, transparency as information exchange ensures the availability of information to the monitoring actor. This will make visible another actor's internal workings or performance. Decisions, actions, and relevant circumstances are documented in a certain way, and these documents form the basis for a subsequent reconstruction of these decisions, actions, and relevant circumstances. A quick reference to this is freedom of information access. The Nigerian Freedom of Information (Fol) Act (2011) is a reflection of civil society's efforts in ensuring the disclosure of official information of public interest, even when unsolicited.

20. Davis (1998), 21
21. Den Boer (1998), 105
22. Prat (2006)
23. Bovens (2010)
24. Mosser (2001)
25. Oliver (2004)
26. Meijer (2013)
27. Prat, Op cit.
28. Meijer, Op cit.

However, not much has been achieved in the implementation of the FoI Act 2011 because of confidentiality in government, information access denial, ignorance, exclusion, and executive immunity. A plausible question is the extent to which efforts by civil society have led to a redefinition of information exchange in terms of speed, accessibility, and ease of use, amongst others.

The third explanation of transparency (i.e., workings and performance) is that it pertains to aspects of a governmental organization, such as actions, decisions, relevant circumstances, responsibilities, etc. Thus, transparency refers to what governmental organizations achieve in terms of inputs, outputs, and outcomes (i.e., performance) and how they achieve those results in terms of transformation processes (i.e., the workings of

Public programs are generally difficult to evaluate, and the task of evaluation is particularly complex in the case of intergovernmental programs.

government). Inputs are categorized as men, money, and materials from government and tiers of government. Outputs are the immediate results (or 'deliverables') of the program. The outcomes (or 'impact') refer to the lasting changes caused by a specific action (or series of actions).

This explanation is particularly useful in conveying program implementation to the public, constituting several aspects of

program monitoring and evaluation, thereby improving understanding of how programs work in practice, including identifying problems and mistakes. However, public programs are generally difficult to evaluate, and the task of evaluation is particularly complex in the case of intergovernmental programs.²⁹ In application, it is important to unearth the change in the domains of government activity that have become transparent as a result of the efforts of civil society in Nigeria.

Also, existing literature highlights a set of practitioner's points relevant to this research.³⁰ The first point is that there is no cure-all in government transparency, and it does not always have positive outcomes. Therefore, CSOs can intervene to scale up for more positive outcomes. The second point pertains to the effectiveness of transparency in increasing participation, improving financial management, and reducing corruption.

However, transparency has been found to be less effective at engendering trust in and legitimacy of government. In fact, public trust is dependent more on the general awareness of transparency as a right (i.e., latent transparency).³¹ Finally, government transparency works under some conditions but not under others. In particular, this research treats fiscal transparency, extractive transparency, judicial transparency, and freedom of information access as core areas of intervention by the "Joinbodi Cohort."

29. Rochelleau (1980)
30. Porumbescu, & Grimmekhujsen (2017)

Accountability

Accountability is both a virtue and a mechanism.³² It is as essential for development efforts, as ‘vital and urgent’ for any society,³³ and the relationship between the state and society at large in providing—and demanding—better governance.³⁴ Essentially, accountability is ‘answerability,’ and it is either reactive or proactive. Accountability is reactive when there are sanctions with ‘teeth,’ and proactive when the focus is less on control and more on transforming relationships between decision-makers and the populations.³⁵

The departing point for the concept of accountability is that “when decision-making power is transferred from a principal (e.g., the citizens) to an agent (e.g., government), there must be a

This research finds relevance in four dimensions of accountability that public institutions must meet, and they include legal and honest accountability, process accountability, program accountability, and policy accountability.

mechanism in place for holding the agent to account for their decisions and if necessary for imposing sanctions, ultimately by removing the agent from power.”³⁶

The ‘principal-agent’ conception draws on John Locke’s theory of the superiority of representational democracy and hinges on the

notion that accountability is only possible when the governed are separated from the governors.³⁷ It is a long political science tradition, but there is also a financial accounting tradition, namely, financial prudence and accounting must align with regulations and instructions.³⁸ Yet, the principle of delegating some authority, evaluating performance, and imposing sanctions is essentially the same in both traditions.³⁹

This research finds relevance in four dimensions of accountability that public institutions must meet, and they include legal and honest accountability, process accountability, program accountability, and policy accountability.⁴⁰ Legal and honest accountability pertains to the compliance of public institutions with applicable legal provisions and their honest behavior in the work they do. Legal accountability calls for law enforcement, while honest accountability requires healthy organizational practices. In application, the plausible question for this research is to assess the effectiveness of civil society in advocating for compliance with legal and policy frameworks by public institutions.

This research will also address the attainment of honest behavior amongst state actors as a result of the efforts of civil society. Process accountability deals with the procedures used in task performance, and these are good enough in terms of the adequacy of accounting information systems, management information systems, and administrative procedures. This research examines the attainment of

31. Gimmelkhuysen, Piotrowski, & Van Ryzin (2020)
32. Bovens, Op cit.
33. OECD (1993)
34. OECD (2013)
35. Buse, Sidibe, & Whyms (2006)
36. Lindberg (2009), 1
37. Locke (1690/1990); Grant, & Keohane (2005)
38. See Normanton (1966); Barton (2006)
39. Lindberg, Op cit.
40. International Conference on Democracy, Accountability and Governance (2017)



accountability in standard operating procedures by public institutions as a result of the efforts of civil society.

Program accountability is associated with the achievement of objectives by public organizations. It also considers alternative programs that may provide optimal results at a minimal cost for the governance. This accountability dimension is applicable in two ways. The first is to investigate civil society's efforts to support public institutions in achieving their objectives. The second is to assess the effectiveness of civil society in supporting public organizations with alternative programs, particularly in the areas of reducing the cost of governance in Nigeria.

The fourth dimension is policy accountability, which relates to public institutions' accountability for the policies adopted. By this,

On its part, the World Bank's notion of governance provides a ready guide for defining the 'quality of government,' including the process by which governments are selected, monitored, and replaced.

public institutions are to be held responsible for the future impacts of established policies. Again, the question is, has civil society worked to convince public institutions to take responsibility for the future impacts of their actions? The concept of accountability is applied to anti-corruption, asset recovery, electoral integrity, and procurement

as core intervention areas by 'Joinbodi Cohort.'

Good Governance

Fukuyama defines governance "as a government's ability to make and enforce rules, and to deliver services, regardless of whether that government is democratic or not,"⁴¹ and "about, or what has traditionally fallen within the domain of public administration, as opposed to politics or public policy."⁴² On its part, the World Bank's notion of governance provides a ready guide for defining the 'quality of government,' including the process by which governments are selected, monitored, and replaced; the capacity of the state to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of citizens and state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions amongst them.⁴³

There are variations of governance with 'often contradictory' meanings. In response, Rhodes' wise counsel is to "never use the word governance without a qualifying adjective."⁴⁴ Rhodes' three waves of governance are 'network governance' (which is directed at neoliberal reforms of the state and their institutional legacy); 'metagovernance' (also called the "governance of government, and governance' is an umbrella concept that is intended to bring 'the state back, yet again"); and 'decentred governance' (which highlights the relevance of beliefs, practices, traditions, and dilemmas in understanding the changing state, and the construction of the problems of the rule).⁴⁵

41. Fukuyama (2013), 350
42. Ibid., 351
43. Holmberg, Rothstein, & Nasirifousi (2009)

There have also been efforts at developing ‘regulatory governance,’ which centers on the needed efficiency and effectiveness of regulatory instruments and approaches. In Senn’s words, “regulation is more narrowly related to the distinct role of the state as a regulator in regulation to societal actors and the mass public.”⁴⁶

The idea of ‘governance by appearance’ was developed by Andrews to describe the award of good governance points to governments on the basis of the promised adoption of certain forms of structures. This followed his study of countries that have recorded better governance indicator scores following governance reforms. Andrews expected positive records from the governance reforms of developing countries. Surprisingly, however, “between 50 and 70 percent of the

In consideration of the ‘governance by appearance’ syndrome, Andrews suggested the ‘action-oriented good governance agenda’ to compel governments to improve functionality.

countries” had gone “backward on scores between 1998 and 2008,” a period of ten years, “even after doing reforms.”⁴⁷

He cited the cases of Cape Verde, Senegal, and Benin. Despite the World Bank-sponsored reforms valued at \$122 million, Cape Verde went down from 0.3 points on the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGIs) scores. After 75 World Bank projects with a public sector

reform component, Senegal’s scores dropped by a quarter of a point. Benin’s 1990s reforms of its Marxist-Leninist-controlled state were supported by the IMF and the World Bank. By 1996, Benin had attained the seventh-best position in Africa on the WGI government effectiveness scores. However, the perception had dropped six years later because the partial privatization had created government-influenced ‘oligopolies,’ and civil servants ‘fired’ in the mid-1990s had already been moved onto contract and returned to the payroll in later years.

In 2001, Benin WGI’s score dropped to -0.48, occupying the 15th place in Africa, and by 2008, the score was -0.51, occupying the 17th place in the continent. In consideration of the ‘governance by appearance’ syndrome, Andrews suggested the ‘action-oriented good governance agenda’ to compel governments to improve functionality. Thus, indicators would only improve when governments are more functional and more capable of delivering the public services needed by the citizens. In view of the variations in governance issues, Andrews also suggested flexibility in indicators and reforms.

Broadly, the concept of ‘good governance’ is relatively unclear because of the Bretton Woods Institutions’ preference to deploy non-offensive terms, ostensibly to avoid any form of antagonism with reluctant developing country governments, in the broad fields of state reform and social or political changes.⁴⁸

Good governance is indicated by

44. Rhodes (2010), 1
45. Ibid.
46. Senn (2013), 1
47. Andrews (2013), 1

the absence of a range of practices that may or may not have linkages with corruption, such as clientelism, cronyism, discrimination, nepotism, patronage, and the ‘capture’ of agencies of administrative regulations by interest groups.⁴⁹ The ‘good governance’ package includes an administration that is demonstrably lean, clean, and efficient; a central bank that operates independently; the existence of rules governing bankruptcy and disclosure of information; and democracy and social safety nets.

These elements are directed at the sustenance of an efficient market, minimizing corruption and ensuring the provision of basic public goods.⁵⁰ Also, the ‘good governance’ that matters for economic development has an ‘essentialist approach,’ with emphasis on the numerous

This research identifies the specific governance sectors that have benefitted, as well as the defective governance sectors that have yet to gain support from civil society. It is applied to anti-corruption, electoral integrity, gender justice, and social inclusion as core areas of the ‘Joinbodi Cohort.’

changes suggested by the good governance agenda that are relevant to economic and political development.⁵¹

Of more relevance to this research is the much latter usage, namely,

‘good enough governance,’ a concept first introduced by Grindle in his paper for the World Bank in 2002, for targeting “fewer, more useful, and more feasible interventions.”⁵² The ‘good enough governance’ concept hinges on the impossibility of tackling all the defects of governance at once (i.e., not all deficits of governance need—or can—be fixed at once).

Yet, institution and capacity development can occur with time. The ‘good enough governance’ considers the peculiar circumstances of a given country, and emphasizes seeking a few important conditions for jumpstarting economic development.⁵³ The ‘good enough governance’ emphasizes the influence of time on institutional and capacity development. It focuses on the achievement of economic and political development through the necessary minimal conditions.

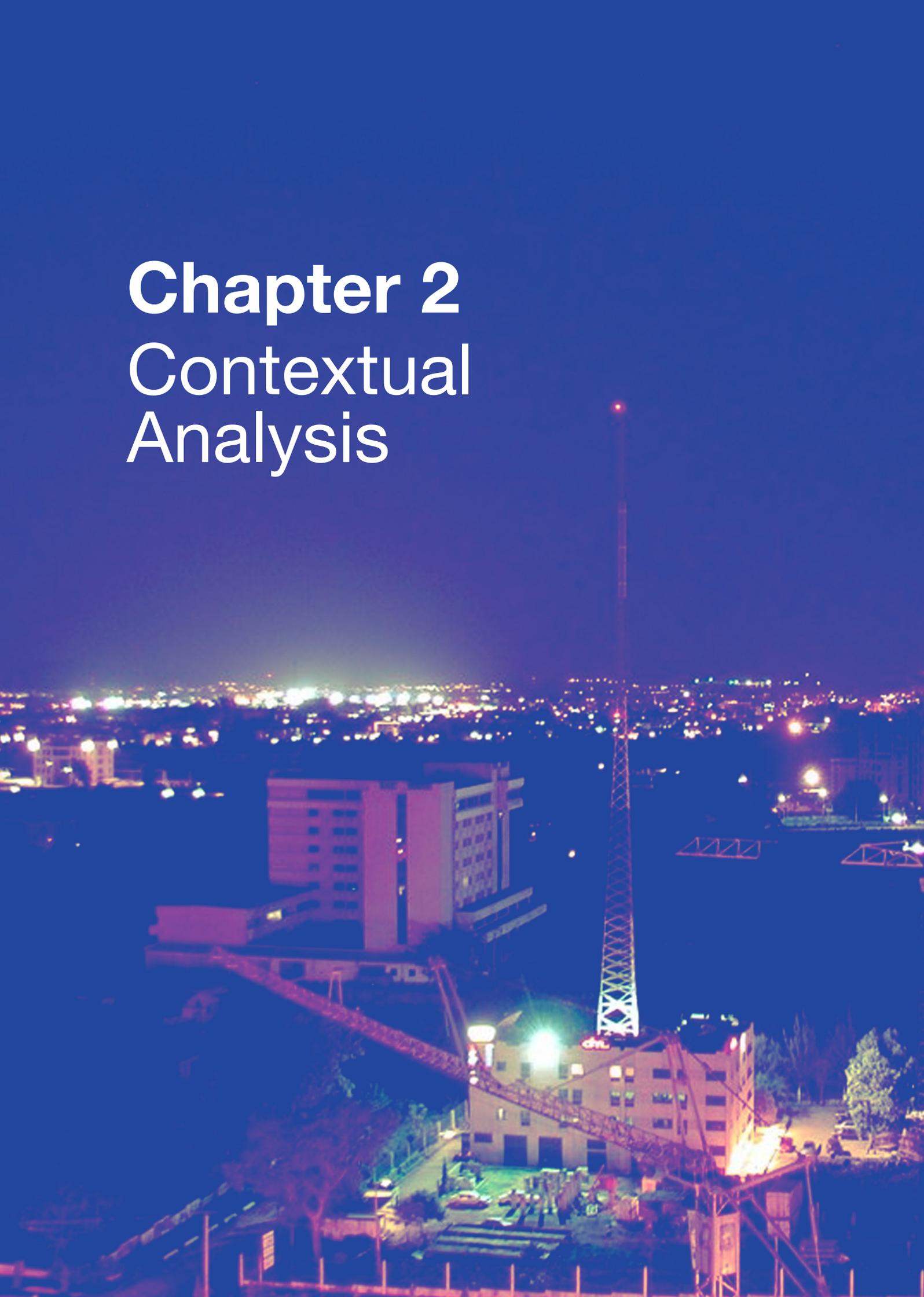
It, therefore, questions the long list of institutional changes and capacity-development initiatives that are considered essential for development to occur. In Grindle’s views, however, good enough governance is short of being a tool to explore what precisely needs to be done in any real-world context.⁵⁴

This research identifies the specific governance sectors that have benefitted, as well as the defective governance sectors that have yet to gain support from civil society. It is applied to anti-corruption, electoral integrity, gender justice, and social inclusion as core areas of the ‘Joinbodi Cohort.’

48. Hardt (2012).
49. Holmberg, et al., Op cit.
50. Lauridsen (2011)
51. Hewitt de Alcántara (1998)
52. Grindle (2007), 571
53. Hardt, Op cit
54. Grindle, Op cit.

Chapter 2

Contextual Analysis



2.1. The Civic Landscape in Nigeria

In this chapter, reference is made to civic space as “the set of legal, policy, institutional, and practical conditions necessary for non-governmental actors to access information, express themselves, associate, organize, and participate in public life.”⁵⁵ The identifiable shapes and forms of civic space include laws to protect freedom of speech, policies to promote CSOs, independent ombuds offices to oversee executive decisions, portals for responding to freedom of information requests, and protection programs for journalists and human rights defenders.⁵⁶

Globally, there has been a shrinking space in which civil society can

First, developing countries are characterized by troubled political contexts, with challenges of vested interests, lack of policymaker demand, and lack of government capacity. In Africa, politicians both reign and rule at the same time.

operate legally and without fear. This ‘closing civic space’ situation is evidenced by limited freedom for civil society actors via legal frameworks and regulations and delegitimization of civil society and social movements using official discourses. Other instruments for closing the civic space are

intimidation, criminalization, surveillance, and other formal and informal restrictions on civil society actors to reduce their effectiveness or legitimacy. The shrinking civic space is a matter of grave concern in developing countries and for international aid donors.⁵⁷

The literature identifies four challenges of research, policy, and practice linkage in developing countries, namely, troubled political contexts, problems of supply, exaggerated external influence, and the emerging civil society, but this research finds usefulness in the first and second challenges. First, developing countries are characterized by troubled political contexts, with challenges of vested interests, lack of policymaker demand, and lack of government capacity. In Africa, politicians both reign and rule at the same time.⁵⁸

For long, the milieu in Africa has been defined by enormous governance and institutional problems, including instability, regime turn-over, authoritarianism, and political contestations.⁵⁹ In particular, authoritarianism is defined by less democratic communities, whereas civil society works for the promotion of democratization.

In Nigeria, CSOs, such as Campaign for Democracy, Centre for Democracy and Development, Civil Liberties Organization, Committee for Defence of Human Rights, and National Democratic Coalition, worked in collaboration with the labor centers and the students’ unions to mobilize against the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential Elections.⁶⁰ These efforts partly culminated in the

55. The OECD Observatory on Civic Space (2020)
56. Ibid.
57. Hossain, & Oosterom (2021)
58. Uthmanin, & Edith (2014)
59. Lockwood (2005)
60. Oke, & Atufe-Musa, Op cit.

eventual exit of the military and the return to civil rule in 1999, but there are worrying signs of a ‘democratic recession’ in Nigeria.⁶¹ Oxfam describes the ‘restrictive practices, attacks on freedom of information expression, attacks on freedom of assembly and attacks on freedom of association’ as elements of the shrinking and closing civic space in the country.⁶² The civic landscape in Nigeria has come increasingly under threat (since 2015) and moved from obstructive to repressed (in 2019). Between 2015 and 2020, the NGO, Spaces for Change, recorded a total of 252 incidents of government crackdown on civic space in Nigeria at the national level, and this trend has been predicted to continue.⁶³

Second, civil society has emerged as a key player, particularly as innovators in service provision, advocates with and for the poor, and builders of capacity. The local

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communities supported by civil society widely recognize their legitimacy and credibility, but often with minimal policy impact. Despite their laudable interventions in the policy space, national governments are wary of civil society’s greater involvement in policy.⁶⁴ It is, therefore, not surprising that there is a proliferation of pro-government NGOs in Nigeria, which Page

has summarily dubbed as ‘fake civil society.’⁶⁵ In Page’s views, Nigeria’s thriving pro-government NGO sector is a niche side hustle for those seeking regime favor, as well as gaining political and media influence.

Ninety percent of the 360 pro-government Nigerian NGOs started operating since former President Muhammadu Buhari took office in 2015. Almost all exist in name only; fewer than seven percent are registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), and 80 percent hold just one or two press conferences before disappearing. The pro-government NGOs perform best in attacking legitimate CSOs and even incite violence against them. “Nigeria’s pro-government NGOs are all opaquely funded, likely through off-budget payments or contracts for consulting services. Political appointees known as special assistants will mobilize surrogates on behalf of their principal, usually a minister or agency head....”⁶⁶

The closing, shrinking, and shifting space of civil society in Nigeria is also evidenced in restrictive legislative proposals, such as the Digital Rights and Online Freedom Bill or ‘Hate Speech Bill’ (2017), the Protection from Internet Falsehoods, Manipulations and Other Related Matters Bill or ‘Social Media Bill’ (2019), and the Civil Society Regulatory Commission Bill or ‘NGO Bill’ (2019). The Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020 (CAMA 2020), in section 839(1)(a), says, “The Commission may by order suspend the trustees of an association and appoint an interim manager or

61. Olasupo (2021)
62. Oxfam (2020)
63. Stakeholder Democracy Network (2021)
64. Young (2005)
65. Page, Op cit.
66. Ibid., 2

managers to manage the affairs of an association where it reasonably believes that there is or has been any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the association.”⁶⁷

Also, the Control of Infectious Diseases Act (2020) reinforces that the COVID-19 pandemic is coalescing with governments in the repeated use of excessive surveillance, discriminatory restrictions on freedoms like movement and assembly, and arbitrary or violent enforcement of such restrictions by police and non-state actors.⁶⁸

2.2. Key Reforms by the Nigerian Government

At the risk of over-simplification, reform means ‘readjustment’ or ‘reorganization,’ but it implies different things to different people. Therefore, reform is generally a loaded word.⁶⁹ The purpose of reform is to enhance the administrative capacity of public institutions in carrying out their responsibilities. Some governments introduce reform to correct the distortions arising from patrimonial systems in the institutional environment, including the incentives framework and the performance of core government institutions.⁷⁰ There are four approaches to public sector reform: the Weberian public administration, the Washington consensus (or structural adjustment), the new public management, and the good governance approach. In particular, the good governance approach

focuses on process.

Its operational base is institutional norms and rules. It is blurred with a major role for civil society, and it is majorly driven by accountability.⁷¹ In this section, we reviewed the key reforms undertaken by the Nigerian government with open government as a departing point. This is extended to anti-corruption, asset recovery, electoral integrity, whistleblowing, fiscal transparency, extractive transparency, judicial transparency, and freedom of information. Other key areas assessed are open contracting and procurement, income and asset disclosure, gender equality and social inclusion, as well as service delivery.

Open Government

Open government refers to the expectation from a government to be transparent, to act with integrity, and to prevent corruption. Open government entails the generation, use and access to information as powerful drivers for modernizing government and holding government to account.⁷² Open government is a global movement to prevent corruption by public officers through transparency and accountability practices in sustaining good governance.

The global movement on open government is currently Open Government Partnership (OGP), which refers to an international multi-stakeholder initiative focusing on improved transparency, accountability, citizen participation and responsiveness to citizens through technology and innovation. The Open Government Declaration

67. Cited in Oxfam, *Op cit.*, 9
68. Repucci, & Slipowitz (2021)
69. Holmes (2007)
70. Poldano (2001)
71. Therikidsen (2008)
72. Santiso (2015)



was initially endorsed by the governments of eight sovereign states (Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, Norway, Philippines, South Africa, United Kingdom, and the United States of America) on the sidelines of a United Nations (UN) General Assembly meeting on September 20, 2011.

President Buhari submitted Nigeria's expression of interest to join the OGP at the London Anti-Corruption Summit on May 11, 2016, and the country effectively joined the OGP as the 70th member state and the 12th African state on June 23, 2016. President Buhari made commitments at the 2016 London Anti-Corruption Summit, which factored into the country's action plan. Thus, Nigeria's first National Action Plan (NAP I) was approved to cover the temporal scope (January 2017 to May 2019), with four thematic areas (fiscal

fiscal transparency, extractive transparency, anti-corruption, access to information, citizens engagement, inclusiveness, and service delivery, spread across 16 commitments. The draft NAP III (2022- 2024) has seven thematic areas: fiscal transparency, extractive transparency, environment and climate change, governance, access to information, improved service delivery, and civic participation, spread across 13 commitments.

The OGP principles mandate subnational governments to create their action plans. Also, the OGP NAP provides a subnational pathway that allows subnational governments and local governments to participate in the process by defining their independent but related commitment areas. By this, each state indicates its readiness to implement the open government reforms by committing to specific areas that fit their particular local contexts.⁷³ As of May 2023, 26 subnational governments in Nigeria had subscribed to the OGP.⁷⁴

It is important to note that the diffusion of OGP to the subnational levels has not been without challenges. At least nine Nigerian federating states have yet to subscribe to the OGP. The differences in the ruling political parties at the subnational level are a consideration. The independence of each component of government within its own sphere is another issue. Also, there are challenges associated with the movement of ideas from one level of government to the next in political systems.⁷⁵

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transparency, anti-corruption, access to information, and citizen engagement) spread across 14 commitments.

Second, NAP II was initially co-created to cover the temporal scope (October 2019 to August 2021) but was revised and extended to August 2022. The Revised NAP II (October 2019 to August 2022) was approved with seven thematic areas of

73. Premium Times (2017)
74. The Authority (2023)
75. Budget (2019)

Anti-corruption

The devastating impact of corruption (i.e., the use and abuse of public power, position, or office for personal advantage or gain) on society has been recognized globally. In response, Target 5 of Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals is to substantially reduce corruption and bribery at all levels. A number of activities are geared toward addressing the size and scope of corruption in a society. Thus, anti-corruption aims to identify the causes of corruption and determine appropriate measures for corruption prevention.

Nigeria has an uncanny reputation for some of the worst scores on corruption and governance.⁷⁶ This is evidenced in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI), which

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has remained consistently low in the last ten years. The country is maintaining its previous score of 24, which is its lowest score on the CPI since 2012. In the 2022 CPI, Nigeria ranked 150 out of 180 countries. Compared to the 2021 CPI, Nigeria moved up four places (i.e., 154 out of 180 countries in 2021), but there was no change in the country's scoring of 24 points between 2021

and 2022. As observed by the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC), the CPI does not assess Nigeria's anti-graft agencies making commendable efforts in the fight against corruption in Nigeria, the political interference notwithstanding.⁷⁷

It suffices to note that anti-corruption was one of the major policy thrusts of former President Muhammadu Buhari's government. In his own words, "If we do not kill corruption in this country, corruption will kill Nigerians."⁷⁸ The fundamental laws of the land are the basis for the development of anti-corruption policy in the country. In sub-section 5 of section 15 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), "the state shall abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of powers." The key reforms in the anti-corruption sector highlighted in this report pertain to beneficial ownership standards, money laundering, and terrorism prevention.

CAMA 2020 defines beneficial ownership (in sections 119 and 120) to enhance transparency and prevent money laundering, terrorism financing, and all forms of illicit financial flows by legal entities with limited liability. Nigeria is the first African country to collect beneficial ownership data in line with Open Ownership's data standard and has committed to making this information public. By implication, federal government agencies can now more easily use a combination of data with other datasets, such as public procurement and extractive industry data, and connect it with beneficial ownership data from across the globe.⁷⁹

76. Roy (2017)
77. Nnochiri (2023)
78. Olaniyi (2015)
79. Pugh, & Iwe (2023)

To avoid Nigeria's expulsion from the Egmont Group, a global body of 154 financial intelligence units, the Eight National Assembly fast-tracked a bill, establishing the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) as an independent entity.⁸⁰ Thus, the NFIU Act (2018) repeals the section of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Act establishing the NFIU, as well as the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act and the Terrorism (Prevention) Act. NFIU is an independent and operationally autonomous body that is 'institutionally domiciled' at the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

NFIU is responsible for receiving, requesting, analyzing, and disseminating financial intelligence reports and information to law enforcement, security, and intelligence agencies, and other relevant authorities to enable

The NFIU is still working to remove Nigeria from the 'grey list' of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an inter-governmental policy-making body for combating money laundering and terrorism financing.

institutions to act on the same. However, the NFIU is still working to remove Nigeria from the 'grey list' of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an inter-governmental policy-making body for combating money laundering and terrorism financing. The 'gray list' places a country under increased monitoring by FATF.⁸¹

The Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Act (2019) took effect on June 20, 2019. In part, the Act provides for identification, tracing, freezing, restraining, recovery, forfeiture, and confiscation of proceeds, property, and other instrumentalities of crime. Its relevance is in the provision to restrain dealings in property or freezing assets that may be recovered, forfeited, or confiscated in respect of offenses and other assistance not contrary to the municipal law of the requesting state.

The Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management, 2022) Act seeks to provide for an effective legal and institutional framework for the recovery and management of the proceeds of crime—a non-conviction-based procedure for the recovery of proceeds of crime—strengthen criminal confiscation procedure, and collaborate among the relevant organization in tracing properties reasonably suspected to be proceeds of unlawful activity. It is envisaged that the Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act (2022) would centralize the safety, security, and management of recovered assets. The amended Clause 74 of the Act says, “the burden of proof shall be on the investigating agencies, and there shall be conviction before the property can be finally seized or forfeited to the Federal Government of Nigeria.”⁸²

The Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition, 2022) Act repeals the Money Laundering Act, provides a comprehensive legal and institutional framework for preventing and prohibiting

80. Ojebor (2018)
81. Shibayan (2023)
82. Baiyewu (2022)

money laundering in Nigeria, and establishes the Special Control Unit under the EFCC. In the main, the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition, 2022) Act seeks to provide for an effective, unified, and comprehensive legal, regulatory, and institutional framework for the detection, prevention, prohibition, prosecution, and punishment of acts of terrorism, terrorism financing, proliferation and financing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in Nigeria.

Asset Recovery

According to former President Muhammadu Buhari, “any person that loots government’s fund will be made to return it to the treasury for utilization in the education, health and security sectors, among others.”⁸³ Since the return to civil rule in May 1999, a number of policies have been

transparency and accountability of the recovered assets.

In response, the Nigerian FEC approved the setting up of an inter-agency Presidential Committee on Asset Recovery (PCAR) to work in partnership with all law enforcement agencies involved in asset recovery. PCAR was set up on the Presidential Advisory Council Against Corruption (PACAC) recommendation to oversee the anti-corruption agenda and coordinate asset recovery processes. PCAR’s mandate includes the creation of an asset register for recovered stolen assets and other government assets.⁸⁴

Drawing on section 5 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), President Muhammadu Buhari signed Executive Order 006 (2018), ‘Preservation of Suspicious Assets Connected with Corruption and Other Related Offences’ on July 5, 2018. This Order restricts dealings in suspicious assets subject to investigation or inquiry bordering on corruption to preserve such assets from dissipation and to deprive alleged criminals of the proceeds of their illicit activities, which can otherwise be employed to allure, pervert, and/or intimidate the investigative and judicial processes. However, Executive Order 006 (2018) has been criticized for being inconsistent with the provision of Sections 6, 36(1) and (5), 43, 44, and section 1 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended).⁸⁵

The lack of central and coordinated management of recovered assets raised issues bordering on transparency and accountability of the recovered assets.

formulated to deal with asset recovery. The Nigerian Federal Government agencies relied on ad-hoc or episodic measures for managing recovered assets. Every agency took custody of the assets it recovered. There was no coordinated and effective mechanism in place for the management of such assets. The lack of central and coordinated management of recovered assets raised issues bordering on

83. Edeh (2018), 3.
84. Onyedika-Ugoeze (2016)
85. Mbiam (2021)

Electoral Integrity

Electoral integrity can be categorized as 'elections with integrity.' This is defined as "any election that is based on the democratic principles of universal suffrage and political equality as reflected in international standards and agreements, and is professional, impartial, and transparent in its preparation and administration throughout the electoral cycle."⁸⁶

With electoral integrity, conflicts are resolved peacefully, with dialogue, debate, and information sharing amongst leaders and the public. Where there is no integrity in elections, leaders and officials would not be accountable to the public, there would be weak confidence in election results, and necessary legitimacy in government

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would be lacking. Thus, issues of inclusiveness, transparency, accountability, as well as the independence of election officials, judges, and the courts are top considerations.⁸⁷

Prior to the 2019 general elections, the Nigerian federal parliament embarked on a series of amendments to the Electoral Act (2010) to achieve a credible

electoral system, but there were rejections by the President. Suggested amendments to the electoral law contained 'landmark provisions' that would fortify the Nigerian electoral system against the rigging machinery of political actors. Such 'landmark provisions' include the legalization of smart card readers, the invalidation of the use of incidence forms, electronic transmission of results from the polling units, serialization of ballot papers for each polling unit, and the announcement of results in the presence of all-party agents.⁸⁸ The amendments were rejected by the then President five times, citing reasons that ranged from the cost of the election, insecurity, drafting errors, and proximity to the date of elections.

The Electoral Amendment Bill was signed into law by President Muhammadu Buhari on Thursday, February 24, 2022. The president had further sought an amendment to the bill by requesting the National Assembly to delete Clause 84(12) of the bill, which says, "No political appointee at any level shall be a voting delegate or be voted for at the Convention or Congress of any political party for the purpose of the nomination of candidates for any election." For "the practical application of section 84(12) of the 2022 Electoral Bill, will, if assented to, by operation of law, subject serving political office holders to inhibitions and restrictions referred to under section 40 and 42 of the 1999 Constitution."⁸⁹

86. Global Commission on Election, Democracy & Security (2012)
87. ACE Electoral Knowledge (undated)
88. Ayankola (2018)
89. Adewole (2022)



The Electoral Amendment Law (2022) introduced safeguards for a more transparent voting and collation process in a political context that was hitherto marred by widespread vote-rigging and voter intimidation. By law, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has been given more decision-making powers and access to early funding for the purpose of dealing with embarrassing technical and logistic lags. The new law also gives legal backing to the use of electronic card readers for voting and electronic methods for transferring results for collation.

For a recap, the card readers, instrumental to electoral transparency and reduction of election rigging incidents, were first introduced in the 2015 general elections but without a legal framework.⁹⁰ In preparation

In preparation for the 2023 general elections, INEC introduced a more advanced technology called the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), which electronically records all accredited voters.

for the 2023 general elections, INEC introduced a more advanced technology called the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), which electronically records all accredited voters. INEC also introduced a Commission Result Viewing Portal, enabling voters to instantly view election results from the Commission's server, ensuring integrity and openness.

It can, therefore, be said that technology has been introduced to save Nigeria's electoral integrity.⁹¹ However, the two major opposition parties (i.e., Labour Party and Peoples' Democratic Party) averred that the electoral umpire, INEC, did not comply with the Electoral Amendment Act (2022), which allows for the electronic transmission of results in real time. The efficacy of the provided digital tools in election management has been interrogated in view of the reported irregularities in the 2023 general elections, but the perceived deliberate subversion of the electoral process by those entrusted with it has also become a consideration.⁹²

Perhaps to address these and allied concerns, the Nigeria Senate proposes to amend the Electoral Amendment Act (2022) before the 2027 general elections. The proposed amendment will allow for diaspora voting (at least for presidential elections), especially those on essential service abroad, such as military, paramilitary, and other security personnel abroad, embassy staff, and other citizens. The proposed amendment will also address the ambiguity evident in section 64 of the Electoral Amendment Act, 2022 and make electronic transmission of results mandatory, including the uploading of polling unit-level results and result sheets used at different levels of result collation from the next general elections in 2027.⁹³

90. Lawal (2022)
91. Edita (.2023)
92. Abowei (2023)
93.. Omogbolagun (2023)

Whistleblowing

The whistleblowing policy was initiated by the Nigerian Federal Executive Council in December 2016. The policy is founded on the fundamental laws of the land. Section 24 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) says every citizen is legally bound to assist law enforcement agencies in exposing crime in society to promote law and order. Also, in section 39 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), there is a guarantee for the freedom of expression, including the freedom to impart knowledge, information, and ideas to people.⁹⁴

The whistleblowing policy is a mechanism through which citizens are able to report criminal acts, such as mismanagement or misappropriation of public funds and assets (including properties and vehicles), financial malpractice

A key component of the whistleblowing policy is the reward offered to credible informants who help expose malfeasance.

or fraud, soliciting/collecting bribes, corruption, diversion of revenues, unapproved payments, splitting of contracts, procurement fraud, kickbacks, and over-invoicing. The policy is also handy in facilitating recoveries of ill-gotten wealth. The policy rewards a whistle-blower who provides information about any financial mismanagement or tip about any stolen funds to the Federal Ministry's (Finance, Budget and National Planning) portal between 2.5 and five percent of

the recovered funds by the federal government.

A key component of the whistleblowing policy is the reward offered to credible informants who help expose malfeasance. Thus, 'patriotic' Nigerians are able to report criminal acts that are inimical to national growth and development. However, reprisals, attacks, and other attendant risks are dangerous in voluntarily providing information about suspicious activities. Second, the whistleblowing policy is only visible at the Nigerian 'center' because there has been no known case of implementation at the subnational or lower levels of government. Third, the oath of secrecy bars public servants from disclosing any information obtained in the course of official business. This hinges on the rule that public servants should be seen but not heard. Fourth, the policy emphasizes information on the financial dealings of public servants, thereby ignoring potential infractions in other sectors of the service.

In sum, the whistleblowing policy lost momentum, particularly because of the lack of protection laws that would guarantee the safety of whistleblowers. Partly in response to the foregoing challenges, the Nigerian FEC scrutinized and approved a bill on whistleblowers' policy to strengthen the fight against corruption and enable protection for whistleblowers who provide information for use by the government.⁹⁵ Prior to this, the Nigerian Senate had, on March 23, 2022, passed the Public Interest Disclosure and Complaints (Enactment) Bill, 2021. The bill's

94. Okafor, & Aio (2018)
95. Angbulu (2022)

intent is to strengthen the Public Complaints Commission and provide a legal and institutional framework for regulating and managing public interest disclosure and protecting the whistle-blower.

Fiscal Transparency

An essential feature of public financial management is fiscal transparency, broadly defined as “openness toward the public at large about government structure and functions, fiscal policy intentions, public sector accounts, and projections.”⁹⁶

Fiscal transparency features in the thematic areas of Nigeria’s OGP National Action Plan (NAP) I (with five commitments), OGP NAP II (with three commitments), and draft NAP III (with five commitments).

The first commitment under fiscal transparency across the three

Nigeria was 26 percent, while the global average was 14 percent. The percentage scores for selected African countries were Sierra Leone (31), Ghana (20), Gambia (09), and Liberia (06). Equatorial Guinea and São Tomé e Príncipe each scored zero.⁹⁸

From the survey, the points of citizens’ participation at the national level include the public consultations during budget formulation and implementation established by the Budget Office and public hearings established by the National Assembly.

The Nigerian Federal Government launched a new financial transparency policy and a web portal on December 19, 2019, to provide the public with greater insight into government expenditures. By this milestone, auditors, government watchdogs, NGOs, and ordinary citizens would promptly assess the government’s investments and public spending.⁹⁹ The Open Treasury Portal would have been a watershed in the country’s public financial management, but there are issues. Report says that the Nigerian Federal Government and its agencies continue to breach its own standards. Financial statements on the country’s spending are not published in an efficient and timely manner. Much has not been achieved with respect to up-to-date publishing of monthly, quarterly, and yearly budget and financial records of the country in the Open Treasury Portal.

The Nigerian Federal Government launched a new financial transparency policy and a web portal on December 19, 2019, to provide the public with greater insight into government expenditures.

NAPs is to ensure more effective citizen participation across the entire budget cycle. The relevance of this commitment draws on established gains of citizens’ inputs as stakeholders in the budgetary process, particularly in Brazil, India, South Africa, Uganda, and the USA. In the main, there would be efficient and effective service delivery.⁹⁷

The 2021 Open Budget Survey by International Budget Partnership shows that public participation in

96. Kopits, & Craig (1998), 1
97. Oweffighe (2021)
98. Open Budget Survey 2021
99. Holzman, & Mugata (2021)

The portal provides that the government will publish Audited Financial Statements for the Federal Government and all Public Sector entities within a month of the end of the first quarter of the succeeding year. However, the government is unable to meet this standard, thereby leaving Nigerians in the dark for a long period on how monies are spent.¹⁰⁰

Extractive Transparency

Nigeria is endowed with abundant natural resources, and the extraction of these resources is deeply connected to the nation's capacity to mobilize resources for development projects. One issue that resonates in the nation's extractive sector is the linkage between illicit financial flows and tax leakage. Western multinational corporations operating in the nation's extractive sector have

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo committed to EITI in November 2003 and launched the Nigeria EITI (NEITI) in February 2004. Thus, Nigeria became the first oil-producing developing country to engage with EITI by enacting the 2007 NEITI Act.

been accused of perpetrating tax evasion.¹⁰¹ Also, politicians cannot be exonerated from alleged involvement in diverting the huge revenues from extractives. According to the UN Comtrade data, about 97 tons of gold worth over three billion dollars was smuggled out of Nigeria between 2012 and 2018. Officials at the

Kotoka International Airport in Ghana intercepted 978 bars of gold (worth £14.5 million), allegedly belonging to a former governor of Zamfara State, in June 2021.¹⁰²

Perhaps the framers of Nigeria's OGP NAPs were thinking of how to address the foregoing issues with public disclosure of extractive sector contracts, licenses, permits, payment to government and revenue stream to improve transparency, fiscal terms and positively impact public finances. The commitment also seeks to ensure work with all stakeholders (especially women, youth, and vulnerable groups) through the full implementation of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) Standards. This is a tool for continuous improvement of extractive sector audit and monitoring, public data and information provision, as well as stakeholders' engagement.

Globally, EITI promotes transparency in company payments and government revenues from oil, gas, and mining. Former President Olusegun Obasanjo committed to EITI in November 2003 and launched the Nigeria EITI (NEITI) in February 2004.¹⁰³ Thus, Nigeria became the first oil-producing developing country to engage with EITI by enacting the 2007 NEITI Act. NEITI's significant milestone is publishing its oil and gas report 2018 in March 2020, nine months ahead of the EITI's reporting deadline.¹⁰⁴

NEITI has used its audit reports to uncover backlogs of unpaid revenues by operators either through statutory tax defaults or

100. Oyediji (2022)
101. Igwe (2021a)
102. Igwe (2021b)
103. Shaxson (2009)
104. The World Bank (2020)

process abuses.¹⁰⁵ NEITI unveiled two documents. First, the roadmap on beneficial ownership disclosure outlines the country's strategy for demanding public disclosures of the real owners of oil, gas, and mining companies that operate in Nigeria. Second, the open data policy seeks to create a solid foundation for open data disclosures in the extractive sector.¹⁰⁶ Despite the progress made by NEITI, the Nigerian Federal Government has yet to demonstrate a firm grip on its extractive revenues due to theft in the oil industry. For example, it was reported that the Nigerian Federal Government lost N4.5 trillion worth of crude oil to 7,143 pipeline vandalism cases within five years.¹⁰⁷ Another consideration is the near criminal enterprise in the non-oil mineral sector.¹⁰⁸

The survey on corruption as experienced by the population shows that the prevalence of bribery by prosecutors (i.e., judges and magistrates) in Nigeria was 33 percent (in 2016) and 23 percent (in 2019).

Judicial Transparency

Lawal alludes to the 'the hope of the hopeless, the defender of the defenseless, and the upholder of the rule of law.'¹⁰⁹ These are pointers to the unique role of the judiciary in society. The judiciary is primarily responsible for interpreting the laws (through adjudication of disputes), and is primarily obliged to the law for the protection of all citizens. Alexander Hamilton explained why the judiciary is

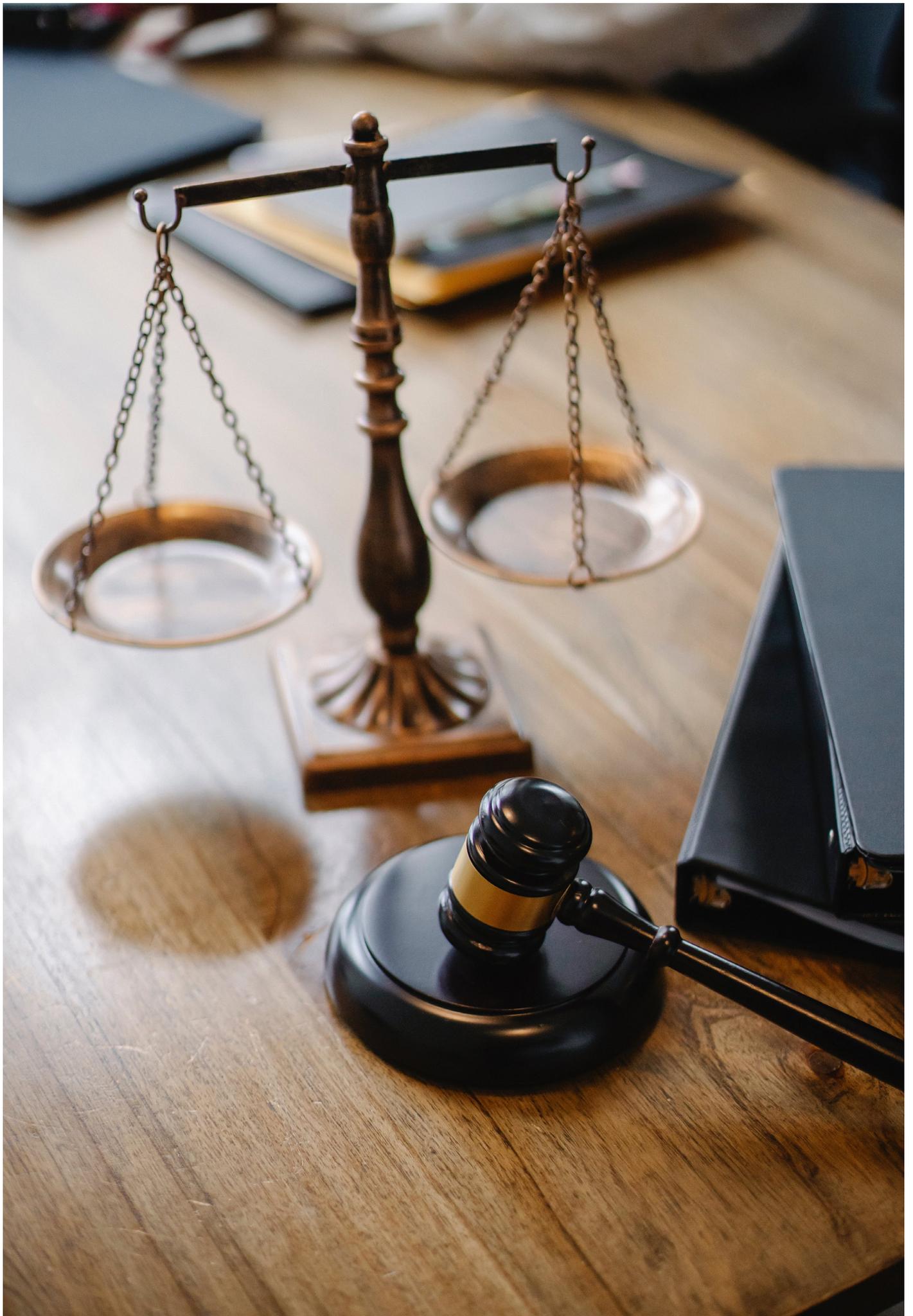
the 'least dangerous' branch of government.

In Hamilton's proposed government, the 'sword' belongs to the executive, who is the commander in chief of the nation's armed forces, and the 'purse' belongs to the legislature, which is the approving authority of all taxes and spending measures of the government. The judiciary does not make law but simply interprets the law. In Hamilton's words, "it may truly be said to have neither FORCE, nor WILL, but merely judgment."¹¹⁰ And Montesquieu reaffirms that "of the three powers mentioned above, the judiciary is next to nothing."¹¹¹

Despite the acclaimed weakness of the judiciary, there is a perception of corruption amongst judicial officers in Nigeria. The survey on corruption as experienced by the population shows that the prevalence of bribery by prosecutors (i.e., judges and magistrates) in Nigeria was 33 percent (in 2016) and 23 percent (in 2019).¹¹² The variation in the percentage of perception can be explained. In October 2016, the Department of State Services (DSS) embarked on a midnight raid called 'a sting operation,' wherein some judicial officers were arrested. Huge raw cash (sums) of various denominations, local and foreign currencies, were uncovered in the process. Other discoveries included real estate worth several millions of naira and documents affirming unholy acts by the judges.¹¹³

Other considerations are the use of technicalities in judicial proceedings and the demonstrable influence of the executive over the judiciary. These also diminish public confidence in the judiciary. It is

105. Okafor (2019)
106. NEITI (2017)
107. Nnodim (2023)
108. Egboboh (2023)
109. Lawal (2004), 159
110. Federalist 78 (1788)
111. Montesquieu (1977)
112. UNODC (2019)
113. Ugwuanyi (2016)



important to state that the Evidence Act (2011) and the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (2015) set the foundation for the use of information and communication in the Nigerian judicial system. Section 84 of the Evidence Act 2011 includes the admissibility of computer-generated evidence.

Sections 16 and 364 of the ACJA (2015) also address issues relating to the admissibility of electronic evidence, including 'discs, tapes, soundtrack, or other devices in which sounds or other data (not visual images) are embodied so as to be capable (with or without the aid of some other equipment) of being reproduced from it,' as well as 'devices by means of which information is recorded, stored or retrievable including computer output.'¹¹⁴ To the extent that ICTs enable the spread of information, these are policy reforms of judicial transparency in Nigeria.

The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) is of the opinion that judicial officers should be remunerated according to an independent salary scale, to be called 'Judicial Service Pay Scale' (JSPS).

The Nigerian Federal Government reviewed the salaries of public servants and political officers on four occasions between May 1999 and March 2011, but the salaries and allowances of judges were last increased in 2007. In response to stakeholders' persuasion for an upward review, the Nigerian Federal Government set up a Technical Committee on

Judicial Remuneration (TCJR) in 2017 to look into the conditions of service of judicial officers. The TCJR, in a report submitted in 2018, recommended immediate harmonization of the salaries and allowances of judicial officers with those of members of the National Assembly.

The TCJR also recommended an upward review of judges' allowances (including medical, rent, leave, and hardship allowances).¹¹⁵ In November 2022, President Muhammadu Buhari approved the immediate increment of salaries and welfare packages for judicial officers to enhance the capacity and independence of the judiciary.¹¹⁶ Despite this gesture, the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) is of the opinion that judicial officers should be remunerated according to an independent salary scale, to be called 'Judicial Service Pay Scale' (JSPS).¹¹⁷

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act (2011) approves the availability of public records and information, provides for public access to public records and information, protects public records and information to the extent consistent with the public interest, and the protection of personal privacy, protects serving public officers from adverse consequences for disclosing certain kinds of official information without authorization, and establishes procedures for the achievement of those purposes. In section 2(3) & (4) of the FoI Act (2011), all information relating to the receipt or expenditure of public or other funds of the institution is to be widely

114. See A&E Law Partnership (undated)
115. Ige (2023)
116. Osaji (2022)
117. Thisday (2023)

disseminated and more readily available.

A unique element of the Fol Act (2011) is the protection for whistleblowers, that is, immunity for public officers against any form of civil or criminal proceeding for ‘disclosure in good faith of any information or any part thereof pursuant to the Fol Act. The formulation of the Fol Act 2011 creates a space for the description of civil society actors as policy advocates, alluding to the unique role of the NGO, Media Rights Agenda. More than a decade later, however, there are still issues with the diffusion of the policy because of the media practitioners’ capacity to access information through the law.

Another top consideration is the lack of cooperation by relevant federal agencies. For example, the

A unique element of the Fol Act (2011) is the protection for whistleblowers, that is, immunity for public officers against any form of civil or criminal proceeding for ‘disclosure in good faith of any information or any part thereof pursuant to the Fol Act.

Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) has consistently declined requests for details of asset declaration by public officers. Following the Code of Conduct Tribunal’s (CCT) conviction of Chief Justice of Nigeria Walter Onnoghen, the human rights advocacy group, Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), sent an Fol request to

the CCB to provide information on specific details of asset declarations submitted by successive presidents and state governors since Nigeria’s return to democracy in 1999. The information sought by SERAP included details of declarations made immediately and after taking office and thereafter, and for those who have left public offices at the end of their term of office, the number of assets declarations verified by the CCB so far, and the number of those found to be false and deemed to have breached the Code of Conduct for Public Officers.¹¹⁸

The CCB rejected the request because the production of such information would amount to an invasion of the privacy of presidents and governors.¹¹⁹ Also, governments at the subnational levels have shown little or no willingness to domesticate the law. State government officials often display a pattern of excuses, such as the absence of organized records, additional clearance mechanisms unrecognized by law, and blatant denial of access to information except through governors’ approval.¹²⁰ As of May 2021, only two states (Ekiti and Imo) had passed their own version of the legislation. The other 34 states would majorly argue that the Fol Act 2011 is not applicable to the states. Therefore, there has been no cheer for the Fol Act in Nigeria.¹²¹

118. Yusuf (2019)
119. Omojuyigbe (2019)
120. Olatunke (2020)
121. Nwankunor, Salau, Agboluaje, & Aikulola (2021)

Open Contracting and Procurement

One of the commitments under the fiscal transparency thematic area of Nigeria's OGP NAPs is open contracting. This refers to publishing and using open, accessible, and timely information on public contracting to engage citizens and businesses to solve problems and deliver results. When there is transparency in the procurement process, there will be competitiveness and improved service delivery. It has been observed in development circles that one in every three dollars spent by the government is on a contract with a company, and public contracting is the world's largest marketplace, covering \$13 trillion of spending every year.¹²²

In 2012 alone, Nigeria reportedly lost about \$400 billion to corruption.

In a bid to achieve transparency, accountability, and openness, as well as facilitate citizen engagement in public contracting, the government, through the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP), set up the Nigeria Open Contracting Portal (NOCOPO)

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) says 60 percent of corruption cases are contract-related. In a bid to achieve transparency, accountability, and openness, as well as facilitate citizen engagement in public contracting, the government, through the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP), set up the

Nigeria Open Contracting Portal (NOCOPO). This was in line with the 2016 London Anti-Corruption Summit. NOCOPO is a solution portal that publishes procurement records and information on all stages of the procurement process (i.e., planning, advertisement, tendering, and award).

The Nigerian federal ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) submit to the portal all procurement plans and records, including information such as project title, cost, name of vendor, procurement method, project location, and implementation status. NOCOPO seeks to significantly reduce cases of abandoned projects through proper record management and project monitoring. Through NOCOPO, citizens would be able to track and monitor projects situated in their localities. NOCOPO conforms with global Open Contracting Data Standards, with a feature for citizen engagement and a feedback mechanism whereby citizens can report project performance. NOCOPO won the 2017 global innovation award, organized by the Open Contracting Partnership and Open Data Institute.¹²³

It is envisaged that NOCOPO would play host to procurement data from more than 700 federal government MDAs. The Africa Network for Environment and Economic Justice (ANEEJ) assessed federal MDAs for two fiscal years, based on records (2018) and procurement plan (2019) published on NOCOPO, in line with the circulars issued by the Secretary to Government of the Federation (SGF). A total of 113 MDAs were assessed out of the over 173 MDAs

122. Open Contracting Partnership (undated)
123. Observatory of Public Sector Innovation (2017)

on the Open Data Segment of NOCOPO. Thirty-four out of 113 MDAs assessed scored between 13 and 19 points, which earned such MDAs the green color. Those 34 MDAs had 'substantial compliant' status.

An MDA earned the yellow color classified as 'partial compliant' with a score of 9.67. From the study, 79 MDAs failed to comply with the SGF's directives on the use of the open contracting portal; they scored between 0 and 7.99 points and earned the 'red color, categorized as 'not compliant.'¹²⁴

It should be noted that the Nigerian federating states have been supported at various times to open up their procurement data since 2018. For example, the World Bank initiated the States Fiscal Transparency, Accountability, and Sustainability (SFTAS) Project

The World Bank initiated the States Fiscal Transparency, Accountability, and Sustainability (SFTAS) Project in partnership with the Nigerian Governors Forum (NGF) to foster a culture of transparency, accountability, and sustainability in public procurement practices.

in partnership with the Nigerian Governors Forum (NGF) to foster a culture of transparency, accountability, and sustainability in public procurement practices. As of October 2021, 32 Nigerian federating states were implementing new e-procurement systems.¹²⁵

Income and Asset Disclosure

Globally, income and asset disclosure grew out of the efforts to address citizens' concerns about the honesty of civil servants and politicians. In Nigeria, income and assets disclosure mechanism, as ordered by paragraph 11 of the Code of Conduct for Public Officers, was first introduced into the Nigerian Constitution in 1979 and thereafter incorporated into the Fifth Schedule to all Nigeria's constitutions (i.e., 1989, 1995, and 1999). The CCB and CCT Act, Cap 015 LFN 2004, also guarantees the mechanism. However, the Nigerian Senate had acted in consonance with the House of Representatives to approve an amendment to certain sections of the CCB and CCT Act in 2016 by transferring the controlling powers over the Bureau and the Tribunal to the National Assembly.¹²⁶

Following the Federal Executive Council's (FEC) approval, President Muhammadu Buhari also proposed amendments to the CCB and CCT Act, as well as the Constitutional Alteration Bill, in 2022, to ensure the effective performance of the functions of the bureau and assist the tribunal in the effective and speedy dispensation of cases.¹²⁷ However, there is no evidence to suggest that the bill has been passed by the Nigeria National Assembly.

124. Ewepu (2021)
125. Open Contracting Partnership (2021)
126. Baiyewu (2016)
127. Adisidepo (2022)

The bill, popularly dubbed “Not Too YoSub-section (2) of section 24 in chapter II of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) states that every citizen has the duty to disclose their income honestly to appropriate and lawful agencies and pay their tax promptly, but very little has been achieved in tax payment. In response, the Nigerian Federal Government signed Executive Order 004, ‘Voluntary Asset and Income Declaration Schemes’ (VAIDS), on June 29, 2017, to broaden the country’s tax base and other incentives for tax evaders, particularly to attract defaulters into the tax net.¹²⁸ As a tax amnesty program, VAIDS was to run for nine months, beginning July 1, 2017, to March 31, 2018, but was afterward extended a few times to August 2020, to give an additional opportunity for compliance.¹²⁹

With VAIDS, the taxpayers’ net was raised from 13 million (in

The Nigerian Federal Government had promised to prosecute, name, and shame tax evaders who did not utilize the tax amnesty program to regularize their tax profiles, but nothing has occurred as touted.

2015) to 14 million (in 2016), and 19.3 million (in 2018).¹³⁰ Despite these results, paying tax remains unattractive to many Nigerians due to the perceived misapplication of tax revenues. The Nigerian Federal Government had promised to prosecute, name, and shame tax evaders who did not utilize the tax amnesty program to regularize their tax profiles, but nothing

has occurred as touted.¹³¹ The Executive Order 008 ‘Voluntary Offshore Assets Regularization Scheme’ signed on October 8, 2018, compelled Nigerian taxpayers holding offshore assets and incomes to declare voluntarily and pay taxes within a period of 12 months.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Gender is an ideological and socio-cultural construct. By definition, gender equality is the treatment of women and men, as well as girls and boys, on the basis of equality in conditions, opportunities for realizing their full potential, human rights and dignity, and for contributing to (and benefitting from) economic, social, cultural and political development. “Gender equality is, therefore, the equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences of men and women, and the roles they play.”¹³² On the other hand, social inclusion is “defined as the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights.”¹³³

President Muhammadu Buhari signed the Age Reduction Bill into Law on May 31, 2018. This was an alteration of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), which hitherto did not allow independent candidacy of any kind, thereby allowing anyone who is otherwise eligible to stand for election to any of these offices as an independent candidate. The law also reduced the age of eligibility for the Office of the President (from

128. Ogbodo (2017)
129. Nwachukwu (2023)
130. Usim (2018)
131. Nwachukwu, Op cit.
132. UNICEF (2017), 3
133. UNECA (2016), 17



40 to 35), Senate (from 35 to 30), House of Representatives (from 30 to 25), and House of Assembly of a State (from 30 to 25).ung to Run,” was initially adopted by more than two-thirds majority in both Houses of the National Assembly (in July 2017) and approved by 25 out of the 36 Houses of Assembly of the States (by March 2018). This inclusive mechanism is laudable, but report says only children of prominent politicians occupy sensitive positions in governance across states and national levels.

Perceptively, others with similar qualifications (even if not from the same schools), as well as age and mental capacity, are unable to secure such positions because of their disadvantaged social and economic conditions.¹³⁴ More broadly, the National Youth Policy (2019–2023) expresses the government’s practical support

Gender Policy (2021) in December 2022 to promote gender equality, women’s empowerment, and social inclusion in all sectors for equitable distribution of the nation’s resources and opportunities. With the revised policy, all ministries, departments, and agencies are compelled to incorporate gender perspectives in their budgeting process to equitably cater to the needs of all segments of the population.¹³⁶

The 2021 National Gender Policy covers a temporal scope (2021–2026). Its goal is the building of a just society of equal opportunities for women, girls, and other vulnerable groups; rights, and obligations in all spheres of life, without discrimination, and where needs and concerns are mainstreamed equitably into all sectors of national development. Currently, the Nigerian subnational governments are urged to domesticate and implement the revised gender policy in their domains.¹³⁷

With the revised policy, all ministries, departments, and agencies are compelled to incorporate gender perspectives in their budgeting process to equitably cater to the needs of all segments of the population.

for youth inclusion, participation, and access to information, which enables them to know their rights. This document is currently being reviewed by a 7-member committee set up by the Nigerian Federal Government.¹³⁵

The Nigerian Federal Government unveiled the revised National

134. Sule (2023)
135. Afonre (2023)
136. Sani (2022)
137. Abeku (2023a)

Service Delivery

Service delivery is defined as a contract with public administration during which customers (i.e., citizens, residents, or entrepreneurs) seek or provide data, handle their efforts, or fulfill their duties. In particular, public services point to the range of services provided by the state, such as infrastructure, utilities, security, and justice. These are the traditional public services, but there are also administrative services, such as the delivery of licenses and permits.

'Time to deliver.' This was the title of address by President Olusegun Obasanjo at the opening of a 'Three-day Special Presidential Retreat on Service Delivery' with the Vice President, ministers, special advisers, presidential aides, and chief executives of major extra-ministerial departments and parastatals held on March 19–21,

In consideration of the challenges of achieving the service compact with all Nigerians, and search for further legal teeth, SERVICOM has submitted a Bill to the National Assembly to firm up the practice of improved service delivery in Nigeria.

2004. It followed a commissioned report on the review of service delivery in Nigeria (December 2003) and the publication of a roadmap on service delivery in Nigeria (February 2004). The two documents recognize that poor service delivery or the absence of service delivery is a consequence of the persistent problems (i.e., conceptual, attitudinal, and operational) that

have been bedeviling the Nigerian public service.

At the end of the three-day retreat, the President and ministers entered into a 'Service Compact with All Nigerians' (i.e., SERVICOM). SERVICOM reviewed the 'National Guide for Developing and Implementing Service Charters in December 2014, a six-chapter document covering service charters (concept, development, and implementation), measuring and reporting performance, service improvement plans, and customer complaints.

In the main, "a service charter is a public statement about the services an organization is providing; it is an undertaking or covenant made to stakeholders by an organization about the service standard they should expect to receive."¹³⁸ In consideration of the challenges of achieving the service compact with all Nigerians, and search for further legal teeth, SERVICOM has submitted a Bill to the National Assembly to firm up the practice of improved service delivery in Nigeria. A virtual joint stakeholders' Review, Advocacy, Engagement, and Policy Dialogue Forum on 'SERVICOM Bill' was held in August 2021. When passed, the Bill would make government businesses more open, improve transparency, and hold service providers to be more accountable. Also, it is envisaged that the legal framework of SERVICOM would ensure the commitment of the Nigerian Federal Government under the OGP Initiative.¹³⁹

One marker of service delivery reforms in Nigeria is the

138. SERVICOM (2014), 6
139. Brand Power (2022)

Treasury Single Account (TSA), proposed by President Goodluck Jonathan-led government (in 2012) and implemented by President Muhammadu Buhari-led government to consolidate all inflows from all agencies of government into a single account at CBN. TSA hinges on sections 80 and 162 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), which presume that all revenues expended are captured in the national budget and are approved by the National Assembly. President Buhari issued a Tuesday, September 15, 2015, deadline for all federal MDAs with the TSA directive, thereby moving all government money to the country's apex bank—the CBN. According to a 2020 report, the Nigerian Federal Government saves an average of N45 billion monthly from the TSA implementation.

BVN was launched by the Central Bank of Nigeria on February 14, 2014, to protect bank customers, reduce fraud, and further strengthen the Nigerian banking system.

This success story inspired The Gambia to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Nigeria on the TSA implementation for The Gambia.¹⁴⁰ Another service delivery reform is the Bank Verification Number (BVN), which is used to record a customer's unique physical traits, such as fingerprints and facial features. BVN was launched

by the Central Bank of Nigeria on February 14, 2014, to protect bank customers, reduce fraud, and further strengthen the Nigerian banking system. The total number of customers enrolled in BVN stood at 133.5 million (in December 2021) and 57.96 million (in July 2023). "The number of accounts linked with BVNs was 130,569,656 out of 148,462,947 active customer accounts, while the number of watch-listed BVNs associated with fraud and deceased persons stood at 6,047 and 11,871, respectively."¹⁴¹

The Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) was originally introduced by the Nigerian Federal Government in October 2006 and implemented in 2007 as a centralized platform for achieving transparency, accountability, and efficiency in paying salaries and wages for civil servants. IPPIS is intended to promote reliable and efficient databases for the public service, improve efficiency in payroll, enhance data integrity, eliminate ghost workers, and consolidate employee records. In recent years, IPPIS has come under scrutiny due to reports of irregularities, including the presence of fake or non-existent employees in the system. For example, it was discovered that the IPPIS portal contained the names of some federal ministers and other political appointees, such as special and personal assistants.¹⁴²

In response, the Head of Civil Service of the Federation mandated a comprehensive verification process for all government employees to authenticate their eligibility to receive salaries.

140. Ujah (2020)
141. Jaiyeola (2023)
142. Isamotu (2023)

The first phase was to leverage technology to open a verification portal (in April 2017), after which all public servants were directed to update their records online. This was followed by aggressive sensitization and publicity via official, conventional, and social media. An initial period of three months was given for compliance, which was extended to one year (i.e., May 2018) to enable all officers to update their records.

The second phase (2018 to 2019) entailed wide publicity, numerous pre-verification sensitization visits to MDAs nationwide, and physical verification. Five hundred staff were trained and deployed to 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) to enable officers to carry out the physical verification in their states and save them from traveling to the FCT. Also, the OHCSF (Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation) conducted a two-week mop-up exercise in the six geo-political zones of the federation, which ended on August 1, 2019. Teams of officials were also assigned to all Unity Colleges to not disrupt academic activities.

The third phase (September 2022 to February 2023) provided another opportunity for those who failed to verify their records in the previous exercises to do so. Over a seven-year period, the Nigerian Federal Government has committed substantial financial and human resources to verify the records of all federal civil servants on the IPPIS platform. The Nigerian Federal Government demonstrated magnanimity by re-opening the IPPIS portal (on October 3- 13, 2023) for another two weeks, ending October 27, 2023. Yet, a significant number of civil servants have yet to comply with the verification requirements despite repeated reminders and extensions.¹⁴³

143. Ukanwa (2023)

Chapter 3

Field Reports



3.1. Methods

The suggested research methods were mainly desk review and key informant interviews (KIs). The desk review entailed a review of existing reports (published and unpublished), specialized publications, journal articles, and blogs in the relevant areas. This helped consider the concepts, target audience, and deliverables. The major concepts underpinning this research were illuminated in chapter one. The concepts were further espoused as part of the analysis of key reforms undertaken by the Nigerian government in the last decade. The envisaged target audience was state and non-state actors. More importantly, the deliverables will serve as a marker for the new actors in government as well as people outside government. In particular, the deliverables are applicable to the activities of the 'Joinbodi Cohort,' which is one of the discernible points of behavior for non-state actors in Nigeria. Another purpose of the desk review was to ascertain the achievements made by civil society and the gaps in advocacy in the broad fields of transparency, accountability, and good governance in Nigeria.

The envisaged target audience was state and non-state actors. More importantly, the deliverables will serve as a marker for the new actors in government as well as people outside government.

Qualitative insights from the desk review were applied to the design of the KI instrument to provide sufficient perspectives on the applicable efforts for the preservation and improvement of the progress made by civil society in Nigeria. The KIs also helped unearth the challenges members of the 'Joinbodi Cohort' faced in their work for transparency, accountability, and good governance. Members of the BudgIT's technical team provided leadership for holding the KIs. A formal letter to introduce the research consultant to all members of the 'Joinbodi Cohort' was sent by email by a designated official of the BudgIT Foundation. The original plan was to administer about 10–15 KIs using virtual means (i.e., Zoom) in two or three days (i.e., five KIs per day). However, after two reminders, KIs were successfully held with seven members of the 'Joinbodi Cohort.' This represents one-third or 33.3 percent of the members of the 'Joinbodi Cohort.'

The difficulty in establishing contacts with key stakeholders was envisaged in the plan of execution prepared by the research consultant. As a backup mechanism, a guided interview instrument was developed and administered via Google Forms, using active members of the 'Joinbodi Cohort' with verifiable contacts (i.e., emails and telephones) as the sampling frame. After sending a reminder, only two (representing a mere 9.5 percent) of the 'Joinbodi Cohort' responded to the guided interview via Google Forms. All nine interviews were successfully held, representing 42.9 percent of the entire 'Joinbodi

Cohort' list shared with the research consultant (see table 3.1 below).

Considering the challenges encountered by the research consultant in the course of this assignment, this is an acceptable response rate. Moreover, interviewed stakeholders participated fully by providing valuable information to support the research. Yet, the views expressed by the respondents during the KIIs and on Google Forms were triangulated to avoid possible bias and ensure trustworthiness

in interpretation. Also, regular check-in calls and WhatsApp messages between the research consultant and BudgIT's technical team provided ample opportunity for peer review. This generated valuable inputs, thereby mitigating the potential limitations to enrich the final report. Finally, the research consultant also adhered to a set of standards of conduct, which were shared with BudgIT's technical team during the first virtual meeting.

Table 3.1: Visual Representation of Interview Stakeholders

Stakeholder	KII	Google Form	Response	
			Response	No Response
AFRICMIL ✓				
Agora Policy Foundation ✓				
ARDP ✓				
Brookings Institution's Africa Growth Initiative ✓				
BudgIT Foundation ✓				
Centre LSD ✓				
CISLAC ✓				
CITAD ✓				
CHRICED ✓				
Community Life Project ✓				
Connected Development ✓				
HEDA Resource Centre ✓				
IRIAD ✓				
Joy Incredible Limited ✓				
PPDC ✓				
PLAC ✓				
PLSI ✓				
SERAP ✓				
Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation ✓				
Social Development Integrated Centre ✓				
WRAPA ✓				

Source: Fieldwork (2023)



3.2. Evidence from the Field

The issues addressed during the fieldwork are CSOs and behavioral change in government, CSOs and information exchange, access to governmental information, governmental domains and transparency, civil society and policy advocacy, CSOs' support for accountability in government, alternative accountability programs, public institutions and future impacts, civil society and good governance, as well as identifiable gaps and challenges of CSOs' advocacy. They are presented below.

For example, a member of the 'Joinbodi Cohort' Human and Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA Resource Centre) wrote a letter to the immediate past Attorney General of the Federation, pointing out the illegality in his proposed framework for managing the proceeds of crime, as well as the setting up of a committee in that regard.

CSOs and Behavioral Change in Government

Interviewed stakeholders were unanimous on the existence of several interventions by CSOs that have resulted in personal or group changes in behavior. Some of these behavioral changes are the outcomes of public interest litigations instituted by CSOs.

Others emanate from policy advisories to governments, which led to some corrected actions on the part of governments. Yet, other positive behaviors emanate from CSOs' influential engagement, where recommendations are made.

As a result, one can find the government doing things differently. For example, a member of the 'Joinbodi Cohort' Human and Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA Resource Centre) wrote a letter to the immediate past Attorney General of the Federation, pointing out the illegality in his proposed framework for managing the proceeds of crime, as well as the setting up of a committee in that regard. HEDA Resource Centre had advised the Attorney General of the Federation that his actions amounted to usurpation of the powers of the anti-corruption agencies, but this did not yield any positive results. HEDA Resource Centre proceeded to institute legal action against the proposed guidelines, and the court nullified the guidelines, and the committee constituted to enforce the guidelines. It can, therefore, be said that the outcome of the court proceedings on the matter inspired the enactment of the "Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act (2022)" by the legislative and executive branches of the Nigerian Federal Government.

The second selling point for HEDA Resource Centre is the effective review of the Deep Offshore and Inland Basin Production Sharing Contracts Act (1993). Section 17 of the 1993 PSC Act defines Production Sharing Contracts as any agreement or arrangement

between the Corporation, the holder, and any other petroleum exploration and production company or companies to explore and produce oil in the Deep Offshore and Inland Basins. Under the 1993 PSC, the parties are the NNPC (the NRC), Royal Dutch Shell Plc, ExxonMobil Corp, Chevron Corp, Total SA, and Eni SpA. The 1993 PSC Act was one of the policy guidelines adopted by many multinational corporations to avoid obeying the profit-sharing agreement with the Nigerian government dating back more than ten to 20 years.

On its part, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) deployed legal advocacy to challenge the legality of the pension benefits for Nigerian ex-governors serving as senators and drawing salaries from the public service.

In contrast, it has been under the law for them to have acted on the profit-sharing act and ensure that Nigeria gets some of the profits from the oil proceeds in the country. HEDA Resource Centre queried that and also worked with Mr. Femi Falana (SAN) Chambers to advocate for an amendment to the 1993 PSC Act. The departing point for HEDA Resource Centre's intervention was a Fol request invoked on the Ministry of Petroleum Resources, based on the observations by petroleum

sector analysts and lawyers on the economic losses being incurred by the country on the basis of the existing arrangement.¹⁴⁴

On its part, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) deployed legal advocacy to challenge the legality of the pension benefits for Nigerian ex-governors serving as senators and drawing salaries from the public service. This provided ample opportunity for some ex-governors in the Senate to clear themselves. For example, Senate President Bukola Saraki stated that he had not collected a dime from his pension benefit as an ex-governor of Kwara State.¹⁴⁵ Senator Ibrahim Dakwambo, who served as Gombe State governor for eight years, recently asked the state government to suspend his monthly pension as approved under the 2007 Executive Pension Law.

Senator Dakwambo's decision to stop receiving the monthly pension and make refunds was informed by his consultation with CSOs, integrity institutions, friends, and associates. Kwara, Imo, and Zamfara States had earlier abolished their pension laws for former political office holders. This is an appropriate behavior resulting from CSO interventions. In furtherance of its consistent advocacy, SERAP has also dragged the current Senate President Godswill Akpabio and others to court, seeking an order of mandamus to direct and compel the Senate President and others to stop collecting both salaries and pensions and to return any pensions collected to their respective state treasuries. In SERAP's recent averment,

144. News Band (2018)

145. Agbajele (2015)

“collecting pensions as former governors and salaries while serving as public officers is a flagrant violation of the letter and spirit of the Nigerian Constitution and the public trust.”¹⁴⁶

In 2021, SERAP also led 176 Nigerians in legal advocacy against President Muhammadu Buhari-led administration over the Twitter ban. Twitter deleted President Buhari’s tweet, and in response, the Minister of Information, Lai Mohammed, announced the suspension of the micro-blogger in Nigeria. The government further threatened to arrest and prosecute users, while the National Broadcasting Commission asked all broadcast stations to stop citing Twitter as a news source. The ECOWAS Court held that the suspension of Twitter is unlawful and inconsistent with the provisions of Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.¹⁴⁷

In other words, debates on state budgets at the House of Assembly now factor representation from the CSOs. This open discussion often results in indictment of government officials, where necessary. Therefore, the positive behavior change is in the state’s conduct of public affairs.

SERAP also responded to a whistleblower in a case of a water project in southwestern

Nigeria handled by a firm whose beneficial ownership was linked to a member of the Federal House of Representatives. Through SERAP’s intervention and advocacy, the politician called to apologize and mobilized his firm back to the site for completion. This was appropriate behavior.

As a result of the activities of CSOs in Nigeria’s northeast, the government of Borno State has started preparing a ‘citizens budget,’ and CSOs are now invited to make inputs before the House of Assembly of the State passes the budget. In other words, debates on state budgets at the House of Assembly now factor representation from the CSOs. This open discussion often results in indictment of government officials, where necessary. Therefore, the positive behavior change is in the state’s conduct of public affairs.

The Centre for Information, Communication and Development (CITAD) has been involved in raising awareness and advocating against gender-based violence, gender disparity, and gender divide in the social media space. Amongst others, CITAD has conducted advocacies (including road walks and peaceful demonstrations) on the need to hasten the domestication of gender-based legislation, such as the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law in Kano State. These activities engendered positive feedback from public officers in charge of units or offices for creating awareness and policy implementation. Although the VAPP Law has not been fully enacted, there is a sense of understanding of the seriousness

146. Ukoh (2023)
147. Odunsi (2022)



of gender-based violence in Kano State.

Also, the Nigerian state has witnessed several transparency-related interventions from the CSOs. CSOs' initiatives opened the space for citizens to access budget documents, which also helped improve the public audit system. For example, BudgIT, through its initial interventions in budget access, has gradually succeeded in opening up the space. As highlighted by Joy Incredible Limited, "BudgIT has played a crucial role by providing valuable data and holding public officers accountable. By offering transparency through data-driven insights, BudgIT contributes to the broader objective of promoting accountability in governance."

As highlighted by Joy Incredible Limited, "BudgIT has played a crucial role by providing valuable data and holding public officers accountable. By offering transparency through data-driven insights, BudgIT contributes to the broader objective of promoting accountability in governance."

BudgIT Foundation on its part, further emphasized that CSOs' actions have resulted in good behaviors by Nigerian public officers, but it might be difficult to pinpoint which particular CSO spearheaded a certain result. Yet the fact remains that different CSOs are advancing the course of transparency in Nigeria. It recalled

that the Nigerian Government signing the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in 2016 was an intervention championed by three principal organizations—BudgIT Foundation, Media Rights Agenda, and Public and Private Development Centre (PPDC). This, to a great extent, snowballed into what we have today, where the eight years of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration is generally regarded as a period of transparency that significantly improved notably access to government data as exemplified in the timely release of approved budgets on the website of the Budget office, 48 hours after presentation by the President.

BudgIT also cited that initiatives such as the Open Budget Survey, a research championed by the International Budget Partnership (IBP), which BudgIT has led in Nigeria since its inception, have seen Nigeria's result or rank improving per year because there is a consistent effort by the government to see what was achieved the previous year, where the lapses were, and how they can overcome them.

On its part, the Public and Private Development Centre (PPDC) works on public procurement by ensuring citizens have access to procurement information to enable them to demand accountability. More fundamentally, the World Bank-supported initiative called 'State Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability' (SFTAS) program embedded the interventions of CSOs, such as BudgIT and Paradigm Leadership Support Initiative (PLSI). The purpose was to sustain some of

the gains, including access to the budgetary process, publication of budget documents online by state public officials, and improvements in public audit systems. These efforts were incentivized by the World Bank's Credit Facility to the Nigerian Federal Government, which in turn gave money (i.e., grants of sorts) to the participating Nigerian states. This propelled the participating states to continue to do the required things for the SFTAS program. In sum, contributions by the CSOs to the SFTAS program were in the form of social capital for engagement in the process.

A coalition of over 500 gender rights activists under the aegis of Womanifesto convened by the Director of Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre's Executive Director, Dr. Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi, demanded a public apology from the Minister of Women Affairs, Barr. Uju Kenndey-Ohanenye over comments credited to her in a viral video concerning an alleged sexual harassment controversy at the University of Calabar.

A coalition of over 500 gender rights activists under the aegis of Womanifesto convened by the Director of Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre's Executive Director, Dr. Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi, demanded a public apology from the Minister of Women Affairs, Barr. Uju Kenndey-Ohanenye over comments credited to her in a viral video concerning an alleged sexual harassment controversy at the University of Calabar. The CSOs expressed grave concern over the

interest and protection of vulnerable women and children. In a quick response to the CSOs' agitations, the minister publicly apologized for her comments and expressed her commitment to safeguarding and advancing the rights and welfare of Nigerian women, including the pursuit of justice when these rights are violated. In the minister's words, "I stand for all Nigerian women, and I stand for justice; and it is my hope that we can work together to actualize the dream of a country where women's rights are respected and protected, and where our daughters feel safe in institutions of learning."¹⁴⁸

Arguably, the minister's apology and expressed commitment are pointers to plausible behaviors by public officers toward gender-based violence and sextortion, which is fast gaining attention in the policy space.

Another behavioral change ascribed to the CSOs' interventions in the area of transparency is the shift in budgeting culture at the local government level in Ekiti and Osun States. This is the outcome of interventions by the NGO, Community Life Project (CLP). From CLP's response to the survey, "Local governments and state agencies are working with communities to prioritize their needs for inclusion in local budgets or as a tool for direct project execution by state governments." Finally, Joy Incredible Limited highlights YIAGA Africa's and other CSOs' commendable efforts in championing the "Not Too Young to Run" Bill, beginning in May 2016. This reflects the concerted push for increased inclusion

and representation within the governance system in Nigeria. The successful passage of this bill into law marks a significant stride toward fostering active youth participation in politics by dismantling age-related barriers. Another change in behavior arises from the impactful #EndSARS campaign, which addressed issues of police brutality.

Amidst these interventions, BudgIT has played a crucial role by providing valuable data and holding public officers accountable. By offering transparency through data-driven insights, BudgIT contributes to the broader objective of promoting accountability in governance. This collaborative effort not only spotlights systemic issues but also emphasizes the need for sustained engagement with policymakers, continuous public support, and concrete steps to address challenges in law enforcement, ensuring lasting impact and positive change.

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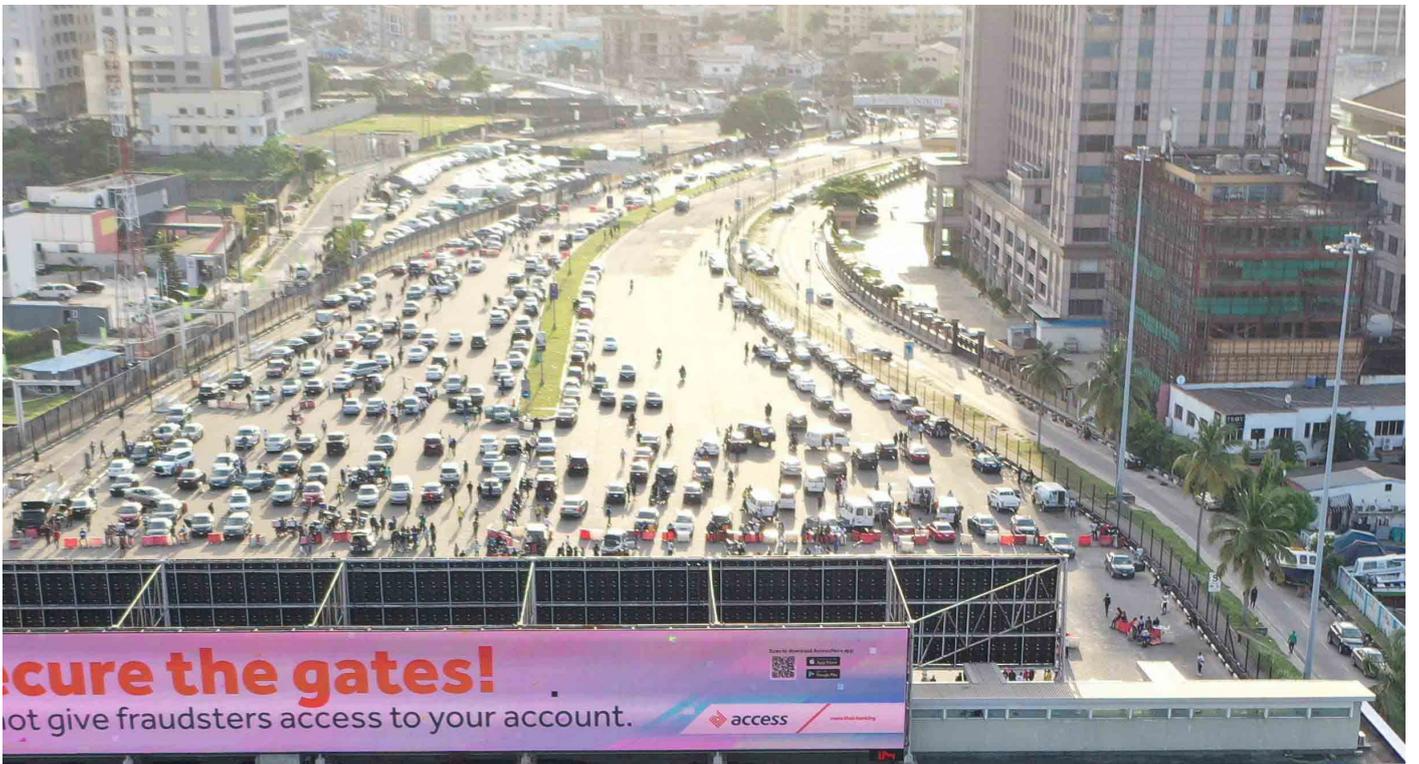
CSOs and Information Exchange

There is a redefinition of information exchange, and information

requested by citizens and groups is no longer discarded by government agents and officials. First and foremost, the enactment of the Fol Act resulted from civil society efforts. With the Fol Act, citizens can request and access information from government agencies, but there are challenges, such as government officials' refusal to release information. In response, the CSOs have often resorted to public interest litigations (i.e., public interest court actions), which have led to the release of information. Also, public agencies that are reluctant to release information are brought to the public square to be named and shamed. For instance, HEDA Resource Centre got three separate favorable judgments on the FOI requests: against the Central Bank of Nigeria, against the Nigeria Customs Services, and against the Honourable Minister of the Federal Capital Territory.

These judgments clearly show that information exchange will be given different interpretations in the country. Oftentimes, government institutions do not respond positively to Fol requests by citizens, even when there is a valid court order in favor of CSOs. In response to the survey on Google Forms, Community Life Project (CLP) alludes to the failure of the Federal Ministry of Finance to release details of officials responsible for the ghost workers scam, despite the court judgment in favor of the Centre for Social Justice (Citizens Wealth Platform).

Although the actors in government are refusing to proactively disclose information, the Fol Act (2011) is redefining the rules of engagement



when it comes to access to information. In terms of spread, the advent of technology and social media have become a viable tool for CSOs to bring to bear the purpose of their existence by passing information and creating awareness. For example, CITAD has an online radio for passing information across to key persons within the internet space on X (formerly Twitter) handle for conducting virtual spaces to discuss issues of accountability, gender-based violence, and connectivity within underserved or unserved regions lacking internet connectivity. Using this medium has become the norm, especially for CSOs, to reach out to those whom one cannot actually reach on land or in person.

On accessibility, the CSOs are

The MacArthur Foundation supported the Resource Centre for Human Rights and Civic Education (CHRICED) and other CSOs to mobilize youths for accountability in the utilization of Universal Basic Education (UBE) funds in Kaduna State. This helped to raise the skill level of citizens in rural areas to demand accountability from political officeholders and other government officials.

working to ensure the creation of some internet substitute services in areas where the internet is barely strong. In particular, CITAD has led such intervention with the Alliance for Progressive Communications to develop a 'Community Network' by creating a substitute network for rural areas. This helps to reduce the rates of financing and maintenance

of the service. On the other hand, it provides information to underserved populations. Initiatives like online portals and open data policies also enable speed and ease of accessing public information. In response to the challenge of a language barrier, CITAD's online radio programs are done in Hausa.

In the context of what the Arewa Research and Development Project (ARDP) is doing, the work started from 'Ground Zero' because most of the states never had anything closer to OGP. Zamfara has signed on now, and Borno has met all the criteria for enlisting in the OGP. Also, ARDP's translation of Zamfara and Borno States capital budgets into Hausa and Kanuri languages makes information available, easily understandable, and more accessible to a wider population segment. ARDP also simplifies complex information in graphs (i.e., info-graphs) that would be meaningful to an average Nigerian. It is important to note that the speed may be slow, but accessibility is much more than before now.

The MacArthur Foundation supported the Resource Centre for Human Rights and Civic Education (CHRICED) and other CSOs to mobilize youths for accountability in the utilization of Universal Basic Education (UBE) funds in Kaduna State. This helped to raise the skill level of citizens in rural areas to demand accountability from political officeholders and other government officials. The project entailed the tracking of approved UBE funds. CHRICED's intervention hinges on the provisions of the Nigerian Constitution in Chapter II

(i.e., 'Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy'), which also includes the educational objectives of the Nigerian state. This is further emphasized by the Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act 2004, which makes it compulsory for every Nigerian child of school age to be in school. Through the project, CHRICED has been able to change the behaviors of the duty bearers, the educational authority, the local government, the state, and even the State Universal Basic Education Board.

For example, the Nigerian Federal Government would oblige information requested if it does not bother with sensitive fiscal matters and national security. Whereas government information is becoming more accessible due to the increased number of government websites, the information released may not be as requested.

“The other dimension of behavior change we saw as a result of that project had to do with the fact that communities were now becoming active in their approach. So, when a contractor comes to a village and maybe does a shoddy job, we were now able to get communities to speak up to say that the contractor is not using the right materials and is not doing the work according to the program’s scope. In that way, the anti-corruption agencies will be

brought in because we shared the addresses of all the anti-corruption agencies with the communities and we taught them how to write letters like freedom of information requests and so and so forth. So, those developments combine to make the duty bearers to become a lot more responsive, and to become a lot more accountable for the public resources they are entrusted to spend on behalf of the people.” – Armsfree Ajanaku, CHRICED

It is also important to note that accessibility of information is dependent upon the type of information and target organization, the level of governance, and the time of request. In other words, context matters in requesting information. For example, the Nigerian Federal Government would oblige information requested if it does not bother with sensitive fiscal matters and national security. Whereas government information is becoming more accessible due to the increased number of government websites, the information released may not be as requested.

“But of course, there is also the challenge of the security sector in terms of information disclosure; there are certain information that cannot be disclosed, there are certain categories of information that are under the Freedom of Information Act, you know, you cannot disclose.” – Armsfree Ajanaku, CHRICED

The FoI Act has made it possible

for citizens to request and access information from government agencies. Some government agencies are also facilitating information access for easy use. For example, the Federal Ministry of Finance uses infographics to publish Federal Allocation on the official website. The Federal Government provides expenditures (recurrent and capital) details, but such details are not available at the subnational level. This makes expenditure tracking and monitoring difficult. Joy Incredible Limited helps simplify the governance stories to show the commensurate impacts on everyday people. BudgIT Foundation is working to demand accountability through Tracka by exposing the hidden agendas of public service professionals.

the government or represent available data in an appealing format that citizens can engage with and understand.”

He cited another example on the Open Treasury Portal, which the federal government of Nigeria launched in December 2019, and upon which BudgIT Foundation has built another channel for data analysis called Govspend.ng. What this means is that one can easily run an analysis through the platform by sending a query for a particular contractor’s name. It would provide the contractor’s name, a list of the other contracts they have received from the federal government, and the amount the contractor has been paid. This provides citizens with up-to-date information with which they can demand accountability and service delivery.

Even children have the right to certain information about the direction of their country because you have to give them hope that the country is working in their interest, and that is how you also raise citizens, and that is why we have subjects like Civic Education in the school curriculum.

For Gabriel Okeowo, BudgIT Foundation’s Country Director, CSO efforts are leading to the redefinition of information exchange in terms of speed, accessibility, and ease of use. “At BudgIT Foundation, we do not generate data but facilitate access to data put out by

Access to Government Information

Interviewed stakeholders were also unanimous on the categories of people outside government that should have access to government information. To the extent that every citizen has a stake in governance, every citizen should have access to information. Empowering citizens with government information will position them to serve as watchdogs to government officials. Those of voting age need information about how the government operates and specifically how the government is expending resources for governance because there is a saying that ‘democracy dies in darkness.’ The darkness is when there is no transparency.



Even children have the right to certain information about the direction of their country because you have to give them hope that the country is working in their interest, and that is how you also raise citizens, and that is why we have subjects like Civic Education in the school curriculum. The purpose is to build the civic knowledge and awareness of citizens, and part of that civic awareness is how the government is functioning, what the government is doing, what are the ground rules, and what are the ground norms shaping how the government does its business.

A case can be drawn from religious leaders (i.e., the Council of Ulama), which have become a prominent social group since the introduction of Sharia in Zamfara State. With its translated and validated capital budgets of Zamfara State, ARDP encouraged the Ulama to disseminate the messages during Friday sermons.

More critically, some citizens are operating in civil society, the media space, the knowledge space (e.g., researchers), and the opinion formation space (e.g., columnists and writers). These people scientifically mold opinions on a daily basis, and they are an integral part of society's socialization process. Therefore, a democratic and accountable system cannot afford to hide critical information from these categories of people because they shape the knowledge base, the opinion, the thinking,

and the direction of the rest of the population.

In sum, the people outside government that should have access to government information include civil society, the media, the organized private sector, different associations, women groups, persons with disabilities, youth forums, traditional institutions, religious organizations, organized labor, opposition parties, clubs, associations, and citizens in general. It should be noted that civil society includes opposition political parties, religious institutions, organized labor, clubs, and associations.

A case can be drawn from religious leaders (i.e., the Council of Ulama), which have become a prominent social group since the introduction of Sharia in Zamfara State. With its translated and validated capital budgets of Zamfara State, ARDP encouraged the Ulama to disseminate the messages during Friday sermons. This positions the Ulama as anti-corruption crusaders. This would enhance not only criticisms but also promote good governance and accountability. In addition, information serves as an instrument for addressing conflict, misunderstanding, and disagreement.

“Once people have advanced and sufficient information, they can also counter misinformation or rumor in the system.” – Olanrewaju Suraju, HEDA Resource Centre

Also, policies that pertain to women groups and persons with

disabilities are being implemented at different levels of government, and they should be aware of how these policies are affecting them, especially the implementation mode, as well as how public funds are appropriated and expended. Thus, information access by population segments can be analyzed to factor into the gender equality and social inclusion approach. In addition, information on public officers' emoluments, contracts, budget performance documents, audit documents, and policies (e.g., local government by-laws) should be on government websites and available to members of the public on request.

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Governmental Domains and Transparency

From the fieldwork, civil society in Nigeria has contributed to increased government transparency at the federal level. This is particularly applicable to the executive and judicial arms of government. A practical example was the first recovered Abacha loot, which was said to have been re-looted. There is no evidence of the projects and those empowered with the funds. This inspired a clamor by civil society for involvement in the

utilization of the Recovered Abacha Loot II (\$322.5m).

The flagship of this successful intervention is the Monitoring of Recovered Assets Through Transparency and Accountability (MANTRA) project led by the Africa Network for Environment and Economic Justice (ANEEJ), with support of the UKAid and collaboration with many CSOs across the country on the utilization of the funds on Cash Transfers Program. ANEEJ worked on tracking the Abacha Loot II (\$322.5m), distributed across the six geopolitical zones. They sent monitors to all the cash transfer offices, and they also sent monitors to the cash transfer points where there were cases of poor people being beneficiaries being short-changed. They were able to spotlight those infractions, and they were able to write comprehensive reports that provided data on how the process became a lot more transparent.

Another area of intervention by civil society is in constituency projects, which the lawmakers could award to companies in which they had vested interests. With the emergence of the 'Joinbodi Cohort,' there have been some elements of transparency, accountability, probity, citizen participation, citizen knowledge, and citizen-driven design in constituency projects. The 'Joinbodi Cohort' got enormous support from the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), which in itself also started some tracking work, which aided the call back of some contractors that did shoddy jobs on project

sites. This was a collaborative process with civil society because civil society provided the reach and network with the people in rural communities while the ICPC provided the legal and policy framework for dealing with erring contractors.

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Under the MacArthur Foundation supported 'Nigeria 2.0 Portfolio,' CHRICED worked on constituency projects in Kano State, Community Life Project worked in Lagos State and Ekiti State, and Connected Development worked in Kaduna State. As submitted by CHRICED's Program and Communications Manager, Armsfree Ajanaku, instilling transparency into a process does not automatically translate into a corruption-free process. Rather, the flaws are identifiable, and CSOs can deploy advocacy to the government to correct such flaws.

"In terms of the state and local level, there is no accountability, at least for now." – Olanrewaju Suraju, HEDA Resource Centre

"The legislature is completely

obliged, and you rarely get anything from the legislature except when activities are already conducted and also includes the constituency projects." – Olanrewaju Suraju, HEDA Resource Centre

"When you look at the issue of the budget at the national level, anything you want, you can get it on the internet, unlike the state where you need to go to their ministry to have access to their budget." – KII with CITAD

Regarding public finance and resources management, expenditure reporting in the geographies covered by ARDP has become more transparent. In Zamfara State, some government officials were indicted for not making appropriate returns, which was the first of its kind in the state's history. Also, there is a lot of work going on in the area of determining value for money for government expenditure. In all, ARDP believes it has laid the foundation for transparency in the financial domains. Another domain that has improved in transparency is the law-making branch of government. This is because members of the legislature are aware of the relevance of the information available to the citizens, thereby raising their consciousness. Sadly, the local governments are under the direct control of the state governors. As a result, scaling up should be directed at the local government level.

"Of course, if we can call them appendages, well,



they are more actually of inconsequential appendages because they are inconsequential appendages like the footnote, at times they will not make much meaning unless you look at the footnote.” – KII with ARDP

“If you want transformation of the grassroots, the local governments need to be vibrant, but the mode of our political practice in Nigeria today does not factor that.” – KII with ARDP

The ‘Joinbodi Cohort’ got enormous support from the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), which in itself also started some tracking work, which aided the call back of some contractors that did shoddy jobs on project sites.

CITAD has worked with other CSOs to address budgeting and procurement in Bauchi State. CITAD created clusters of CSOs in five Local Government Areas in Bauchi State—Alakeri, Bauchi, Itas/Gadau, Nuskiri, and Toro. Training programs were offered on how to demand accountability in budgeting and procurement from the MDAs operating in their localities. CITAD translated portions of the Bauchi State budget into Hausa to better understand the issue. Therefore, one of CITAD’s achievements is breaking the budget into Hausa and sharing soft and hard copies for the

communities by charging them to use it as a follow-up on monitoring changes in government activities.

As a technology-based NGO, CITAD has also built a social media app that can be found on Google Play Store and Apple Store for checking and reporting on abandoned projects, budgeting, and procurement. This is helping to raise awareness about what is needed in local communities in Bauchi state. CITAD is, therefore, able to instill transparency because citizens use the App to draw the attention of Bauchi State MDAs to relevant issues.

In the last decade, CSOs in Nigeria have also supported transparency in the health sector by tracking constituency projects.

“When you look at the health sector from the last decade to date and the aspect of transparency, issue in that regards due to the efforts of civil societies organizations, most of the projects done are now on online platforms where you can go and assist them on the issue of budget tracking due to the efforts of CSOs and also ICPC, you see that most of the project that is being conducted by legislators is now being tracked.” – KII with CITAD

PLSI has demonstrably worked with the National Assembly and the 36 House of Assembly of the State, particularly the Public Accounts Committees (PACs). However, this has not been consistent because the Committees regularly closed their doors to

CSOs' scrutiny of their work. Yet, PLSI envisages that there would be positive engagements with the new PACs, particularly at the federal level. PLSI's flagship, the 'Subnational Audit Efficacy Index,' is done annually to measure the accountability temperature of public finance management practices and policy implementation practices.

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In the conduct of elections in Nigeria, the use of BVAS machines, the INEC Result Viewing (IReV) portal, and the Continuous Voter Registration Portal are contributing to improved transparency in electoral management. However, the behaviors of some electoral officials, politicians, and duty-bearers undermine the system's efficacy.

The Federal Ministry of Finance publishes Federal Allocation to Local Governments and Zonal Intervention Projects (i.e., constituency projects). In particular, the information on constituency projects helps citizens to know the specific projects initiated by their representatives in parliament.

Some local governments in a few states are also practicing inclusive budgeting, opening the space for citizens to influence the allocation of funds to projects and track project implementation in their communities.

Civil Society and Policy Advocacy

CSOs have been involved in legal advocacy, political advocacy, protests, rallies, legal action, and collaborative engagements. CSOs have worked to ensure that public officers operate within the ambit of the law and laid down policies. Through such advocacy, public officers are compelled to release more required information. In effect, there are increasing opportunities for media practitioners to also report on some governmental activities. In the words of HEDA Resource Centre's Chair, Olanrewaju Suraju:

“For the purpose of honesty, there is a conscious level of information and media engagement for pushing the frontier of accountability.”
– Olanrewaju Suraju, HEDA Resource Centre

Policy advocacy by CSOs has led to the adoption of the Bureau of Public Procurement as part of the legal framework established by the subnational governments. This is because government officials are now mindful of the fact that citizens would ask very penetrating questions based on information supplied by the CSOs through publications, town hall meetings, information dissemination agencies, radio programs, and so on. Therefore, “the establishment

or the enactment of a certain legal framework arises directly or indirectly from the activities of the CSOs operating in these states.” - Kabiru Chafe, ARDP

On its part, PLSI has done a lot to advocate compliance with the legal framework. PLSI measures state compliance with the audit legal framework through its Subnational Audit Efficacy Index. Also, CSOs have continued to engage public institutions, such as the judiciary, Police, and Correctional Service, to fast-track implementation of the Administration of the Criminal Justice Act via training officers and men of the concerned agencies.

In 2021, the NGO, African Centre for Media and Information Literacy (AFRICMIL) collaborated with the Presidential Initiative on Continuous Audit (PICA) to review five years of the Nigerian Federal Government’s Whistleblowing Policy. AFRICMIL has partnered with and supported PICA since 2017 when it launched its Corruption Anonymous (CORA) project supported by the MacArthur Foundation.

CSOs have also carried out advocacy to get the government to comply with the Fiscal Responsibility Act. There are some wins in getting state actors to behave, but such positive impacts are not commensurate with civil society efforts. On the contrary, impunity and lack of respect for the rule of law are increasingly becoming the norm. In 2021, the NGO, African Centre for Media and

Information Literacy (AFRICMIL) collaborated with the Presidential Initiative on Continuous Audit (PICA) to review five years of the Nigerian Federal Government’s Whistleblowing Policy. AFRICMIL has partnered with and supported PICA since 2017 when it launched its Corruption Anonymous (CORA) project supported by the MacArthur Foundation.¹⁴⁹

Gabriel Okeowo, Country Director, BudgIT Foundation, on domains of government activity that have become transparent as a result of the efforts of the civil society in Nigeria, stated that *“It is difficult to say a particular domain of government have done excellently because no matter which agency is identified, we know there are still gaps to be filled. However, the federal government and the executive arm come close in how they have come to understand their obligation, perhaps because of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, which places a responsibility on them to share certain information with the public. We may want to credit some of their domains for taking the initiative while others haven’t. But there are other domains still grossly doing below par. Take the Auditor General of the Federation’s office, for example. Nigeria’s last audit was around 2019/2020; now we are in 2024. So you realize that while one arm of government or one domain of government is doing so well, another domain is not performing well.”*

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CSOs and Accountability Support

It can be said that the purpose of civil society engagement is accountability, that is, to raise voices as active citizens for the promotion of accountability. It is to push for public institutions and politically exposed persons (PEPs) to operate within the standard operating procedures (SOPs). CSOs have supported several public institutions to attain accountability, such as standard electoral processes by INEC and improved operations of the Police, the Judiciary, and the Bureau of Public Procurement. Thus, public institutions can amplify their work using the platforms provided by the CSOs. This helps explain the 2023 Accountability Summit organized by the 'Joinbodi Cohort' dominated CSOs, namely, Accountability Lab Nigeria, Agora Policy, BudgIT Foundation, Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development, Connected Development, Dataphyte, PLSI, PPDC, SERAP, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation, and StepUp Nigeria. The theme was 'Institutionalizing Accountability for Effective Public Administration in Nigeria.' The communique raised by participants addressed issues of oversight mechanisms, merit-based governance, and tech-enabled civic engagement, amongst others.

In addition, recovered properties, including hotels and buildings, were being left to waste away. Keeping the businesses linked to corrupt enrichment afloat was also important because humans were working on such business concerns.

The aptness of the summit can be found in the number of public institutions departing from responsibility to their objectives. For example, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) can be said to have abandoned its primary responsibility by meddling in other activities that are the preserve of MDAs of the Nigerian Federal Government. These departures from the norm were aptly condemned by the CSOs. The CSO, HEDA Resource Centre, instituted a legal action against the CBN Governor Godwin Emefiele for acting against the provisions of the CBN Act, which bars him from engaging in partisan politics.

ARDP connected the Internal Revenue Services of Borno and Zamfara states to the relevant organizations and people to review tax laws. Also, the established Bureaus of Public Procurement can be deployed to assist the states in attaining public accountability standards. Also, the enactment of the Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act (2022) is the result of effective advocacy by civil society, for it had become embarrassing to note that the EFCC was finding it difficult to give an accurate figure of the recovered loot from PEPs. In addition, recovered properties, including hotels and buildings, were being left to waste away. Keeping the businesses linked to corrupt enrichment afloat was also important because humans were working on such business concerns.

Also, civil society deployed advocacy through statements, rallies, discussions, and roundtables to win the case for the Proceeds of

Also, the reports the government is getting from international institutions like the World Bank and IMF are pointers to the pressure mounted by civil society, and this is evidenced in budget transparency and the adoption of other global standards in project implementation at the local level.

Crime (Recovery and Management) Act (2022). CSOs also work to ensure that MDAs respond to audit queries raised by the Auditor-General of the Federation. This is a contribution to the implementation of an anti-corruption policy. CSOs also contribute to data generation and research for anti-corruption. This is evidence-based advocacy.

“One way to provide data, we have also provided data because if you look at the role of civil society, our role is to interrogate what the government is doing. If the government, in our estimation, is doing the wrong thing that will bring about the wrong result, we try as much as possible to tell them there is another way you can do it and the way you can do that as civil society is to provide the data, to do the research, to go in there and dig out where the knowledge is and share the knowledge with the government.” – Armsfree Ajanaku, CHRICED

“CSOs’ work has become the reference point for the push for accountability in government institutions. I can say that our work has been very impactful in that regard, in pushing the institutions, supporting them, providing

them with data, then when institutions do well also, we have a role to commend.” – Armsfree Ajanaku, CHRICED

BudgiT Foundation equally affirmed that CSOs work supports public institutions in attaining accountability in standard operating procedures.

“Through different approaches and strategies by CSOs, for instance, BudgiT’s Tracka is helping public institutions sensitize the people to understand that citizens’ knowledge and understanding of what government wants to do and is doing in their communities will go a long way in promoting the sustainability of such projects.” – Gabriel Okeowo, BudgiT Foundation

From the response by CITAD, civil society has worked to support public institutions to attain accountability in standard operating procedures. This is through monitoring standards, operating standards and procedures, conducting audits, and exposing irregularities. Also, the reports the government is getting from international institutions like the World Bank and IMF are pointers to the pressure mounted by civil society, and this is evidenced in budget transparency and the adoption of other global standards in project implementation at the local level.

On its part, CISLAC publishes a shadow report on the SDGs, focusing on Goal 16: ‘strong institutions, peace, justice and anti-

CSOs have also criticized the cost of maintaining a retinue of aides by a federal minister. This engagement is extended to the state governors who have developed the habit of appointing thousands of special assistants. Part of the suggested alternative programs is the need for digitalized and technology-driven governance to reduce the opportunity for exploitation and corruption in government.

corruption. CISLAC's stakeholders' engagement enables sharing ideas with government officials to identify challenges and gaps and review policy.

"Within that shadow report, you see what Nigeria has done, and we also have the recommendations, you know, what the government can do to achieve better or to perform better in the next year, all toward ensuring that in the country, we can reach these SDG goals that we set for 2030." – KII with CISLAC

Alternative Accountability Programs

The CSOs have consistently engaged the government to reduce the cost of governance. In consideration of the huge cost of a bicameral legislature in Nigeria, the CSOs have consistently advocated the alteration of the fundamental laws in favor of a unilateral legislature at the center. CSOs have also criticized the cost of maintaining a retinue of aides by a federal minister. This engagement is extended to the state governors who have developed the habit of

appointing thousands of special assistants. Part of the suggested alternative programs is the need for digitalized and technology-driven governance to reduce the opportunity for exploitation and corruption in government.

In particular, ARDP prepared a fiscal policy statement for Zamfara State, which is being adopted by the State Ministry of Finance and Budget to streamline the state's financial profile, improve the state's internally generated revenue, and run a cost-effective government. CHRICED has developed an alternative program on maternal health, which enables the organization to bring citizens face to face with the duty bearers on issues of maternal health. Also, CHRICED's employment and empowerment program helps deepen transparency and accountability in the distribution of government-run employment and empowerment programs.

CHRICED also has a flagship program on the promotion of the human rights of the original inhabitants in the Federal Capital Territory. Considering that corruption does not only entail stealing money, the aforementioned programs are driven with a mindset of core democratic tenets, transparency, accountability, and participation to ensure that program beneficiaries are not shut out.

SERAP does a lot of advocacy on the need to reduce the cost of governance. For example, SERAP asked the Federal High Court in Lagos to stop the House of Representatives from procuring and taking delivery of N57.6bn worth of 360 sports utility vehicles



(SUVs) for its members, pending the hearing and determination of the applications for injunction filed by the organization.¹⁵⁰

Alternative accountability programs also emanate from Connected Development's 'Follow the Money' and BudgIT Foundation's Tracka.

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For example, Tracka serves to track the actual implementation of government projects and interventions at all levels.

Further on alternative accountability programs, BudgIT Foundation reiterates that CSOs approach this from different aspects. Enough is Enough (EiE), for example, supports public institutions like the National Assembly by creating a platform where citizens can visit <https://www.shineyoureeye.org> and get a record of their elected representative, contact information, etc. This is very important to support the National Assembly and enhance better interactions with citizens. Similarly, PPDC's work of following through with public procurement and ensuring that states, even at the subnational level, have effective public procurement policies and frameworks is a

notable example to mention.

Referencing its work, BudgIT Foundation cited the value of its strategic relationships with the EFCC and ICPC by virtue of its Tracka work, which enables citizens to hold their elected officials accountable and spotlight potential fraud and corruption cases. As seen over time, the two critical anti-corruption government agencies with the power to prosecute now call people to account. Through this, they have seen tremendous results, such as contractors going back to the sites.

CSOs have served as platforms for equipping public officers with the requisite knowledge and skills to operate optimally within their respective roles and responsibilities. CSOs work with several public institutions to review their laws and make them more effective, such as amending the electoral laws and building capacity for effective service delivery. CSOs have also helped to develop tools that public institutions can use to educate the public, create awareness of public institutions' policies and laws, promote OGP in the country by building the capacities of public officers and reviewing strategy documents, support public officers with resources to attend conferences that increase their knowledge and capacity, sponsor bills and participated in public hearings that strengthened the laws of the land.

CSOs have also suggested and supported reforms in public procurement and accountability through consistent advocacy on the high cost of budgeting and pointing

out frivolous items in the budget in a bid to curb corruption. For example, CLP's 'CLP-ReclaimNaija' has suggested and supported the efforts of local governments to use evidence-based data for fiscal planning and project implementation.

Public Institutions and Future Impacts

Civil society is well-positioned to hold public institutions and public officeholders responsible for some or all of their actions. For instance, HEDA Resource Centre instituted a legal action against the Attorney General and Minister of Justice of the Federation at the ECOWAS Court. This was to address the Attorney General's failure to hold accountable the multinational oil corporations flaring gas in the oil-producing Niger Delta Area. Also, HEDA Resource Centre took bold

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steps to report the chief executive of some of these oil firms to law enforcement agencies to be held accountable for misgovernance, corruption, lack of transparency, and even abuse of office.

In effect, the multinational oil corporations are convinced of the impact of CSOs' oversight of their activities and are conscious of the impact of their actions. ARDP's interventions in Zamfara State have raised the political consciousness, thereby creating a better-informed society that tasks public officers to work. Arguably, state actors are in the process of becoming more responsive.

"Truth to the politician is anything that favors his political goals. In that sense, to any politician, the truth usually dies. But the moment you raise an issue, they are forced to respond, and in that process, you can have data to further your advocacy." – Armsfree Ajanaku, CHRICED

Civil Society and Good Governance

Civil society in Nigeria has contributed immensely to technology-driven governance. This is particularly traceable to the involvement of CSOs, such as BudgIT Foundation. In effect, BudgIT Foundation has succeeded in pushing governments to bring budget operations to some measure of digitalization and engagement in social media. The civic-tech tools and platforms developed by the organization over the years include:

www.budgit.org – a resource center for fiscal transparency and accountability.

www.tracka.ng – the service delivery promotion arm of BudgIT where citizens can access

Also, HEDA Resource Centre took bold steps to report the chief executive of some of these oil firms to law enforcement agencies to be held accountable for misgovernance, corruption, lack of transparency, and even abuse of office.

information the government wants to implement around them. They can read stories, report, and provide project updates regarding happenings in their constituency.

www.govspend.ng – a platform built on the open treasury portal that allows citizens to see the contract the government is issuing out, the amount, and name of the contractor, etc.

www.stateofstates.budgit.org – allows citizens to see the fiscal health of all 36 states in Nigeria.
www.me.budgit.org – a personalized platform that allows citizens to receive direct data regarding FAAC allocation to their states, LGAs and projects around them.

www.fixouroil.com – a platform for the extractive industry where citizens see our works and outputs in the sector.

www.civichive.org – a platform used to engage and train young civic leaders, and promote election and civic education.

In terms of the specific governance sectors, education has benefitted from the work of members of

the 'Joinbodi Cohort' apparently because CHRICED focuses on schools. Second, healthcare has also benefited because CHRICED focuses on hospitals. CHRICED also focuses on monitoring Zonal Intervention Projects (i.e., constituency projects), human capital development, and empowerment programs. CHRICED's advocacy covers all levels of government – federal level, subnational level, and local government. CHRICED has a robust citizen engagement. Through social audits, CHRICED brings people to town halls to state their priorities and sign social bonds and contracts with their political representatives. Beyond the 'Joinbodi Cohort,' CHRICED's legislative advocacy and broader work under the project, 'Strengthening Maternal Healthcare Through Accountability Interventions in Kano State,' led to the passage of Free Maternal and Child Healthcare Law in Kano State.

CITAD also has the health sector as its biggest beneficiary. Other benefitting sectors are anti-corruption, human rights, roads, cottage industries, and cottage initiatives. CITAD is involved in awareness creation, media campaigns, capacity building of CSOs, media practitioners, government officials, and, particularly, how to use social media to demand accountability. CITAD has trained ten thousand youths using social media to advocate for good governance and accountability. For inclusion purposes, CITAD equipped Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Kano State with ICT skills to contribute their voices and participate in anti-corruption efforts through various



digital tools. This hinges on neglect and marginalization faced by the PWD community.

As stated by CITAD's Program Officer on Digital Rights, Ali Sambo, *"This community lacks a voice to advocate for their rights, a crucial aspect of democracy. They lack representation to amplify their plights for progress in crucial areas like health, education, and governance."*¹⁵¹ CITAD also creates awareness among young people to report abandoned projects. CITAD is deploying technology to ensure that there is transparency in good governance. CITAD has joined other organizations to contribute to the successful implementation of the FoI Act. CITAD conducts research that leads to better information that inspires a call for action and peaceful walks. In sum, virtually all governance sectors have benefitted from CSOs' efforts.

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HEDA Resource Centre has been at the forefront of holding the government accountable at the individual and institutional levels. HEDA Resource Centre has been involved in the enforcement of the FoI Act (2011), directly involved with the anti-corruption

agencies by instituting a series of petitions against public office holders that have been accused of misgovernance or mismanagement of public resources, monitoring of judicial proceedings and judges involved in adjudicating on high profile corruption cases, as well as reporting suspected infractions to the National Judicial Council. In addition, HEDA Resource Centre has collaborated with anti-corruption agencies to achieve their underlying purpose of promoting good governance by giving learning opportunities to citizens interested in using the resources of specific anti-corruption agencies.

The very point of intervention for ARDP is budget engagement and review. ARDP articulates the principles of good governance within the context of Islamic religion by translating the budget for discussion with people in government, scholars, and ordinary people. The NGO, CLP, has worked to promote good governance in Nigeria in several ways. First, CLP supported INEC with resources to administer elections effectively for years. For example, INEC adopted the use of CLP's Election Situation Room for use during the 2011 General Elections. CLP also worked to create space for popular participation in Election Day Management and promote the participation of marginalized groups and low-income citizens, Persons with Disability, the Elderly, and faith-based organizations. CLP also provided support to INEC in voter education of the hard-to-reach populations and the resolution of issues.

In 2023, CLP provided IT facilities

and a ‘Short Code for the INEC Citizens Contact Centre.’ CLP is credited with changing the paradigm of Election Day Management by ensuring real-time reporting by citizens, which allows INEC to troubleshoot and resolve electoral incidents quickly while elections are still ongoing. CLP supported its submission with evidence from the literature.¹⁵² In the area of social accountability, CLP has worked with key government MDAs to achieve transparent and inclusive budgeting in 16 local governments, ensure the inclusion of citizens’ needs in the budget in 46 local governments, and build the capacity of public officers on participatory and inclusive budgeting. CLP has also been part of the state government’s efforts to adopt town hall meetings as mechanisms for budget inclusion. CLP also supports grassroots communities in constructively engaging their local governments in needs-based allocation.

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“We are seeing the real needs of communities being included in local budgets for implementation as a result

of the citizens’ demands and the shift in the behavior of local government officials to practice inclusive budgeting processes.” – CLP on Google Forms Survey

Citizens have also been empowered by CLP to track and monitor constituency projects and report the status of such projects to the ICPC. At the national level, CLP has engaged the National Assembly on ‘wasteful’ expenditures in the national budget. For example, federal lawmakers uncovered 25 new errors, amounting to about N37,025,238,407 in the 2016 budget estimates. Out of this amount, about N21,623,323,649 voted for office repairs that were rated ‘avoidable’ by the Senate and House of Representatives Committees on Appropriation. The errors spotted by the National Assembly at the last stage of the budget’s consideration were tallied with input from many CSOs, including CLP/Reclaim Naija.¹⁵³ CLP has also collaborated with other CSOs led by the Centre for Social Justice (under the Citizens Wealth Platform) to itemize and publish such frivolous items in the budget.

The firm, Joy Incredible Limited, tells stories on accountability and social change. The organization’s first film focused on the ills in the justice system (including Police impunity), to spotlight the problems that everyday people face in the course of accessing justice from public institutions. The story was told against the backdrop of the bad system that caused the #EndSars Protests of 2020.

152. Ballard, & Livingston (2014)

153. The Nation (2016)

Identifiable Gaps and Challenges of CSO Advocacy

For HEDA Resource Centre, financial and human resources are still needed to take some of the ongoing advocacy efforts to a political conclusion, which is understandable. Some cases would last for years before they are concluded or decided. There is also a gap in advocating for women's inclusion in governance, or more broadly, gender equality and social inclusion. One of the big gaps in advocacy is in the area of Zonal Intervention Projects (i.e., Constituency Projects). Some constituency projects, especially empowerment projects, do not have specific locations or numbers of beneficiaries, while projects are assigned to the wrong government agency (e.g., Public Complaints Commission constructing community halls or Federal Cooperative College, Ibadan constructing a mini-stadium in Osun State). Sometimes, the choice of constituency projects does not align with community needs, leading to project abandonment.

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On good governance, the area yet to open up for active engagement is the local government, apparently because the local government officials are not independent and incapable of making decisions without the approval of the state governors. According to HEDA Resource Centre's Chair, Olarewaju Suraju:

"This is what governors would not naturally do because there is a whole lot of misgovernance, corruption, and abuse of office at the local government level." – KII with HEDA Resource Centre

BudgIT Foundation's, Gabriel Okeowo, on his part, stated that there is still a huge response gap from state actors, *"We still need to overcome government's lack of responsiveness. We have situations where we reach out to state actors for information and do not get a response, but when the table turns, they expect us to respond immediately."*

Challenges:

Civil liberties are eroding, and the agency of the citizens is also under challenge in Nigeria. This is particularly applicable to the high levels of impunity in public services, such as the rigging of the electoral process. Interviewed stakeholders referred the case of the former Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) on the alleged N544 million grass-cutting scandal,¹⁵⁴ wherein the Nigerian Federal Government did not act until the CSOs mounted effective pressure. Also, a lot of CSOs spoke about the re-looting of the recovered assets and recovered

154. Olowolagba (2017)

Civil liberties are eroding, and the agency of the citizens is also under challenge in Nigeria. This is particularly applicable to the high levels of impunity in public services, such as the rigging of the electoral process. Interviewed stakeholders referred the case of the former Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) on the alleged N544 million grass-cutting scandal.

proceeds of crime, which led the EFCC to take responsibility for its actions. As observed by Armsfree Ajanaku:

“We know how money is playing its role in the political process. We know how our electoral process produces characters who do not believe they are accountable to anybody. So, getting them to take responsibility means, if you have done something wrong, you resign, right? How many of them are ready to resign when they do something wrong? Responsibility means that if it is found you wasted government money, you will refund it. How many of such cases have we had? So, that question is more of ‘we are still on the journey toward getting there.’ We are not yet there at all. We cannot kid ourselves. The state of our country, we have the highest number of poor people, our institutions, you know, still have major accountability issues.” – KII with CHRICED

There is a huge challenge in dealing with independent and responsible media. This is because some of the independent media are only independent in ownership to

some extent, but their operations are largely influenced by several interests, including those who are enemies of the society, such as corrupt government officials. The civic space is shrinking, there is an assault on civil liberties, and resources are thinning out. Government officials are reluctant to provide information and data about the government. A high level of political turnover amongst federal parliamentarians is impacting CSOs’ advocacy and work. For example, PLSI invests hugely in politicians by building their technical capacity to provide good governance.

CSOs also face the challenges of insufficient resources and resistance from interested persons. There is also the challenge of limited access to information. Most information that should be made public is labeled top secret or covered with evasive information that does not provide answers that would support the story. There is a high level of impunity, flagrant disregard for the rule of law, and blurred separation of powers.

Risks:

CSOs in Nigeria face several risks. For example, HEDA Resource Centre’s office has been physically attacked, legally attacked, and attacked in the media. There have been several threats to the organization’s leadership, work, and existence, as well as the lives of its staff. For CHRICED, politicians feel they are troublemakers. This is a risk because it is increasingly difficult for CSOs to deliver on their program objectives. For those who monitor Zonal Intervention Projects (i.e., constituency projects), there

Chapter 4

Conclusion



4.1. Introduction

The distinct space occupied by civil society has been well elaborated in the literature. Civil society plays unique roles in advancing the rights of all populations. Globally, civil society works to address the challenges of governance. In Africa, civil society, particularly in the early 1990s, was a platform for advocacy, protest, and resistance against excesses and abuse of state power. In Nigeria, civil society was partly inspired by the remarkable vibrancy in response to the distress of despotism and their advocacy for constitutionalism. Yet, civil society has continued to play leading roles in Nigeria's democratization process. This visibility has engendered studies on civil society, elections, and broadly, civil society and democratic tenets. Apart from this enviable civil society status, Nigeria also hosts

A review of the contextual landscape (i.e., Nigeria) affirms the closing, shrinking, and shifting space of civil society in Nigeria, which is also evidenced in a number of restrictive legislative proposals.

the briefcase NGOs. It suffices to note that the vibrancy of civil society, on the one hand, and the proliferation of 'unregistered non-profit entities' call for a thorough understanding of the efforts of civil society in advancing transparency, accountability, and good governance. This helps to explain

the relevance of this research.

To gain an understanding of the major conceptual underpinnings, the research offers a review of the concepts of transparency, accountability, and good governance. First, transparency hinges on the idea that "the more closely we are watched, the better we behave." Second, accountability is 'answerability,' and it is either reactive or proactive. Third, good governance is indicated by the absence of corruption, such as clientelism, cronyism, discrimination, nepotism, patronage, and the 'capture' of agencies of administrative regulations by interest groups. Thus, attempts were made to identify the specific governance sectors that benefitted and the defective ones that have yet to gain support from civil society.

A review of the contextual landscape (i.e., Nigeria) affirms the closing, shrinking, and shifting space of civil society in Nigeria, which is also evidenced in a number of restrictive legislative proposals. Key policy reforms of the Nigerian Federal Government were also considered to cover open government, anti-corruption, asset recovery, electoral integrity, whistleblowing, fiscal transparency, extractive transparency, judicial transparency, freedom of information, open contracting and procurement, income and asset disclosure, gender equality and social inclusion, as well as service delivery.

4.2. Summary of Evidence

CSOs and Behavioral Change in Government

Interviewed stakeholders agreed to the influence of CSOs' interventions on behavioral change by government officials. Such interventions by CSOs include public interest litigations, policy advisories, and influential engagement. A recent behavioral change is that of a serving minister responding to CSOs' demand for an apology. Arguably, the minister's apology and expressed commitment are pointers to plausible behaviors by public officers toward gender-based violence and sextortion, which is fast gaining attention in the policy space.

Citizens are positioned to serve as watchdogs to government officials. Some citizens operate in civil society, the media space, the knowledge space (e.g., researchers), and the opinion formation space (e.g., columnists and writers).

CSOs and Information Exchange

The evidence also suggests that there is a redefinition of information exchange because government actors no longer discard information requested by citizens and groups. A pointer to this is the unique role CSOs played in enacting the Fol

Act (2011), which is redefining the rules of engagement on access to information. The Nigerian Federal Government will oblige information requests if they do not involve sensitive fiscal matters and national security. Therefore, context matters.

Access to Government Information

Interviewed stakeholders were also unanimous on the citizens' empowerment through access to information. Thus, citizens are positioned to serve as watchdogs to government officials. Some citizens operate in civil society, the media space, the knowledge space (e.g., researchers), and the opinion formation space (e.g., columnists and writers). In sum, civil society, the media, the organized private sector, different associations, women groups, persons with disabilities, youth forums, traditional institutions, religious organizations, organized labor, opposition parties, clubs, associations, and citizens in general should have access to information.

Governmental Domains and Transparency

The domains of government that have benefitted from CSOs' interventions in transparency matters include the federal government (particularly the executive and judicial branches). The 'Joinbodi Cohort' emergence has created some elements of transparency, accountability, probity, citizen participation, citizen knowledge, and citizen-driven design in constituency projects. There is no transparency at the



legislative branch of government and no accountability at the state and local government levels. Sadly, the local government is under the direct control of the state governors; as a result, scaling up should be directed at the local government level. Other benefiting domains include the financial sector (e.g., Zamfara State) and procurement (e.g., Bauchi State).

Civil Society and Policy Advocacy

Through CSOs' advocacy, public officers are compelled to release the required information. Policy advocacy by CSOs has led to the adoption of the Bureau of Public Procurement as part of the legal framework established by the subnational governments. In 2021, African Centre for Media and Information Literacy (AFRICMIL) collaborated with the Presidential

CSOs have supported several public institutions to attain accountability, such as standard electoral processes by the INEC and improved operations of the Police, the Judiciary, and the Bureau of Public Procurement.

Initiative on Continuous Audit (PICA) to review five years of the Nigerian Federal Government's Whistleblowing Policy.

CSOs and Accountability Support

It can be said that the purpose of civil society engagement is accountability, that is, to raise voices as active citizens for the promotion of accountability. It is

to push for public institutions and politically exposed persons (PEPs) to operate within the set standard operating procedures (SOPs). CSOs have supported several public institutions to attain accountability, such as standard electoral processes by the INEC and improved operations of the Police, the Judiciary, and the Bureau of Public Procurement. An example is the 2023 Accountability Summit organized by the 'Joinbodi Cohort' dominated CSOs. The communique raised by participants addressed issues of oversight mechanisms, merit-based governance, and tech-enabled civic engagement, amongst others. The aptness of the summit can be found in the number of public institutions departing from the responsibility to their objectives.

Alternative Accountability Programs

From the responses by the interviewed stakeholders, CSOs have been consistent in engaging the government for the possible reduction of the cost of governance, such as the advocacy for unicameral legislature via alteration of the fundamental laws of the land. CHRICED has developed an alternative program on maternal health, which enables the organization to bring citizens face-to-face with the duty bearers on issues of maternal health. SERAP also advocates for the need to reduce the cost of governance.

Public Institutions and Future Impacts

Public institutions and future impacts are signposted by HEDA Resource Centre's legal action against the Attorney General

and Minister of Justice of the Federation at the ECOWAS Court. The purpose was to address the Attorney General's failure to hold multinational oil corporations flaring gas in the oil-producing Niger Delta Area accountable.

Civil Society and Good Governance

Civil society in Nigeria has contributed immensely to technology-driven governance. This is particularly traceable to the involvement of CSOs, such as BudgIT Foundation. BudgIT Foundation has succeeded in pushing governments to upgrade budget operations to some measure of digitalization and engagement in the social media space.

Identifiable Gaps and Challenges of CSOs' Advocacy

The interviewed stakeholders highlighted a number of challenges to the effectiveness of their work. These include financial and human resources, time lag on some cases in court, women's inclusion in governance, and constituency projects. In particular, the local government is yet to open up for active engagement because the officials are not independent and are incapable of making decisions without the approval of their state governors. Also, a lot needs to be done in the area of local government elections.

For HEDA Resource Centre, there has not been much coordination of the 'Joinbodi Cohort,' but the MacArthur Foundation can help ensure that the gaps are bridged among the individual members of the Cohort. It is also important to see how the organizations

are brought to some measure of important realization of connecting the dots with their different activities to make the circle go round, rather than having a dot that partly forms a shape without connecting with another. There is a need to consistently and continuously provide leadership and coordination for those who will value what is inherent in the achievement of individual organizations. For CLP, the points of coordination would be in the area of transparency and accountability in the management of constituency projects.

Challenges and Risks

Civil liberties are eroding, and the agency of the citizens is challenged in Nigeria. This is particularly applicable to the high levels of impunity in public services, such as rigging the electoral process for favorable outcomes. The last is also a consideration, as there is a huge challenge in dealing with independent and responsible media. CSOs in Nigeria are faced with several risks where some CSOs have been physically attacked, legally attacked, or attacked in the media. There have been several threats to some organizations' leadership, work, and existence, as well as the lives of their staff.

4.3. Recommendation

In the light of the earlier evidence, we recommend the following:

A. General

1. Heighten OGP Implementation:

CSOs should continue to leverage existing international commitments, such as the Open Government Partnership (OGP), a major co-creation tool for engaging governments and other non-state actors toward realizing effective governance in Nigeria.

2. Combat Corruption through Advocacy for Financial Intelligence:

Civil society energies should be directed at advocacy for the full implementation of the Nigerian Financial Intelligence's guidelines, including support for the institutionalization of financial autonomy in the local governments. Also, action research is needed for the achievement of SDGs 16, Target 5, 'substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms,' by all tiers of the Nigerian government. This will enable CSOs to hold elected officials accountable to promote a peaceful and inclusive Nigerian society.

3. Sustain Digital Platforms for Effective Governance:

CSOs should work toward improving online platforms for issue reporting, data collection, and project review. While CSOs have built civic technology tools, efforts must be geared towards sustaining their impact beyond the Joinbodi program. The adoption of artificial

intelligence will also strengthen effective governance and the use of technology.

4. Heighten Budgets Transparency and Promote Inclusive Budgeting:

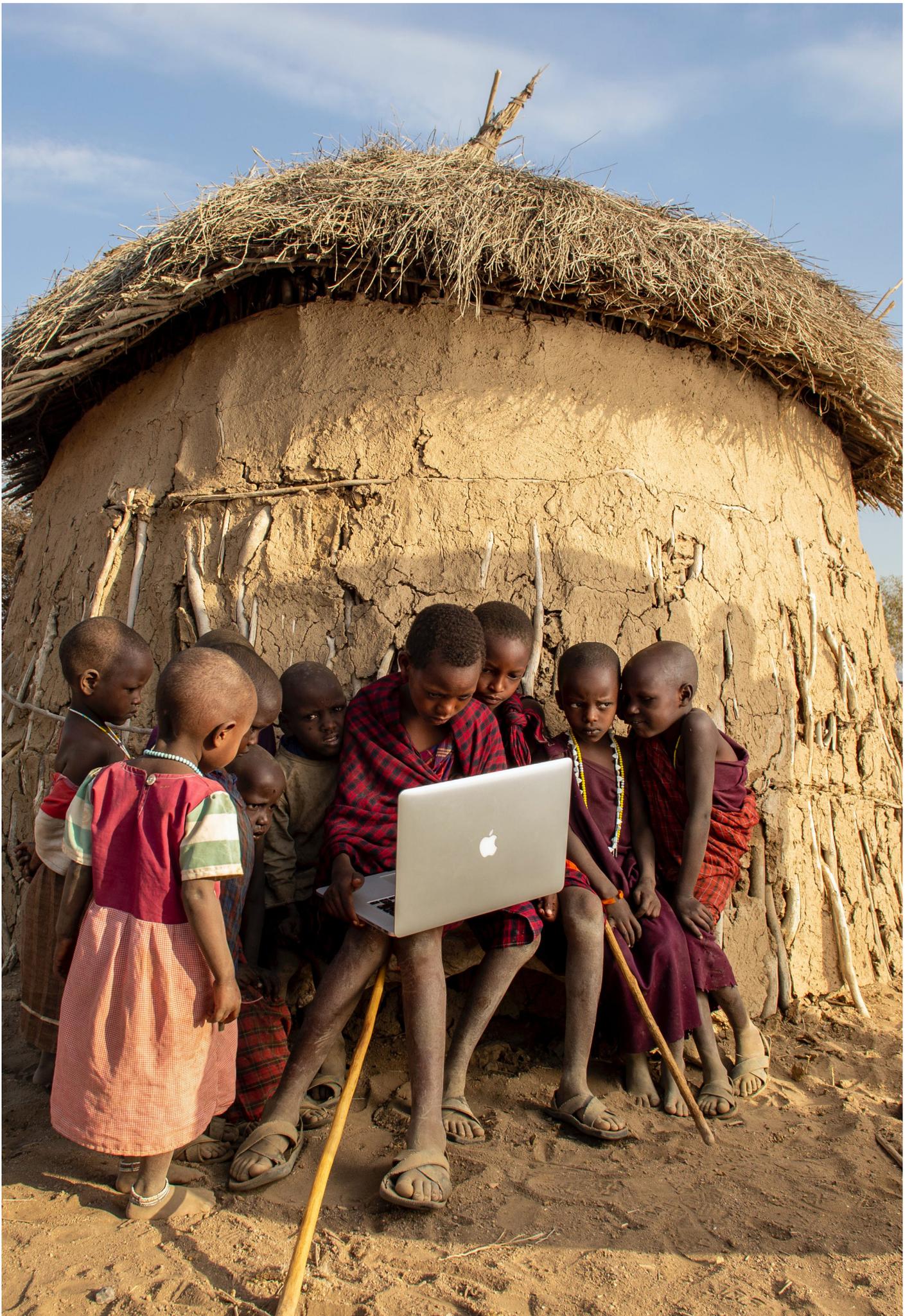
The positive transparency practices occurring at the federal level (e.g., publishing budget details) need to be pushed for replication at the subnational and local government levels. In the post-SFTAS environment, all states and local governments should be encouraged to adopt inclusive budgeting. This will entail needs-based community development plans to encourage the judicious use of resources.

5. Debt Transparency and Management:

CSOs should continue to reinforce strategies to advocate for public debt transparency. This will help stem the tide of borrowing away the country's future as increasing indebtedness by national and subnational governments is limiting the country's strength to provide basic social services.

6. Climate Change-related Advocacy:

CSOs should continue to heighten awareness about climate change challenges, advocate the adoption of new climate change resilience approaches, push for the implementation of post-COP 28 agreements, and encourage civic actors' participation in climate change financing processes. This is a new frontier of advocacy that should be embraced by CSOs due to the enormous funding from the global level.



B. Preservation and Scaling Up

1. Members of the 'Joinbodi Cohort' should scale up for more positive results in transparency. Perceptively, the scope of interventions by members of the 'Joinbodi Cohort' is in pockets of states: Kano has 44 Local Government Areas (LGAs), Ekiti has 16 LGAs, Kaduna has 23 LGAs, and Lagos has 20 LGAs. According to census figures, Kano is the most populous, and Lagos is the second most populous. Whereas a critical mass is needed for scaling up, the transparency work has yet to reach the critical mass. Therefore, scaling up would require reaching at least four states in each of the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria, amounting to 24 states of the federation.

'Joinbodi Cohort' should coordinate and work together toward sharing knowledge and ensuring that organizations and personnel work together.

2. Civil society should engage more with states and local governments. This would help to unearth how about 52 percent of the Federal Allocation is domiciled. The state governors not only control their states but also control the local governments. More than 52 percent of the Nigerian Federal Government allocation disappears through the state governors under the guise of the State-Local Government Joint Account Allocation Committee. Applied to the branches of

government at the state level, there should be more engagement with the executive branch of government.

3. Scaling up and preserving progress are possibilities. However, this hinges on a favorable operational environment for civil society, including support for their actions. The major support would be from development partners who value and understand the enormity of the work that civil society does and also the implications of such work for many civil society operators, as well as the mechanisms in terms of the anti-corruption agencies, and the judiciary being open to favorable dispositions toward the activities of CSOs.

4. CHRICED envisages that scaling up would be achieved through proper coordination and interfacing as a cohort, regular meetings, and group presentations at international fora, such as the Cohort's presentation at the OGP meeting held in Estonian. Thus, there should be collaboration among the 'Joinbodi Cohort.'

5. 'Joinbodi Cohort' should coordinate and work together toward sharing knowledge and ensuring that organizations and personnel work together. Organizations sometimes execute projects together, which helps to reduce the tension of rivals or competition. CSOs are partners and can work together continuously. Adapting to new challenges and the need to promote political leadership and governance within communities will also give a chance for more learning.

4. See "9 largest cement producers in Africa", by CCE News Team, on January 27, 2023, in CCE Online. Available at: <https://cceaonline.com/2023/01/27/cement-producers-in-africa/#:~:text=Obajana%20now%20has%20a%20cement,in%20West%20and%20Central%20Africa.>

5. See "The Story Behind Ajakuta", by Temiloluwa Oyeniyi, on August 2 2022, in Najja Biography (Online). Available at: [https://najjabio.com/history-culture/the-story-behind-ajakuta/.](https://najjabio.com/history-culture/the-story-behind-ajakuta/)

6. See Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Online), Natural Resources, Federal Government of Nigeria. Available at: [https://foreignaffairs.gov.ng/nigeria/natural-resources/.](https://foreignaffairs.gov.ng/nigeria/natural-resources/)

6. One of the ways to improve the efforts of CSOs is to institutionalize the work they do. To achieve this, there should be opportunities for engagement with the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly on developing frameworks for needs assessment before budget preparation and formulation, as well as constituency project implementation.

C. Risk Mitigation

1. The identifiable risks can be mitigated by increasing the consciousness of international partners to deploy their diplomatic influence to support CSOs in dealing with the numerous risks to their work and existence. A departure point would be clarity on the level of involvement of big countries and international partners in monitoring government officials' activities toward shrinking the civic space. Therefore, much work must be done to expose the repression of the civic space in Nigeria.

2. The valid response to insecurity is to do a security assessment in the course of project implementation. For example, CHRICED does proper community entry before proceeding to do their work. Also,

there should be legal protection for civil society actors and their rights, especially those working in the areas of transparency and accountability.

3. Another risk mitigation would be to ensure that the law works for everyone. Ensure internet safety for CSOs and actors. CSOs can strengthen partnerships. Diversified funding sources will help to address insufficient resources. Of course, CSOs will survive when they have enough funds.

4. There is a need for security measures for CSO activists and personnel who are always on the frontline of propagating transparency, accountability, and good governance. There should be physical and online security measures for CSOs, actors, and activists.

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Annexure I



Draft Guide for Key Informant Interviews

A. Transparency related

1. Do you know of any interventions by CSOs that have resulted in appropriate behavior by Nigerian public officers?
2. In your opinion, who are the people outside the government who should have access to government information?
3. Are civil society efforts leading to a redefinition of information exchange in terms of speed, accessibility, ease of use, etc? Please, explain based on your understanding.
4. In your opinion, which of the domains of government activity have become transparent as a result of the efforts of civil society in Nigeria. Is it possible to scale-up for more positive outcomes?

B. Accountability related

5. What has civil society done in advocating for compliance with legal and policy frameworks by public institutions? Are state actors becoming honest in behavior as a result of civil society efforts?
6. Do you think civil society's work supports public institutions to attain accountability in standard operating procedures? How?
7. How do civil society efforts support public institutions to achieve their objectives? What alternative accountability programs have CSOs suggested and supported? Maybe cost of governance?
8. Are CSOs able to convince public institutions to take responsibility for future impacts of their actions?

C. Good governance related

9. What specific governance sectors have benefitted from civil society efforts? What areas have yet to gain the support from civil society?
10. What is your organization doing to promote good governance in Nigeria? Please, tell us the progress made so far.

D. General

11. What are the gaps left in advocacy and agitation by your organization? What challenges have you encountered? Are there any risks? How can these risks be mitigated in the course of your organization's intervention?
12. Do you think the progress made by civil society can be preserved? How do we improve upon these efforts? What are the points of coordination for the 'Joinbodi Cohort' in their areas of interventions?

End of Questions

Note—Before commencement:

- 1.** Ask each participant to tell you about himself or herself, mentioning name, age, ethnicity, religion, education, marital status, work and professional experiences, hobbies, community services, activism, and political affiliation (if any).
- 2.** Each participant or stakeholder will be assigned a number that will be used for introduction during discussion on any topic. This will be for identity safeguard.

Annexure II



List of Interviewees and Their Coordinates

S/N	Organization	Representative/ Official Status	E-Mail/ Telephone
1	Arewa Research and Development Project (ARDP)	Prof. Kabiru Chafe/Director	chafe111@gmail.com
2	Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD)	John Otaro/M & Evaluation Officer	
3	Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD)	Ali Sabo/Program Officer on Digital Rights	
4	Civil Society Legislative and Advocacy Centre (CISLAC)	Bathsheba Tagwai/Senior Legal Officer	b.tagwai@cislac.org
5	Civil Society Legislative and Advocacy Centre (CISLAC)	Emmanuel Ebu/Assistant Program Officer	e.ebu@cislac.org
6	Community Life Project	Francis Onahor/Program Manager	clpnig@communitylifeproject.org 0803-385-6223
7	Human and Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA Resource Centre)	Olanrewaju Surajudeen/Chair	larryk371@yahoo.co.uk
8	Joy Incredible Limited	Damola Morenikeji/Co-founder & COO	damola@joyinc.xyz dorcass@joyinc.xyz
9	Paradigm Leadership Support Initiative	Olusegun Elemo/Executive Director	olusegun.elemo@plsinitiative.org

List of Interviewees and Their Coordinates

S/N	Organization	Representative/ Official Status	E-Mail/ Telephone
10	Resource Centre for Human Rights and Civic Education (CHRICED)	Armsfree Ajanaku/Progs & Communication Mgr.	armsfree.ajanaku@gmail.com
11	Socio- Economic Rights and Accountability Project	Kóláwolé Olúwádàre/Deputy Director	kolawoleoluwadare@se rap-nigeria.org
12	Socio- Economic Rights and Accountability Project	Ruth Otori/Program Officer Folashade Arigbabu/Program Coordinator	
13	Socio- Economic Rights and Accountability Project	Odun Ayo/Program Officer	
14	Socio- Economic Rights and Accountability Project	Odunayo Igbaoyinbo/Program Officer	
15	Socio- Economic Rights and Accountability Project		

Annexure III



Members of the 'Joinbodi Cohort' and Their Interventions

S/N	Organization	Purpose	MacArthur/Joinbodi Supported
1	African Centre for Leadership, Strategy & Development (Centre LSD)	Work with forces of positive change to empower citizens to transform society.	Educated CSOs on Nigeria's plan for implementing the OGP, an initiative to secure commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and strengthen governance.
2	African Centre for Media and Information Literacy (AFRICMIL)	Promote media and information literacy for enhanced democracy and good governance.	Corruption Anonymous (CORA) Project, mobilized public support and built confidence in the whistleblowing policy of the Nigerian Federal Government.
3	Agora Policy Foundation	Generate and advocate evidence-based, inclusive, and pragmatic public policies that sustainably address challenges.	Reinforced accountability and anti-corruption in Nigeria through policy analysis, policy engagement, and technical assistance to legislative aides, policy advisors, and civil society groups.
4	Arewa Research and Development Project (ARDP)	Unlock Nigeria's northern states' huge potentials (agriculture, water, and mineral resources) to create jobs and prosperity.	Anti-Corruption and Social Accountability Project translated and disseminated investigative reports on corruption into Kanuri and Hausa and also used infographics and data visualization.
5	Brookings Institution's Africa Growth Initiative	Inform policy that makes a difference in the lives of the people of Africa.	Supported technology innovation, which focuses on delivering research that affects public debate and policymaking in the arena of U.S. and global technology innovation.
6	BudgIT Foundation	Use creative technology to simplify public information and stimulate a community of active citizens to demand accountability and institutional reforms. Promote democracy and active citizenship through ICT and civic empowerment programs.	Expanded fiscal transparency work through the development of technology platforms while it leveraged its digital and offline footprint to drive use by citizens in Southwest/east Nigeria. Collaborated with media organizations to identify corruption in the use of public funds through the GovSpend platform. Led programming for young leaders on change-making and arts for change under the Creative Change Makers Fellowship (CCMF) which was piloted in 2023 and implemented by CivicHive.

Members of the 'Joinbodi Cohort' and Their Interventions

S/N	Organization	Purpose	MacArthur/Joinbodi Supported
7	Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD)	Promote democracy and active citizenship through ICT and civic empowerment programs.	Supported equitable recovery from COVID-19 in Nigeria's Northern region by educating the public about the virus and mobilizing support for vaccine rollout and mobilized citizens' action for accountable election and governance in Nigeria.
8	Civil Society Legislative and Advocacy Centre (CISLAC)	Strengthen the link between civil society and the legislature through advocacy and capacity building for civil society groups and policymakers on legislative processes and governance issues.	Amplified the reach of investigative reports related to corruption and improved mechanisms and systems for preventing, detecting, and punishing corruption.
9	Community Life Project (CLP)	Reduce human misery by empowering citizens to be positive change agents.	Supported the building of a robust community movement on participatory budgeting and resource tracking. Strengthened diverse local voices and their skills for identifying and prioritizing constituency projects in their communities.
10	Connected Development (CODE)	Empower marginalized communities.	Monitored and advocated for accountability in the flow of and use of Universal Basic Education Funds in Kaduna State.
11	Human and Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA Resource Centre)	Serve as a policy and campaign center for research, training, and advocacy on the environment, good governance and human rights.	Gani Fawehinmi Impact and Integrity Awards (GFIIA), rewarded acts of integrity, accountability, and whistleblowing by deserving Nigerians. Other impacts included strengthening anti-corruption systems, Institutions, and networks (with CeFTIW).
12	Initiative for Research, Innovation, and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD)	Strengthen democratic governance by promoting public accountability and enhancing the capabilities of governance institutions and citizens to be effective.	Consolidated Nigeria's recent gains in the electoral process by establishing the Nigeria Election Working Group. Efforts included evidence-based research on electoral reform and election management.
13	Joy Incredible Limited	Mainstream evidence and research on human flourishing, and the power of	Worked with MacArthur Foundation to stimulate actions on high-profile corruption cases in Nigeria, which

Members of the 'Joinbodi Cohort' and Their Interventions

S/N	Organization	Purpose	MacArthur/Joinbodi Supported
		emotions to transform society.	included telling the stories around accountability and social change. The first film focused on exposing the ills in the justice system and police impunity.
14	Paradigm Leadership Support Initiative (PLSI)	Advance accountability, foster good governance, and enhance development in marginalized and underserved communities.	Supported state auditor-general offices, public accounts committees, and anti-corruption agencies and non-state actors to strengthen compliance with public audit requirements.
15	Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC)	Strengthen democratic governance and citizens' participation.	<p>PLAC has contributed to improving social inclusion in Nigeria, strengthened the voice of the disability community to increase demand for disability inclusion in the electoral process and created awareness of the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018, and related policies through advocacy, stakeholders' convening, support to INEC's Department of Gender and Inclusivity, and institutional and programmatic support to the Secretariat of the Joint National Association of Persons with Disability (JONAPWD).</p> <p>In partnership with JONAPWD Secretariat, PLAC supported the review and adoption of a new constitution for JONAPWD to strengthen it. Also, with the support of the Foundation through PLAC, Savannah Centre (Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy, and Development) convened numerous forums at the subnational level to improve social cohesion in Nigeria.</p> <p>Furthermore, TAF Africa and Cedarseed Foundation created awareness and engaged stakeholders on inclusive governance at the national level, focusing on why persons with disability should be nominated like others into appointive positions, while Data-Lead Africa strengthened the employability skills and economic base of persons with disabilities through digital literacy training for persons hard of hearing.</p>

Members of the 'Joinbodi Cohort' and Their Interventions

S/N	Organization	Purpose	MacArthur/Joinbodi Supported
16	Public and Private Development Centre (PPDC)	Mobilize citizens for integrity in public sector procurement governance.	Deployed Budeshi, a dedicated web platform that links budget and procurement to various public services using the Open Contracting Data Standards. Also, integrated GESI in the procurement cycle.
17	Resource Centre for Human Rights and Civic Education (CHRICED)	Promote the understanding and commitment of citizens and groups to the ideals, values, and principles of democracy.	Tracked constituency projects funded by state and federal governments using the technical and grant support by MacArthur Foundation.
18	Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation	Promote national unity, good governance, and a just, democratic Nigeria.	Deployed accountability portal (in collaboration with Reboot), to provide access to tools and vital resources to enable accountability partners to address key societal issues.
19	Social Development Integrated Centre (Social Action)	Promote social justice by building solidarity with communities and citizens' groups.	Implemented the Public Finance Accountability Program to respond to investigative reports on corruption by organizing, mobilizing, and coordinating with community groups.
20	Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP)	Promoting transparency, accountability, and respect for socio-economic rights through training, advocacy, research, and strategic litigation.	Supported transparency and accountability in public resource management and also currently deepening, consolidating, and institutionalizing anti-corruption and accountability work.
21	Women's Rights Advancement & Protection Alternative (WRAPA)	Advance and protect the rights of women and girls.	Supported electoral integrity, engaging political parties, anti-corruption agencies, and the electoral management body, and educating the public on the monetization of the electoral process.

Annexure IV: Transcribed Interviews



Arewa Research and Development Project

Thank you very much sir. My name is Oscar E. Ubhenin, and I am doing this project on behalf of BudgIT Foundation. I want to see what has been happening within the 'Joinbodi Cohort' in the area of transparency, accountability and good governance. And I was introduced to you by BudgIT Foundation for the purpose of this interview. So, sir, let us start by getting to know you better.

Is Bello on the line? Yes, I am on the line. We represent Arewa Research...on Nigeria 1 & 2. We participated on Nigeria's own; I think we are now in Nigeria 2, right? Ok, yes. Physically, originally, our mandate has been to translate investigative reports into Hausa, Kanuri and disseminate them around Borno State, and to our focal States, Zamfara State in Northwest and Borno State in Northeast. But because the entire project encapsulates issues around anti-corruption, social accountability and transparency, so, we actually expanded even before the Nigeria 2.0, we translated the capital budget of Zamfara and Borno into Hausa and Kanuri and engage all the civil societies, Christian groups and citizens in community palace.

And progressively, we also become involved in not only translation, but in monitoring constituency projects. In the case of Zamfara, I think we have done if for a moment of I think four years, from 2017, 2018, 2019. So, we monitor federal constituency projects, that have been delivered and we have reports both in English and also translated in Hausa. And also engaged both people in the government and social classes to disseminate what is happening.

So, these are some of the things we have been doing so far. And I am sure it is because of our engagement in the monitoring and reporting constituency projects that is why we have been introduced to you I suspect, right? Currently, actually we are up to date. In the case of Zamfara we have reported 2021, 2022 constituency projects. We are actually working on the report and trying to translate.

In the case of budget, we have also translated and validated the capital budget of 2021, 2022 and 2023. The one of Zamfara has been translated, the one of one of Borno State is still being translated and I am sure they have gone far, maybe they might have finished. In the case of Zamfara actually we are validating the translated document. In the case of Zamfara also, I think we did a study of the fiscal policy from 2018 to 2022. The whole idea is to come up with a report, which may aid the state toward fiscal reforms.

I think now we have a new government, which we feel is much more forward-looking, and which we feel might imbibe a lot of issues that we have raised arising from the shortcomings that we have highlighted as a result our investigation of the state over the last six years. In a nutshell, this where we are, maybe as the discussion goes on, maybe I can highlight some issues. I think this gives a general background?

Thank you, sir. So very quickly we move... if you look at the template that I sent to you, the questions are in four streams, transparency, accountability, good governance and general. So, we start with transparency related questions. And the first question goes like this: Do you know of any interventions by civil society organizations that resulted in appropriate behavior by the Nigerian public officers?

Interventions, is from the local or international? Interventions from civil society organizations... that is local, right? Yes! When you say interventions... interventions in terms of what? Interventions in terms of monetary contributions or in terms of activities... It should cover all the... any intervention at all. Any activity that your... maybe your organization is doing or maybe any other CSO is

doing... Of course, because some of these... like now, the case of Zamfara and I am sure even in the case of Borno State, you know, because of the activities of civil society organizations, now budget debated in the State Assemblies have factored representation from civil society organization like what you call open discussion, on Nigeria 1.0 or 2.0 network.

Now, you know they are indicted, and there are even memos, memos from the committees, and there is open discussion and people are discussing, and then also indeed because I am sure before in Zamfara and in Borno, some of these states don't have actually have federal account. I am sure in the case of Borno, I don't know whether they are available... because I superintended over the one in Borno. The case of Zamfara actually, the federal accounts were largely as a result of activities, so that answer is actually a big yes, you know, it has made tremendous positive changes actually in the behavior of public officers in the conduct of public affairs of the state.

Ok, thank you sir. I don't know if Bello will like to add something because honestly, he knows the sources from Zamfara. He may add something. If you go through our reports, Borno more often than not, the activities in Borno mirror that of Zamfara, but then in Borno State, just like Prof said, before 2010, I mean before 2018, from 2010 to 2018 there has never been a federal account in Borno State before the intervention by RDP.

Equally, as well, what they prepare now they call them citizens budget. It is because of the activities of civil society organizations that the CSO are now invited for their inputs before the budget, and they are invited to monitor and track the budget implementation, which is a big plus, it is something new in Borno State. They have never had it before this intervention. Thank you. Well I don't know... those your reports you made reference to, if you can share them, share the soft copies with me to enhance our research. It will also increase the visibility of your organization in this project. Go ahead, after we will share the soft copies. Ok, thank you sir.

Quickly, we go to the second question. In your opinion, who are the people outside government that should have access to government information? Virtually everybody should, government is everybody's business. Actually, that is the heart... a lot of activities telling the public... government is corporate society's business within the environment. So, everybody is entitled. In fact what we are trying to do particularly in our relationship with CSOs is to encourage them to simplify some of these information, you know, for public consumption.

You know, that is why they are being translated. And if you ask me, if you can ask the same question, maybe, who are the critical stakeholders in ensuring that some of these information get to the public? Maybe I will outline some. In the case of Zamfara, I will say maybe the organised sectors, maybe organised labour, CSOs, maybe clubs, associations, and the Council of Ulama, that is the religious leaders. You because Zamfara is predominantly muslims, you remember that there is this hype about sharia in the case of Zamfara during the early 1st republic from 1999 during the time of Yerima as the governor who practised sharia.

So, these Ulama became a prominent social group... that has always been the historical context. But now, we are engaging them and in fact virtually all our engagements, the teachers participated, they have access to these information and we encourage them to disseminate these information even during Friday sermons, you know, as part of the anti- corruption crusade and also to highlight that the public office and the people need to work hand-in-hand, you know, the people should control the public office of their trust and public officers should also be ready to account for their activities because they do that on behalf of the people. So, the answer to the question is that everybody has access... the information is no longer secret.

You know, before our activities, even published budgets; people don't have access to published budgets. Now, it is almost everywhere. Actually in the case of Borno, they are sold for a small amount. In the case of Zamfara, it is actually free and people have access to it, which was not use to be the case. There is a league of CSOs actually working on the budget either by monitoring or and actually helping the people to ask questions, to interact with their representatives so that they can relay what they think is their main concern in the next fiscal arrangement, specifically when they are trying to pursue projects in most of the constituencies.

In the case of Zamfara, apart from federal constituencies, they have constituency projects in each constituency of the State House of Assembly. Now, the budget information is no longer a top secret actually. People are aware now that it is supposed to be opened. And there are a lot of CSOs who are making use of the information and freedom Act, they have been writing to demand for information. Thank you very much sir. I think ehh... just a word or two; I think the context and the spirit of freedom of information Act has made it mandatory for everybody to have access to information. And secondly, the essence of the translation that we are doing is to make that readily available, whatever information, whether it is budget, anti-corruption, and in general governance, information like that should be freely available for everybody that is interested in getting the information.

Ok, thank you. And then, we go straight to the third question. Are civil society efforts leading to a redefinition of information exchange in terms of speed, accessibility, and ease of use? Please explain based on your understanding. There is no definition of how actually the state actors dish out these information. Now, they ask some of these CSOs to come for the debate. They ask them to come for the discussion. I think that we have already answered it, unless you want us to over-emphasise it.

For of ease use, we have them, we have translated some of these information. So, they are now not only easily available, but they are more easily understood, you know, by a wider segment of the population because they can read in their own level. And also in form of presentation, we have graphs to simplify complex information, which an average Nigerian can make sense of. So, the answer to that is, you know, well I have answered it even in the last question we have answered that one.

In fact, that is one of our objectives so that we redefine the way we access these information so that they access it not easily, but so that they can understand the contents. That is why it is translated so that it can have community value, so that they can understand and try to contextualize these information. *Ok, maybe your colleague has something to add.* Like he said, the explanation given in question 2 captures most of the things related to question 3. The speed may be slow but accessibility is more.

Accessibility is much, much, much more than before now. *Ok, if we are doing the matrix we discover that we have been achieving in terms of accessibility, but in terms of speed,..* What I like to add is that we are talking about our own operational areas. So, if you know the background, we started, the speed is fantastic, it is enormous. Because of the society we are operating in ahh, is a society that never borders about governance or government, about their activities and so on. So, it is like starting from ground zero. If you know where we reach now, it is enormous, because most of the states, when we got there, they have never had anything called open government partnership. Zamfara has signed out now, Borno has met all the criteria, what remains for them now is to sign. So the speed is fantastic. *Ok, I thank God.*

Then number 4: In your opinion, which of the domains of government activities have become transparent as a result of the efforts of civil society in Nigeria? And is it possible to scale up for more positive outcomes? Hello, hello. *Did you get you get my question?* My brother, repeat the question once again. I think we have the set of questions. *In your opinion, which of the domains of government activities have become transparent as a result of the efforts of civil society in Nigeria? Is it possible to scale up for more positive outcomes?* One of the activities may be expenditure report that has become more transparent now. That is the financial domain; yes the financial sector has become transparent in most states now. And I remember was it last two years in case of Zamfara they even indicted some of the staff who have not even, you know, made appropriate return, which was the first of its kind may be in the history of the state.

Largely now because they know that people are on their throat, so we can say as a result of these activities, you know, some of the activities in terms of expenditure reporting have become more transparent. Apart from that one, in terms of spending whether it is actually spending or value for money, I think maybe I can say there is a lot of way to go. And maybe some other segment of the question, maybe whether there is a way that we can scale up, actually there is. To be more precise, what we have started actually is to lay the foundation. I am not even sure maybe if you have a scale of 1 to 10. What we have done, it doesn't go beyond the third point. So there is a lot of things that need to be done to systematise and then internalise and actually for it to be sustainable before it becomes part of the financial part of the governance system.

Just to add a word or two. I think, I think in my opinion one of the domains that has improved is the legislature, *ok*, simply because they know that the information that we churn out there to the electorate, they have to be alert, they have to know that they are been monitored and tracked by their own constituencies. *Ok, what about the assuming you are looking at the levels of government, what about the local government?* The local governments are something else, and you know most of the local governments whether by default or whatever, they are under the direct control of the governors. So, if...we are working on the... in fact that is why the scaling up should come. We are working at the state level and we believe that if the executive arm of government is held accountable, they will now cascade down the process themselves, the governors *ok*, to the local government level.

So in scaling up, professor talked about sustainability that is where the local governments will now come in. I don't know, when you are asking question about local government, I think maybe in an attempt to be sincere to ourselves you know, the local governments as they are now, they feature very, very negligibly... they are more of appendages to the executives. Of course, if we can call them appendages, well, they are more actually of inconsequential appendages; they are only inconsequential appendages, because they are inconsequential appendages like the footnote, at times they will not make much meaning unless you look at the footnote.

Now, we just glossed over the case of the local government, you see this country, not even just our activities, we simply have to remake the local government, the constitution has already...I don't know if we need some constitutional amendment to enforce the constitution. But I think in terms of orientation. The local governments are inconsequential appendages, in the activities we do, they hardly feature, you know, I mean if something is taking place in the local government, it is simply superintended over by the members of State House of Assembly, not the local government chairman, not actually the councilors.

And in terms of their finance, virtually everything is under the control of the Governor; you know most of their activities like ministry of local government and chieftaincy affair, they superintend... they are just there... they really don't feature prominently. And I think you asked a very good

question, what about the local government? Because we are worried, and only if you want transformation of the grassroots, the local governments need to be vibrant, but the mode of our political practice in Nigeria today does not factor that. And that is the most unfortunate thing.

Thank you, sir, for that response, now we move to the next level of question, the accountability related. Question number 5: What has civil society done in advocating for compliance with legal and policy framework by public institutions? Are state actors becoming honest in behavior as a result of civil society efforts?

I don't know, Mr. Bello you want to answer that question, it is a more legal abuna fa... I don't think we have any report to experiment some of the issues on this question he is asking. We really have serious challenges whereby you have maybe civil society forcing the state government to behave in a particular way or... maybe we didn't encounter that. But one cannot be categorical oh because of the activities of these guys; the state public actors are actually honest. Honesty, honesty you know in psychology, there is an honesty that is intrinsically inbuilt. You are honest because it is inbuilt. You are honest because you have already internalised the virtues. And then, people comply because they have no option. They have to comply; they have to give certain information even if they are not honest about what they are saying.

One cannot, I cannot say for sure that maybe the public officers, all of them or majority of them are actually honest in the way I will want to use the word honest. But the idea is that maybe as we progress, as we go forward, you know, some of these virtues are internalised and progressively, the public officers become much more open and it becomes part of them to be honest. So, but now they do comply, I can say they do comply, maybe I can say they are honest because they can't hide. They can't hide because they know that even if they do, people are going to take action and along the line, they will be embarrassed and that is the essence.

Even though you are a partner in progress, the whole idea, we are also mobilised people around them, the Ulama, mobilise the organised sector in the state, I mean not just businessmen, when I say organised sectors, I mean associations and clubs. You know they are already aware and you know in most cases when we hold rallies, people from the government are there. They also re-echo what we are saying, government is for everybody, this information is for everybody, everybody is a partner in progress, government needs to interact, I mean particularly I am sure just like my brother earlier brought forward over the past years when we were rolling out activities for this open government partnership (OGP).

You know there a lot of activities which have opened government to the people, joint sittings, and joint meetings and so on and so forth. So now, a lot of them they have to come out and give information and they comply, so we can say they are complying and we hope, we commandeer some willingness to do that. I don't know whether they can be judged that to be just honest in what they are doing. I think they are doing it because they have no option than to do it. That has not been the order, but hopefully, when it continues that way, hopefully, the order will be much more honest. That honesty... hello, yes, about the activities of civil society in advocating for compliance, I think... what civil society has been doing spread across most of the state governments.

Now every state government has a bureau for public procurement, which is part of the legal framework that has been established by the state. You know, I can beat my chest and say that most of these things came about because of the activities of civil society organizations. Because government officials now know that their citizens ask them very penetrating questions based on information supplied by civil society organizations through publications, through town hall meetings

and other you know, information dissemination agencies, radio programs and so on and so forth. So, actually I can say the establishment or the enactment of certain legal framework arises directly or indirectly from the activities of civil society organizations operating in these states. *Ok, thank you sir, thank you very much.*

Then number six: Do you think that civil society's work supports public institutions to attain accountability in standard operating procedures, if so, how?

They do. The activities of civil society organizations they support public institutions to attain public standard operating procedures. (Tape cracks.) The internal revenue services, they wanted us to come and work with them in trying to review tax laws and we now connected them with the relevant people who can do that for them. And secondly, the other part of the question, do you think that... supports public institutions to attain? Yes, they are attaining, the example I gave was the establishment of the bureau for public procurement, which is an instrument if properly deployed, can assist the state in attaining you know, the public accountability standards. Thank you.

Yes, thank you. I don't know if there is any other comment on that.

No, no...

Ok. Part of it also, making states like Zamfara, which never prepared financial reports, to do so. OK. Now prepare financial report. Thank you.

Number 7: How do civil society's efforts support public institutions to achieve their objectives? What alternative accountability program or policy has CSOs suggested and supported.

In terms of cost of governance... *for example in terms of huge cost of governance the CSOs in Zamfara or Borno State have organised and they have advocated for a reduction and not just advocating for a reduction, what program have they suggested to government, you know that will now help in reducing the cost of governance? That is what the question means.* Well I am not sure civil society...the type of work we do there, maybe it is OPG, the open government partnership can lead to that. There are a lot of questions that has more to do with the ally, to ally the objectives of the government with the real challenges, you know, the real practical problems facing the people in the state.

In most cases that is what they... maybe in terms of the cost of governance or public finance in the case of Zamfara, they have done, we have done what like I said this emm fiscal policy statement and they have engaged ministry of finance and budget for virtually getting up to a year, in fact we have entry a report, I will share that report with you to see what they have done so as to see how they can streamline financial profile to improve IGR, you know, run the government with cost effectiveness and so on. I think that is what the question is asking... *Ok.* And I hope this government, this government, because even yesterday I was talking with some coordinator, he said even the commissioner they sent the report to me.

We are still looking at the report, we are still validating and editing, we are still asking for some updates...I will still show you the draft of the report that has been made. And actually there is a lot of anxiety that maybe they might want to use that, you know, as a guide to what I may call fiscal reforms in the state. *Thank you, any other comment?* No, no.

Then we go straight to number 8. Are CSOs able to convince public institutions to take

responsibilities for future impacts of their actions?

Well I think this is very difficult, this more like, you can only guess, I am not sure you know, we cannot see all, but we assume we can say yes in the sense that maybe interactions that you can assume that it may need to happen. When you do this, this must be the consequences, when you do this, people are going to be happy, when you do this, people are not going to be happy. In the case of Zamfara, actually it has shown it clearly. I don't know whether you are aware of what has happened in Zamfara because, what happened in Zamfara this 2023 is virtually like a political revolution, the entire political class that has ruled the state but structurally wiped out. A lot of it I can say has to do with our activities and I mean practically, people can see the consequences of their actions, the former government, people in the government and so on and so forth, not all of them, some of them but the majority of them. So, this is something that you can observe, it is not something that is not clear. These people are already condemned but virtually I am sure that through their interactions they know overtime that when you do this, this is what is going to happen. And in the case of Zamfara it happened, maybe they never thought that the people will become aware and the youth, the CSOs will become very active.

Maybe I will even share a report on the..., because we have a report on even the conduct of election in the state and they themselves actually monitored the election in Zamfara, the CSOs themselves particularly the one that we are working with. I have a report on that. And ironically, even our former coordinator of activities is now the commissioner of information in the state. *Ok, that's good.* What, is it good? Hehehe. *At least the organization is making inroads into government so that, the idea is that you stand for, you will be able to implement them when you are in government.*

Well, I can say that the governor is now actually trying to recruit them because they are very active in changing maybe... let's say they are the conscience of the movement for political change, because of the activities they were doing, you know, disseminating information, taking public officers to task, and maybe by getting things done, perhaps the governor is also trying to get support... these people who are making noise are now part of my government. You are right, depending they act rightly, what you are saying you now have opportunity to implement, we can say it is a good step forward, but that is not to be judged by the way the government act. *Thank you sir!* I think what Professor forgot to mention is that from 1999 to 2003, it is the same group that has been you know, in government in Zamfara State, one group, the same group and this time around during this last election, the whole group was wiped away completely from the political scene for now anyway.

And secondly, where we are headed to, I think we are getting there. We are now having you know, a more informed society. So apart from monetary accountability, the society that is up coming, it is the youths that are taking over government and governance. And more informed, we are in a connected world whereby what you are doing is observed, it's seen from Chicago, you know UK, wherever you are. So, people are now more mindful. *Thank you sir!*

Then on the good governance related, question number 9: What specific governance sectors have benefitted from civil society's efforts? What areas have yet to gain the support from civil society?

Maybe take question 9 and 10. I think this question 9 and 10; I will send you one publication. *Ok.* One document, it will answer 9 and 10 because we can discuss this for the next one hour, because this was where we started. *Ok, it's alright.* Yes! Actually when we got the budget, the very condition for our engagement with the state started from this. And because we are working with what you can call new content traditional society, and we call them an Islamic society with an

ancient history of Islamic culture and civilization.

As far back as the 9th century AD, there is Kanem Borno Empire, in the 19th century; a lot of what gave birth to the Northern Nigeria came through the Sokoto jihad movement, right? So, now, what we are trying to do first on the issue of governance is to articulate some of these principles within the context of Islamic religion propounded by the people who existed in that area in the 19th century. From what they wrote, we extracted it, translated it and we took time to disseminate that, to discuss that with people in government, with the scholars, with the ordinary people, with virtually everybody. And to me, I believe that was the key that was the key to our status in this state. (Tape cracks.) Because of corruption, governance (tape cracks)...oh these are CIA agents, these are not new issues, these are issues that are in their polity as far back as 300 years ago. (tape cracks)...I am sure we are like, virtually we are like... (tape cracks) by the time I share it, it is called principles of leadership. That is what the book... Hello! OK, I will... Hello! Hello! Yes. So we go straight to... Hello, the line is breaking. Your connection is very unstable. Emmmm emmmm emmmmm... I can't hear you very well. *Can you hear me now?* Ok I can hear you.

I said question 11, we are looking at the gaps in what you are doing, the risk that your organization is facing, how you are mitigating such risk. (tape cracks) Hello, hello! *Did you get the question?* Can you hear me? *I can hear you.* OK. But Bello can you hear him? I can hear you, but I cannot hear him. His connection is not stable. If you can hear him Bello, you can go ahead and talk to him if you can hear him. Yes I am listening to you yallabai! No I said you can go ahead and answer question. *Can you, I can hear you.* Hello, hello yallabai, yes you can go ahead.

Ok, let me start. You say you can hear me right? Hello, hello, me I can hear you, but I don't know, his connection is not stable. Oscar, Oscar can you hear me? *Yes, yes sir! Hello, hello, hello, hello.* Hello! Hello! Yes, yes! *You can hear now?* Yes, yes, I can hear you. *Ok! We are trying to, we want to know about the gaps in what you are doing, the risk faced by your organization and how you are mitigating such risk.*

Ok, actually when you say gaps, actually there are many gaps. There are a lot of things that are you know, you know, we are limited in terms of activities, for example now you mentioned the local government, some of the arms of government, you know that is a gap, you know that is not because ehh...these are objective limitations out of the scope. You know if you are talking about risk, some of the states you operate, you know they are areas with serious security challenge right? *Yes! Hello! Yes, I can hear you...* continue. Hello, the focal states, these are states with security challenges.

Hello! Yes! So, how have been able to mitigate... *continue, I can hear you.* We have always; we always engage you know... *Hello!* Oscar it seems your connection is very bad. *I don't know ooo hehe.* I think what we can do, what we can do; this on this 11 and 12 is very freaky. What I can I do on this 11 and 12, can I do a paragraph, one paragraph and send it to you? Is that ok with you? Hello, hello Oscar. *Yes, ok, very much ok, yes it's ok.* For you! *Yes that will be fine.* Enhen, 11 and 12! *Yes, that will be fine, yes. Thank you very much, thank you very much, I appreciate it.* Yes! So, I will send it to you. *It's alright sir.* As soon as we are through with the document... (tape cracks) *Ok sir, bye!*

BudgIT Foundation

A. Transparency Related

1. Do you know of any interventions by CSOs that have resulted in appropriate behavior by Nigerian public officers?

Answer: Yes, many CSO interventions have resulted in good behavior by Nigerian public officers. Sometimes, it might be difficult to pinpoint which particular CSO spearheaded a certain result, but the fact remains that different CSOs are advancing the course of transparency in Nigeria. To start with, what led to the Nigerian government signing the Open Government Partnership in 2016 was an intervention championed by three principal organizations—BudgIT Foundation, Media Rights Agenda, and the Public and Private Development Centre, PPDC. Seeing how that has snowballed into what we have today, we can say Nigeria is a nation where transparency has significantly improved. And I am emphasizing transparency because it is different from accountability.

Transparency here is talking about access to government data, which has improved significantly. In the eight years of President Buhari's administration, we became used to seeing cases where once the proposed Budget is presented to President Buhari, 48 hours later, it will be publicly available on the website of the Budget of the Federation, same as the approved budget, and other relevant information that comes from the government.

The intervention, like the Open Budget Survey, is a research championed by the International Budget Partnership (IBP), which BudgIT has led in Nigeria since its inception. In the past years, we have seen Nigeria's result or rank improve per year because the government has consistently tried to see what was achieved the previous year, where the lapses were, and how they can overcome them.

Yes, positive results can be measured or seen due to the intervention of CSOs that have greatly improved transparency.

2. In your opinion, who are the people outside the government that should have access to government information?

Answer: Everybody outside the government should have access to government information, and one word that captures everybody is 'Citizens'—including those in government—they are citizens. It's just for contextualization that we separate the government from the people. Everyone that represents the people should have access to government information.

Now, we can go into the segmentation of those people. Among them are laymen, and even as a layman, you need to know what the government is doing. Then there are the private sector, artisan groups, CSOs, media, professional bodies, and others.

3. Are civil society efforts leading to a redefinition of information exchange in terms of speed, accessibility, ease of use, etc? Please explain based on your understanding.

Answer: Yes, CSO efforts are leading to the redefinition of information exchange in terms of speed, accessibility, and ease of use—and one example that no one can deny is the work of organizations like BudgIT Foundation. At BudgIT Foundation, we do not generate data but facilitate access to data put out by the government or represent available data in an appealing format that citizens can engage with and understand.

Another example is the Open Treasury Portal, which the federal government of Nigeria launched in December 2019. BudgIT Foundation was able to build another layer of analysis called www.govspend.ng. What this means is that you can easily run an analysis and send a query to ask for a particular contractor's name, and it gives you that contractor's name and a list of other contracts they have received from the federal government and the amount the contractor has been paid.

4. In your opinion, which of the domains of government activity have become transparent as a result of the efforts of the civil society in Nigeria? Is it possible to scale-up for more positive outcomes?

Answer: It is difficult to say a particular domain of government has done excellently because no matter which agency is identified, we know there are still gaps to be filled. However, the federal government and the executive arm come close in how they have come to understand their obligation, perhaps because of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, which places a responsibility on them to share certain information with the public. We may want to credit some of their domains for taking the initiative while others haven't. But there are other domains still grossly doing below par. Take the Auditor General of the Federation's office, for example. Nigeria's last audit was around 2019/2020; now we are in 2024. So you realize that while one arm of government or one domain of government is doing so well, another domain is not performing well and ruining the efforts of those doing well.

Scaling up positive outcomes largely depends on the president's body language. I believe the President is subjected to the House of Assembly and seems to have an executive influence to impact all-round positive outcomes across government—executive, judiciary, and legislative. I believe the president has the power to request and demand the scaling up of positive outcomes.

B. Accountability related

5. What has the civil society done in advocating for compliance with legal and policy frameworks by public institutions? Are state actors becoming honest in behavior as a result of the civil society efforts?

Answer: This aspect of the interview will have a lot of ‘no’ and negative feedback as compared with the transparency sector.

On accountability and the part of the CSOs, advocating for compliance with legal and policy frameworks is an emphatic yes. Not just one, but different CSOs handle different aspects of legal and policy direction in the space, and we are doing excellently in that.

You see BudgIT pushing for fiscal reform, SERAP pushing for compliance and complimenting it with litigation, and Media Rights Agenda advocating for the implementation and judicious use of the Freedom of Information Act.

However, what we see is that state actors are not becoming honest. For every intelligent effort of the CSO, government and state actors seek new ways of perpetuating fraud, corruption, and insensitivity to the people’s needs. A recent example is what we saw regarding the Social Investment Program. Although the CSOs are doing their best, we are not seeing a corresponding attitude or reaction from state governments.

6. Do you think the civil society’s work supports public institutions to attain accountability in standard operating procedures? How?

Answer: Yes, the work of CSOs supports public institutions in attaining accountability in standard operating procedures.

How? Through different approaches and strategies that CSOs put in place. For instance, how does Tracka help public institutions? What Tracka does is to go ahead of the government and sensitize the people to understand that citizens’ knowledge and understanding of the involvement of what the government wants to do and is doing in their community will go a long way in promoting the sustainability of such a project and there are other organizations doing fantastic work relating to that to support public institutions.

7. How do the civil society efforts support public institutions to achieve their objectives? What alternative accountability programs have CSOs suggested and supported? May the cost of governance?

Answer: We are all coming in from different aspects. EIE, for example, supports public institutions like the National Assembly by creating a platform where citizens can go to shineyoureye.com or get a record of their elected representative, contact information, etc. This is very important to support the national assembly because the National Assembly is the representative of the people. But we know they usually don’t even remember the constituents that brought them into power

once they get into such office.

Also you see a PPDC following through with public procurement and ensuring that states, even at the subnational level, have an effective public procurement policy and framework. Regarding alternatives to the accountability program, our work is not alternatives but what needs to be done. However, when you look at BudgIT's strategic relationship with EFCC and ICPC, by virtue of what we do at Tracka (where we help citizens hold their elected officials accountable or where we have identified fraud and corruption cases) over time, we realize government or public officers develop thick skin towards our accountability measures, but with the alternative accountability program of partnership with ICPC or EFCC, or with the agency of government that has the power to prosecute now call people to account. We have seen tremendous results, such as contractors going back to the sites. At some point, the EFCC chairman confided in us that some public officers had been willing to return money to avoid prosecution. These are things we can count as some of these results.

8. Are CSOs able to convince public institutions to take responsibility for future impacts of their actions?

Answer: No, we are not able to. We are doing our best to make them see how their decisions today will impact the future of Nigeria's unborn generation. But until now, no significant result shows that public institutions are taking responsibility.

C. Good governance related

9. What specific governance sectors have benefitted from the civil society efforts? What areas have yet to gain the support from the civil society?

Answer: Maybe there will be some sectors of government, but I don't think any sector lacks the presence of the CSOs. BudgIT works with the government's economic and social sectors. BudgIT and other organizations are at the forefront of advocacy even in the natural resources sector. When you look at procurement, PPDC, litigation, social justice, and audit, PLSI, Citizens Gavel SERAP, and many more take the lead. CSOs are practically touching all sectors.

However, regarding the governance sector benefiting from CSOs, this can be seen in how we are gradually improving their efficiency and effectiveness. Practically all areas have received support from the CSO, but if there is a sector left out, it may be the security sector, and that is because it has not been very open to engaging with the CSOs or bloody civilians as they would describe us. Some projects cannot be tracked in some instances because they are tagged as an invasion of national security.

10. What is your organization doing to promote good governance in Nigeria? Please tell us the progress made so far.

Answer: The 'How' is that we believe good governance is best when it is participatory. The government has an obligation to engage citizens; likewise, citizens must exercise their duty by engaging with the government.

We bridge the gap and ensure there is a platform for both ends to meet. If we expatiate, we will see how that has significantly contributed to good governance in Nigeria. Today, the issue of governance has become a common conversation on social media platforms courtesy of organizations like BudgIT. We are proud to say we are the forerunner when it comes to how information and engaging the government has been liberalized.

Progresses made can be counted in different forms. How accessible was government information 12 years before BudgIT's establishment, and how accessible is it now? Progress can be measured in the significant reduction in the number of abandoned projects in the country through the work of our project tracking officers.

Our progress can also be measured in our civic tech tools' contributions to enhance good governance, which include:

www.budgit.org – a resource center for fiscal transparency and accountability.

www.tracka.ng – the service delivery promotion arm of BudgIT where citizens can access information the government wants to implement around them. They can read stories, report, and provide project updates regarding happenings in their constituency.

www.govspend.ng – a platform built on the open treasury portal that allows citizens to see the contract the government is issuing out, the amount, the name of the contractor, etc.

www.stateofstates.budgit.org – allows citizens to see the fiscal health of all 36 states in Nigeria.

www.me.budgit.org – a personalized platform that allows citizens to receive direct data regarding FAAC allocation to their states, LGAs and projects around them.

www.fixouoil.com – a platform for the extractive industry where citizens see our works and outputs in the sector.

www.civichive.org – a platform used to engage and train young civic leaders and promote election

D. General

11. What are the gaps left in advocacy and agitation by your organization? What challenges have you encountered? Are there any risks? How can these risks be mitigated in the course of your organization's intervention?

Answer: There is a huge gap left on the state actors' side regarding response. We still need to overcome the government's unresponsiveness. We've had situations where we reach out to state actors for information, and we don't get a response, but when the table turns, they expect us to respond immediately.

Our challenges now are better than when our staff, brands, and reputation faced different kinds of assault. However, such ill response toward us is reducing as Nigerians are beginning to appreciate the efforts of organizations like ours.

Risks? Yes, there is a huge risk to our work, and one of them is how state officers perceive us. They see us as anti-government, and other quarters see us as deliberately embarrassing the government. We have had instances where some who believe those were our motives went out of their way to harass, assault, and arrest some of our staff, but that is subsiding significantly.

Part of the mitigating risk for us is to study the country's political environment consistently and always ensure we are not positioning ourselves against the government but rather as partners in progress with the government.

12. Do you think the progress made by civil society can be preserved? How do we improve upon these efforts? What are the points of coordination for the 'Joinbodi Cohort' in their areas of intervention?

Answer: Yes, CSO progress can be preserved, but that requires a huge commitment from all of us in the CSO space. As it is, some of us are trying to institutionalize it and create a system that ensures our progress continues, which can only happen with consistent engagement with the government and successive governments so the progress made will not be reversed once an administration exits power.

How do we improve upon this effort? The Joinbodi Cohort is a way to preserve these efforts courtesy of Mac Arthur Foundation funding such a coalition. We need to give life to more coalitions or existing ones like the Open Alliance or the Joinbodi Cohort to strengthen and support each other to preserve our progress in Nigeria's transparency, accountability, and good governance.

Centre for Information, Communication and Development

An Introduction

CITAD is Centre for Information, Communication and Development. It is a non-profit organization that focuses on the use of basically technology for promotion of good of governance, human right, education, issues of peace-building and development in general. Our head office is in Kano, and then we have offices in the federal capital territory Abuja and three offices in Bauchi State. Our vision (CITAD) is knowledge base and self-reliance democratic society. We stand and follow through with our mission which is to empower our citizens for the just and knowledge-based society that is anchored on sustainable and balanced development using the same ICTSs using capacity building, research and also partnerships.

The organization also has the board of trustees constituting of four people. The governing board of 8 people at the same time and staff strength of over 30 staff members. I work in the unit of wondering and evaluation department. My name is John Otaru. My key role in that department is to ensure that all programs and project are well monitored and properly planned, provides report and insight on trains from different lens that we pull out from each project and programs. And also to develop a working monitoring evaluation system to guide the organizations activity. And also develop KPIs that will also guide how we measure, how we are doing and how to do better. My colleague is not here which I said, he will join us shortly. That is our social media campaign officer.

A. Transparency Related

1. Do you know of any interventions by CSOs that have resulted in appropriate behavior by Nigerian public officers?

Answer: Yes. Bur not directly. And why I said yes but not directly is that I have come across new strings of CSOs interventions and is actually collaborative interventions of a group of CSOs that have taken different promos to promote accountability, transparency among public officers. An instance in which CITAD has been involved with in the course of our work is gender-based violence; gender disparity and gender divide in the social media space and so on. And during this, we conducted advocacies which speak toward the need to hasten the notification of the Bart law and also the laws that talks about issues of gender divide in the community. And in so doing we spare-headed with other CSOs in Kano State specifically and then they took road works, peaceful demonstrations in ensuring that these laws are domesticated within the Kano State laws.

And also from that activity, we got positive feedback from public officers who are spare-heading those units or offices in charge of creating awareness and also in charge of also bringing to bear these laws that will be able to curtail issues of gender-based violence in Kano State. Although, it has not been fully enacted yet, but it has pushed more awareness and also given the sense of more understanding that these issues of gender-based violence is quite serious and also it's happening in Kano State.

We did researches with other CSOs and it has pulled out evidence of this violence against women and we use that as our back-up to push forward for the law to be domesticated. And is still a long-way process and we still move forward to know how far it's gone. And we received positive feedback about the process; it takes for it to be domesticated. And that is the work that other CSOs have done. And I also know of other CSOs' work that has to do with successfully undertaking activities of exposing corruption and embezzlement which led to the removal of or prosecution of corrupt officials too.

This is at the national level within Nigeria which I know CSOs has taken part to push forward for such. One of which is also the Electoral Bill which was successfully pulled out before the elections of 2023 that most CSOs and also particularly they spare-headed those of the situation room and other civil society organizations. That is evidence that CSOs has played to show some changes in behavior in public offices.

2. In your opinion, who are the people outside government that should have access to government information?

Answer: In my opinion, people outside government that should have access to government information first of all will include and I think is a matter of importance, is the citizens themselves. The citizens are very key important persons that should have access to government information, journalist need to have access to government information also and CSOs too. These groups of persons are the key people who need to have access to government information outside of government officials. I think they will serve as watchdog too, to checkmate the excesses and doings of government officials.

3. Are civil society efforts leading to a redefinition of information exchange in terms of speed, accessibility, ease of use, etc? Please explain based on your understanding.

Answer: Yes. Civil society efforts have been leading to a redefinition of information exchange in terms of speed, accessibility and ease of use. Ease of use maybe not much but speed and accountability, yes. Let me explain why.

We have CSOs who now work using social media. The advent of technology and social media has become a very viable tool to bring to bear what on normal day

before we had media or technology people would not have been able to access to information, pass along information and create awareness. For example, CITAD have an online radio where we use as medium to pass across information, key information to persons within the internet space and then we have the twitter handle where we sometimes conduct some virtual spaces to discuss issues around accountability, issues around gender-based violence, issues around and issues of connectivity within underserved or unserved region that are lacking with internet connectivity. Using this medium has become a norm especially for CSOs to reach out to those areas especially where one cannot actually reach on land or in person. So, we use this medium to expand our awareness. That is for speed.

Then for accessibility, I have seen CSOs toward ensuring that places where internet is barely strong, network is barely there, CSOs have spare-headed interventions that has to do with the creation of some internet substitute services in those areas. Specific places where CITAD has spare-headed such intervention are; 1) there is a work which we do which is called Community Network. Basically, sponsored by APC (Alliance for Progressive Communications) and in that work is to create substitute network for rural areas, places that are underserved or unserved in terms of network and then make it to be something of an ownership for the community themselves.

It reduces rates of financing and also reduces maintenance too. By so doing we are spreading the work of social media and also network to be able to reach to these people so that these people can be able to get information as at when due that they need such information. Initiatives like online portals and open data policies also include speed and ease of accessing public information's, making it more readily available to the public. This is why I said for ease of use it will be in terms of language barrier especially for underserved areas. Basically most of what we see on the internet or online comes in English and then we have underserved areas or rural areas where is basically the local language that is being spoken or understood.

That is where we might have a little barrier with language translation for those places. But then, we still have social media platforms or social media programs that are done in local languages. CITAD for one, online radio most of our programs are done in Hausa because we have a whole lot of following in Kano that follow our programs online. So is only in Hausa that gives more understanding for people in the rural areas.

4. In your opinion, which of the domains of government activity have become transparent as a result of efforts of civil society in Nigeria? Is it possible to scale-up for more positive outcomes?

Answer: In my opinion, domains of government activity that has become more transparent as a result of civil society's interventions in Nigeria, I will speak based on what CITAD has ventured into that will be on public procurement and also budgeting. Those are domains that I think to an extent has top up their game to say that there is transparency in a way of what is been done. I said this because CITAD has worked with other CSOs in Bauchi State specifically in the area of procurement and also budgeting. And why we did this, we were able to create clusters of CSOs within five local governments in Bauchi State, Alakeri, Nuskiri, Bauchi itself and Taro local government.

Within these local governments we created clusters of CSOs which mandate we trained and also informed to seek accountability from the MDEs within their localities on issues of procurement and issues of budgeting. Now for them to understand it better there was a need for us to also translate portions of the Bauchi State budget into Hausa, which we did and shared within these local governments' areas that we, worked in. And this has gone a long way to seeing that the government activities are becoming more transparent. Now they need to translate this because is one thing to know about the budget and to know about how public procurement are being done in English and is another thing to understand it and breakdown to the level at which the common man or rural dweller will understand.

So we saw it important that this budget needs to be translated in a simpler method that people will understand and key into. So breaking it into Hausa was one of the big achievements which we did and shared it around in soft copies and also in hard copies for the communities, and we also charged them to use it to follow up, while they follow up, we also monitored changes in activities of the government. And we still are following up because we have created a network of accountability mechanisms within these regions. So far so good, we have seen some changes. In doing that, we did not only stop at that, CITAD as a tech NGO, we also built a social media app.

It's on play store and also on apple store for checking and also reporting issues of abandoned project, issues of procurement and issues of budget and raising up awareness about what is needed in local communities in Bauchi State. And that application has been so useful during the time of the project and still is being use. In that same software we have being able to bring together relevant MDEs whose attention needs to be drawn into issues like this so that people can access the app and drop in their message. It is not an instant reply you do get but then it is being forwarded and then the lead persons in the MDEs who need to respond to these gets these notifications and then respond to it. I think this is what I can say about government activities becoming transparent as e result of CSOs' activities in Nigeria.

Adding to what my colleague said, one of the areas that I think receive this, is the health sector, because when you look at the health sector from the last decade to date and the aspect of transparency, issue in that regards due to the efforts of civil societies organizations, most of the project that being done are now on an online platforms where you can go and assist them on the issue of budget tracking due to the efforts of CSOs and also ICPC you see that most of the project that is being conducted by legislators is now being tracked and also the issue following really helped in making the process comfortable and I think the last part of the question which is talking about the scaling up of the efforts, I think is very good if this kind of effort is kindly scaled up, because when you look at the outcomes that we are getting most especially when it comes to constituency projects issues of transparency in budget especially in health sector and other sectors, it is really giving the country a good image at the international arena.

In terms of branches of government, which of them is becoming more transparent?

I think the national government is more transparent than other two arms of government that is state and local government. Because when you look at the issue of budget at the national level, anything you want you can get it at the internet, unlike the state where you need to go to their ministry to have access to their budget.

B. Accountability Related

1. What has civil society done in advocating for compliance with legal and policy framework by public institutions? Are state actors becoming honest in behavior as a result of civil society?

Answer: Some of the things that has been done by civil societies one of the thing is advocacy, media campaigns and also taking legal action for like what SERAP is doing. Because whenever you want anything from government especially when it has to do with data or budget, it is very difficult for government institution to give you these kinds of data. So what civil societies are mostly doing currently are media campaigns and also engaging with governments agencies to ensure that what they needed is being given.

The second part of the question, I cannot say that they are becoming more honest, we can say that they are becoming more compliance due to some of the pressure from the national and international arena. Basically, what CSOs has done so far is in the line of advocacy, compliance with legal and policy frameworks by public institutions through various means and this involves public awareness, campaigns, researches and legal actions.

He just mentioned SERAP. We know the works SERAP does on the issue of legal interventions and then in the aspect of behavioral change in becoming honest by the state actors, this is quite dicey. Media is an ongoing challenge in this scenario. Pressure from civil societies has led to improvement in compliance.

2. Do you think civil society's work supports public institutions to attain accountability in standard operating procedures? How?

Answer: Yes. Civil society works support public institutions to attain accountability in standard operating procedures. And in the how will be from my own understanding. Is through monitoring standards, operating standards and procedures. Conducting audit and then exposing irregularities when this audit are been conducted and then advocating non-compliance and necessary reforms. The efforts of civil society have really supported institutions to attain accountability most especially when you look at the issue of budget and the level of transparency is really helpful.

And when you look at the global standard, the reports government is getting from international institutions like World Bank, IMF and all of that, we can say that the pressure being put by civil society, we can see that budget is transparent and also in order is really yielding result and also putting pressure on public institutions especially those responsible for doing some projects at the local level has helped in ensuring that we reach the global standard.

3. How civil society efforts support public institutions to achieve their objectives? What alternative accountability programs have CSOs suggested and supported? May be cost of governance?

Answer: The first part of the question; it has to do with capacity building and training of government institutions. There are a lot of buildings on going and also training of government institutions with contributions from international donors and also the second part of the question, Alternative Accountability Programs are ensuring that budgets are online. This is one of the best ways to ensure that there is transparency in whatever we do. So am suggesting online platforms for reporting, collecting data's and also putting projects that are what civil society has done.

In the area of reducing cost of governance; yes. A lot of efforts ensuring that everything is online have really reduced the cost of governance. Because when we look at what government was spending before and what is spending now, is far cheaper. Online activities simplify a lot of things and also cut a lot of expenses. It also cut corruption in public institutions because if something is not online, like before when we were using the paper form, somebody can just take a lot of money and nobody will notice. But now everything is online even the salaries at

local level in Kano and Bauchi is been done online. Even some of the purchases government is doing now are done online. It is easy to track where money goes and when money comes in creating online platform has been able to reduce cost of governance in the area we work. The advent of online technology and platforms helps in checkmating government unnecessary spending to a great extent.

4. Are CSOs able to convince public institutions to take responsibility for future impacts of their actions?

Answer: Yes, it does of course. The way government is transforming its activities and also the level of compliance on recommendations being made by civil society's organizations. Example, the issue of ICF who was caught in the function of cutting grass. Government did not want to take action but the pressure from CSOs made them to remove him from office.

C. Good Governance Related

1. What specific governance sectors have benefitted from civil society efforts? What areas have yet to gain the support from civil society?

Answer: The biggest sector that has benefitted is the health sector. Because when we look at the money, energy and effort put in that sector, it is really significant already. The second one we can say is education. Education is really receiving a lot of contributions from civil society organizations. It has benefitted a lot from the CSOs. Areas yet to receive this; is the issue of improving life's of the local community. That is empowerment. Most of the effort put by the CSOs' donors is basically human development that has not really empowered the community. Agriculture is one of the areas that need these efforts more.

Adding to what my colleague has said the anti-corruption sector too and the joinbodi- cohorts are working toward corruption. Human rights too are areas that civil societies have also gone a long way. Areas that need more support are environmental conservations and then infrastructural development and rural development.

2. What is your organization doing to promote good governance in Nigeria? Please tell us the progress made so far.

Answer: Some of the things we are doing are awareness creations. It's one of the key things that we focus in. Also, media campaigns are another thing we are doing to ensure this. Also building capacity of CSOs, media and also journalist, government agencies. Another thing we are doing is training of young people especially on using social media to request for accountability. This is one program that we are really happy about. We have trained 10 thousand youths currently across Nigeria who is now using social media to advocate for good governance

and accountability.

Another thing we are doing is creating awareness among young people to report abandoned project which we think is a key area that has been abandoned for so many years. Also, we are involving technology to ensure that there is transparency in good governance. Another thing is the issue of FOI. We are one of the leading organizations that contributed to the success of the FOI. We are working with the FOI team. We involved in conducting researches that leads to better information that spurs us to call to action, peaceful work and also push forward our demands with collaboration of other CSOs.

We also work with youth and women in the areas of governance were we had handful of young men and women who aspire to participate and join political agencies and governance too. In this we have youth and women who applied for several positions in Kano during the last elections. During that period we were able to mobilize 661 women and youths in politics and in that number we had almost half of those numbers who joined several political parties to make their own impacts in those parties. A good success story of that is a lady that emerged the first female national president in jumus emerged as the president from that school. She was one of our mentees in the governance project.

CITAD has done much working with youth and women. We intervene in the issues of the internet to ensure that people speak their mind and that the internet is also safe of issues related to hate speech, misinformation and so on. These are key areas we have involved in. More on our success story, some contactors have gone back to continue the work on the site they abandoned.

D. General

11. What are the gaps left in advocacy and agitation by your organization? What challenges have encountered? Are there any risks? How can these risks be mitigated in the course of your organization's intervention?

Answer: Gap is in the area of women inclusion in governance and that of the children. They are a lot of gaps here. The challenges are reluctance of government officials to give information about government or government data. The risks have to do with ensuring transparency and accountability from government officials. We receive a lot of threats for us to shut our mouth but we still do what we can. Mitigating the risks; ensuring that there is legal protection for civil society's actors and those working in the areas of transparency and accountability and also ensuring that the law works for everyone.

Ensuring the CSOs' actors rights are protected. More gaps; insufficient resources, resistance from interested persons. Threats; to personnel, activities and these

threats is also online and also ensuring internet safety. More mitigating factors; CSOs can strengthen partnerships and also diversify funding too, to workout issues of insufficient resources. The need for security measure for CSOs' activists, personnel who are out there doing the work they are meant to do to propagate good governance and anti-corruption. Land security measures and also online security measure for CSOs' actors and activists do.

12. Do you think the progress made by civil society can be preserved? How do we improve upon these efforts? What are the points of coordination for the 'joinbodi Cohort' in the areas of interventions?

Answer: It can be preserved. Improve on the efforts; collaboration between CSOs is very key. Diversify source of fund for CSOs will really help because CSOs will survive when they have enough fund.

Joinbodi Cohort; coordinate and work together toward sharing of knowledge and ensure that each organizations and everyone work together. Organizations sometimes do project together and that helps reduce the tension of rival or competition. We are partners and can work together continuously adapting to new challenges and the need to promote political leadership and governance within communities too will also pick from them more learnings.

Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre

Okay, emmm the sixth question is if the CSOs' work is supporting ehhhh public institutions to obtain accountability.

Yes, it is!

Okay, okay, how?

I think that is what we have been talking about all through, you know, about how the work of CSOs has actually been... in terms of interventions, training, engagement with state actors and even citizens. Yeah! And CSOs for a number of times have called out on government, commended when government is doing well, even when government is not doing as it is supposed to, CSOs have called government out, you know, through engaging with them whether it is stakeholders engagement, whether it is during advocacy visits to their offices, whether it is through press conferences and we have done that as an organization.

A number of times we have put out press conferences to address one or two issues that are happening in the country either to commend the government or call the government to action. So, these are all measures through which citizens

are used to hold the government accountable. There is also something that we publish yearly in our organization which is our SDG shadow report. We all know about the sustainable development goals, at CISLAC we are focused on goal 16 which talked about strong institutions, peace, justice and anti-corruptions. All those issues under SDG goal 16, from 2018 we have published a shadow report. And now, in that shadow report there are indicators to measure whether a particular country is really implementing or how far the country has gone in achieving the goals that have been set, you know.

So, using those indicators CISLAC through our desk research, through information we get via our engagements with stakeholders we measure the Nigeria's government performance in achieving this goal 16. And we present it every year to the government. We present it also at the United Nations general assembly. This year during the United Nations general assembly this SDG shadow was presented there by our Executive Director, the first lady was also at the launch and the SDG shadow report was presented to her. Within that shadow report you see what Nigeria has done and we also have the recommendations you know, what government can do to achieve better or to perform better in the next year, all toward ensuring that in the country, we are able to reach these SDG goals that we set for 2030. 2030 is just in 7 years' time.

How far have we gone as a nation in achieving some of these goals that we set in sustainable development goals, our focus as I said is goal 16, which is strengthening institutions, under that we have peace, justice, anti-corruption and all that. In the shadow report for this year, like for example, we commended them on the beneficial ownership register that has been launched by the Corporate Affairs Commission; there was commendation also for the POCA, 2022. There were recommendations on certain areas that have not been done, you know, so, we don't just condemn, condemn and call out the government. We also recommend like I said CISLAC helps to complement the efforts of the government. So, at the end of the day we are all working for a better Nigeria. *Ok, thank you, I don't know if your colleague has emmm anything to say.* No, its fine, it's fine. *Ok!*

So, emmm emmm on that ehhhh, now we move to question number 7: How do civil society efforts support public institutions to achieve their objectives? I think we have answered it already, but I will just itemize. Civil society efforts support government institutions to perform their duties. (1) Through building the capacity of public institutions you know, and that can be done through trainings, workshops and all that. (2) Through stakeholders engagement where we are able to rub minds and share ideas with them, they are able to also share their challenges, identify gaps, review of policies. Where there is need for legal framework, civil society lend their voice to the advocacy for some of those

legal framework to be put in place to make these institutions even effective in performing their duties.

Ok, there is rider to that question, which is what alternative accountability programs have CSOs suggested and supported. What alternative accountability programs that is being suggested by CSOs. I don't understand. Alternative to what!? To what is already in place or what? Yes, to what is already in place maybe can we say instead of eh hh instead of eh hh having this kind of paper style of filing or whatever, the digitalization of governance, then you look at the way the cost of governance is eating deep into the Nigerian pulse, now you are looking at the cost of governance, you want to say that there should be a reduction in the cost of governance. Is there a program that is being supported by the CSOs to ensure that really there is a reduction in the cost of governance, those are some of the issues.

There are few CSOs that work in the area of technology, AI, artificial intelligence that is currently trending globally. Most countries are now using it to keep up their data and also use it in their day to day operations and activities. Some CSOs who work in this area of technology in my understanding, work to build the capacity of some government institutions toward how they can use technology to improve their work and work environment. Take for instance the ministry of justice; I remember that there are few CSOs that are currently training the Nigerian judges on how to use technology in their court processes. That is also to reduce the level of burden on judges and the court as well.

And then to add to that; there are also institutions, CSOs like I said whose core work is around data and IT who also use technology to track government interventions, you understand, especially to track government efforts in such a way that we are able to promote accountability. Take for instance, CSOs such as CODE and BudgIT who through their interventions, CODE follows the money, where we see money disbursed by various state government, how they are actually being implemented. We also have BudgIT that uses their tracker to track government project, track government interventions at all level to see if these interventions that governments say they are doing are actually being implemented. So, they use that; they collate data through that tracker and people are able to have access to it. They monitor projects you know, they have been able to expose some projects that were not implemented the way those responsible said they were implemented. And that has been used to promote accountability because when get some of those information, they are able to report to the relevant anti-corruption agencies the institutions that were supposed to be responsible for the monitoring of those projects or for handling those projects and effective actions can then be taken. So, there are CSOs that actually deal with technology and use data, you understand, to track. Look at this humanitarian issue; I am talking

about the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, these palliatives scandal and all that. So, there were CSOs that were able to use, you know, data and technology to track and see and that is how it was revealed that some of these humanitarian efforts did not even get to some of the people that the ministry said they had gotten to. They were able to track who are the poorest of the poor and all that. They are people that partner with government so as to help government. They are the people that are able to collate such data, because you talk about the poorest of the poor and the vulnerable in the society, they are able to ensure that some of those things get to these people, we are able to gather data. Yes! *Thank you.*

Then number 8: Are CSOs able to convince public institutions to take responsibility for future impact of their actions? Did you get that? Yeah, I got it. I should take it again. Yes! I am trying to understand it. Are CSOs able to convince public institutions to take responsibility for future impact of their actions? Ok, let me give you a pointer to this. You look at thee, thee the design of the Nigerian naira, some denominations of the Nigerian naira and then you see what the CBN did and we all we are witnesses, we witnessed the impacts of such policy decision...policy, actions ummm, maybe cases like that the CSOs are able to intervene but I don't the CBN took responsibility for that action or the leadership of the CBN. So, we are looking a situation whereby if there is an action in the future government institution would agree that yes, we take responsibility of what is going to happen.

I think, looking at your pointer that you raised now, the case of Magu the former EFCC chairman is a good example of the pointer you gave as regards to this question that you have just asked. Yes, the EFCC took responsibility and got the chairman dismissed. Even though he was later promoted as a police officer which clarifications were made that yes the reason for his dismissal while he was with EFCC has nothing to do with his job as a police officer you know. For Magu's case for instance, the EFCC took responsibility for its action because quite a lot of CSOs were talking about the re-looting of the recovered assets and recovered proceeds of crime that is being re-looted.

And also, EFCC under the watch of the former chairman Mr. Magu was not effective enough in the fight against corruption as regards to what his principal, the president at the time has made known to Nigeria that one of his cardinal points in his administration is to fight against corruption. So, the EFCC for instance took responsibility for their own action. *If they took responsibility for their actions, was it as a result of the efforts of the CSOs?* Yes it was, yes it was as a result of the efforts of the CSOs because there were quite a lot of CSOs that were clamouring for the replacement of the EFCC chairman. The Pandora reports identifying individuals who have foreign account, who have plenty money, who have invested in politics using dirty money as a way to buy themselves into office,

quite a lot of CSOs were advocating for it.

Eventually the president heard the voice of advocacy of the CSOs and took action that led to the removal of Magu from office. And let's also go into talking about taking actions, the ICPC for instance that is currently taking constituency projects as a very key cardinal point of its mandate is also as a result of that cry of government not doing enough in the fight against corruption that led to the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission to include in its line of work the constituency projects monitoring and yeah, I agree with my colleague to some extent, government has tried but like I said earlier, there is still room for improvement. There is still room for improvement because even with regards to the Pandora paper, P&ID listed you know, for the people mentioned to be investigated, the politically exposed persons to be investigated and to be properly punished, but we haven't seen that implemented.

That is one instance of there is still room for improvement. We are saying P&ID was a clear case of corruption you know, people took bribe from the foreign company, government officials that are supposed to have the interest of Nigeria they were saying you know, now that the case has been concluded let the people who were involved be punished, but we are yet to see that. We are saying let the people mentioned in the Pandora paper be investigated, we are yet to see any of that happening. So, we are still waiting, in as much as civil society efforts have led to some results, there is still room for improvement even though government is slow in taking action. *Ok, thank you.*

Now we move to the third component of this interview, the good governance related. What specific governance sectors have benefitted from civil society efforts? What areas have yet to gain the support from civil society? I feel civil society has tried its possible best in really trying to cover almost every area; there are several civil society organizations in the country working in different areas of governance. So, what CISLAC is doing might be different from what PLAC is doing, what YIAGA is doing, what Human Angle is doing. So, there are so many that are focusing on different areas, some are not at the federal, some are focusing on the grassroots level you know, (local government), yeah, some are dealing with people with disabilities you know, women and children, how they are also left behind sometimes in governance and others.

So, I feel civil society has stretched itself to different areas, you understand, doing work in different areas trying to engage Nigerians and te government. I don't know personally know if there is any area that has been left out by civil society. I don't know if Mr. Emma has... There is none. She is correct. Just like you mentioned, we have various civil society organizations involved in various line of work. I think from what you said, you are very correct. There are CSOs whose focus area is in

the local government, the grassroots, you know, when you talk about grassroots interventions, there are also different interventions from various CSOs that are focused on different issues as they emanate from local governments in the country.

Then taking it to the state and then even the federal government, various CSOs have partnered, collaborated with different government institutions at the federal level as well as the state level. So, I don't think there is any area really that has been left out. Looking at the prison reform, there are CSOs that work in the area of prison reforms and even the wellbeing, the welfare of prisoners, there are various CSOs. You talk about the health sector, there various CSOs that work with the federal government.

Nigeria has one of the strongest civil society voices on the continent. I mean civil society in Nigeria is doing quite a lot, quite a lot and even the citizens can attest to that you know, the citizens will always tell you... sometimes you go and you are interacting, like I gave the example of a community and they said that the presence of civil society is there so much more than even the presence of government; that civil society is doing almost everything for them and then we begin to wonder where is the presence of government. And so, I think what we should be looking more, or thinking more in calling out on government to really work with civil society, to really be open to collaborating with civil society and not to leave its role and responsibilities for civil society. We are all partners in progress, you know, complementing each other in what we are doing. *Ok, thank you very much.*

Question number 10: What is your organization doing to promote good governance in Nigeria? Please tell us the progress made so far. I think well, almost 70% of this interview was about what our organization is doing, but so... *we need to articulate those things now, we need to articulate for the purpose of the good governance stream.* Yeah! So like we mentioned earlier, our organization first of all uses our platform to call government to account through stakeholder engagements, advocacy, whether it's advocacies visit, press conferences, press statement or interviews or through the media, we commend government and we also make recommendations to government, where government is not doing as it should we also try to call them to do the right thing.

We also collaborate a lot with government institutions on different programs and projects. There are several departments in our organization, you know, working on different thematic areas and so each of these departments collaborate with various institutions of government, you know, we build capacity, we conduct trainings for staff of government institutions and citizens, we conduct stakeholders engagement where we are able to share ideas, we are to listen to one another to hear their challenges so that we can, you know, we can support, we also

advocate for policies and legal frameworks. We are also involved in legislative and policy advocacy. We have been to a lot of public hearing, we contributed to various memorandas, we have made input on some legal frameworks before the national assembly, and we made inputs to some of these bills, to some of these amendments, some in the working while others have become laws. Furthermore, we engage citizens; carry out a lot of sensitisation, a lot of awareness creation, capacity building for citizens and educating them on issues that affect them as citizens, educating them on their roles, their responsibilities, their rights as citizens and also educate them on policies, government programs, and governance issues that affect them as Nigerians. We also have Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre which is within our organization which is an avenue for citizens who are victims or witnessed practices of corruption or human rights violations to report and then we forward to relevant institutions and follow up, with them to ensure appropriate actions and redress.

CISLAC is doing quite a lot with regards to promoting transparency and accountability. We engage government at all levels, both the federal, the state and local, we use different interventions to engage with all kinds of stakeholders, the citizens, policymakers, the executive. *Thank you!*

Now the general question, number 11: What are the gaps left in advocacy agitation by your organization? By organization or by my organization; by your organization, by CISLAC, What are the gaps left in advocacy, what challenges have you encountered? Are there risks, how can these risks be mitigated in the course of your organization's interventions? So, a lot of questions are actually loaded there. It's a lot of questions. Yes, take them one after the other so that we can round off.

Ok, I think maybe one of the gaps is actually bureaucracy in government, you know sometimes the slow action of government, the lack of political will by government to take action regarding certain issues. That is a gap and challenge because no matter how much effort we put into advocacy work, whatever things we do, we are only civil society. At the end of the day the bulks of work falls on the government and there is no political will for government to take actions instead everything will just be a futility. So that is a huge gap and a challenge for us. Sometimes the government needs to act fast and when there is no political will it definitely slows down whatever efforts it is... and that is like a major gap for us. And of course I think funding because we as CSOs are not government institutions that receive allocation and all that.

So, we need donor support to continue to fuel and push our effort to... I mean with the way the global economy is now, you know there is an issue, those kinds of funding and grants are not coming as they use to... it's a challenge not just

for CISLAC, a lot CSOs are trying to sustain efforts in the midst of economic challenges because the funding and grants to actually continue to push some of those efforts is dwindling. And then I think insecurity, insecurity is also a gap because places where you would have been able to reach and go to with your interventions has been limited because of insecurity in the country, you understand. And political interference as well, so sometimes that is also a gap, political interference and insecurity is limiting whatever efforts we putting in as an organization.

Yes, maybe your colleague can say something. So, is Emmanuel saying anything?

I think Bathsheba highlighted some of the risks that can that come with advocacy in Nigeria. The only part I think she didn't really capture was the legal aspect of it that sometimes a well-planned and good intent advocacy can be misinterpreted by some public actors and thereby leading to legal confrontation you know. And on the part of what steps can be taken to mitigate some of these risks that come with advocacy, I think what CISLAC have actually done in its line of work and partnership and collaboration with government institutions is to first of all get ourselves introduced to most of these institutions to set the line straight that what CISLAC does is not to attack government, but to complement the efforts of government. So far, so good CISLAC have carried out most of its engagements smoothly to a large extent.

Ok, yes, I think we should be rounding off now. Finally, do you think the progress made by civil society can be preserved, how do we improve upon these efforts, what are the points of coordination for the joinbodi cohorts in their areas of interventions?

Civil society efforts can be preserved and one way through which that can be done is to continue to advocate yeah, continuous advocacy and support from government institutions... *continuous advocacy*... yes sir, and support from the government. Yes, we are complementing government's efforts, we collaborate and we partner with government and so long as that relationship is maintained and sustained, I think efforts would last longer. Secondly I feel speaking now of joinbodi, one way also for sustainability of efforts beyond even the lifespan of the grant, find a way of incorporating whatever effort it is into organizational programs and beyond the joinbodi, beyond the MacArthur grant, as an organization we are able to continue with those efforts, we are able to improve because it is now embedded in the programs of your organization.

So, it's not just based on the grants. While these grants are out and end and then all efforts just stop, we have to find a way to sustain efforts beyond the lifespan of the grants and that is by absorbing and incorporating our efforts into

organizational structures and organizational programs. *Ok, maybe Emmanuel has something to say. Hello, this is the last lap.* I actually do not have much to say than to say that the programs and structures that Bathsheba highlighted is one very fundamental way to sustain the programs, the project itself from the grants of MacArthur.

I hold strongly that yes, this is one good way to sustain the progress made from that particular joinbodi cohorts activities. *Ok, so thank you very much, it has always been a pleasure. Please ehhe I am actually doing the recording, I will still get back to you...* (Tape playing without sound) ...you said, no, the first thing you said about pen and paper... *Ok, I was saying assuming there are aspects I didn't get from my conversation with you, I will request that you write it, some aspects you just write it for me because of the challenges we had in the course of this interview... network issue... if there is any area ehnhhen that was I was...*

Ok, it's fine if can send it, the questions, if can forward them down. *And then in case you have any question for me maybe on the project, this project that you are doing now, I am ready to respond so that we can finalise.* Yeah, so, I just wanted to ask, I know right now is the rounds of interviews you are having with all the members and so, after the rounds of interview, what next? Would you be compiling them, and how would you be compiling all our responses? *Ok, what I...* And how long do you think it will take you to be done with the interviews and the compilations? *Ehhhh well there is a time frame for this assignment, by November 15th I should have been rounding off, but I know that because of the responses I have gotten in the course of doing this work, I may appeal to them for emmm emmm more days... additional time... Maybe 5 days, Then I have a research assistant, who is transcribing for me, then I will go through, after that; I will send it back to the specific organization that I interviewed and they will be able to respond.*

And then like, as I am doing it there points of ehhhh ehhhh points of similarities with the interviews I have had with others. So, those ones now will help in identifying the salient issues and maybe in terms of the gaps and then the recommendations that we made to further this work. So, those will be into the report. That is it. So, by the time you compile everything, you will be sharing it back to the various organizations. First I will share yours with you to look at it to ensure that it is a representative of what we discussed. And then a final report will be done and Budglt Foundation (Tape skips)...for the presentation of the report.

Usually BudgIT Foundation they publish their, they publish all their research work. So, it will be published. So, those are the stuffs. Alright, thank you. So, Bathsheba I want to say that I really appreciate the patience you had with me in the course of this interview, the technology, and the Mr. Hope Emmanuel, I really appreciate

HEDA Resource Centre

Introduction:

My name is Olanrewaju Suraju, the Chair of HEDA Resource Centre, which is a non-governmental organization, and non-profit organization, promoting good governance, accountability and transparency, as well as climate justice in Nigeria and in Africa. Registered as an Incorporated Trustee. The headquarter is in Lagos and the Liaison office is in Abuja.

A. Transparency related

1. Do you know of any interventions by CSOs that have resulted in appropriate behavior by Nigerian public officers?

Answer: Yes. There are several of these kind of intervention by civil society organization that have resulted in personal or group response that can be traced to civil society organization. Some of them are either through public interest litigation action that are instituted by civil society organizations. There are some that are part of suggestions and recommendations to government leading to some corrected action on the part of government, whereas there are also some that are influenced through engagement where recommendations are made to government and on the strength and basis of that, you find government doing things differently.

1.(a) What are those that you find prominent that constitute the selling point for HEDA Resource Centre?

Answer: For HEDA Resource Centre in particular, we have had reasons to engage several of government agencies and institutions. One of the remarkable one was the proposition by the immediate past Attorney General of the federation where he deserted what he called the 'guideline on the management of the proceeds of crime' and also created a committee in his office to take responsibility for the disposal for the recover proceeds of crime which either actually ruled to him that it was illegal for him to usurp the powers of the anti-corruption agencies for the purpose of now setting up an administrative body in his capacity as Attorney General which he actually refused to hearken to that advice by HEDA.

And we proceeded to institute a legal action against the guidelines that was actually deserted by his office. And the law (the judiciary) agreed with us in that position and nullified his guidelines the same thing with the committee that was constituted for the purpose of forcing the guideline. The order of the court led to the National Assembly also enacting a Proceeds of Crime Act which actually

reinforced the position of HEDA as an organization.

The second one was on the Profit-Sharing Contract Act which was also one of the policy guidelines that was used by many of the multinational corporations to avoid been some of the profit-sharing agreement with the Nigerian government dating back to more than 10, 20 years. Whereas it's been under the law for them to have acted on the profit-sharing act and ensure that Nigeria gets some of the profits from the oil proceeds in the country. We queried that and also worked with military government which then led to the amendment of the profit-sharing act of the federal republic of Nigeria.

1.(b) Which other organization did you work with either CSOs that were instrumental to this milestone?

With the profit sharing, we actually work more with an individual which is the Femi Falana (SAN) chambers in the advocacy for the Profit-Sharing Act and the same thing actually goes to the proceed of crime act. Though there are quite a number of civil societies organizations that were in different room of advocacy and also engagement and also legislative interactions both like organizations like Sislack that were also speaking on the legislative advocacy but HEDA independently took them to court in the court order to get that decision.

2. Are civil society efforts leading to a redefinition of information exchange in terms of speed, accessibility, ease of use etc in Nigeria?

Answer: Yes. It is already happening though we are not there and is shaping up quite a number of things and issues. It is not like before anymore for many of the government institutions and individuals where request for information are treated by government officials as just what can be discarded. The whips and caprices of government officials they lot of challenges. So for us for instance at HEDA we have got like three separate favorable judgment on the freedom of information requests. We got one against the Central Bank of Nigeria; we got one against the Custom Services and we got one against the FCT Minister. This is clear, redefining with the judicial backing that we get from the court, clearly showing that the information of exchange is going to be on a different interpretation in the country.

3. In your opinion, who are the people outside government that should have access to government information?

Answer: These are civil society, the media; the citizens themselves even the opposition party. So civil society is broad in terms of both the opposition party, religious institutions etc because the access to information from government is not only for criticisms. It is even sometimes to help government and that is very difficult for government to know and it is also a way of promoting good

governance and accountability if people have the information. It is also potency for conflict, misunderstanding and disagreement for government. Once people have advance and sufficient information, they are able to also counter misinformation or rumor in the system.

4. In your opinion, which of the domains of government activity have become transparent as a result of the activities of civil society in Nigeria?

Answer: In terms of tiers of government, it is more at the federal level that you see the best form of transparency, in terms of the state and local level; there is no accountability at least for now.

In terms of branches of government it is more in the executive and also the judiciary. The legislature is completely obliged and you rarely get anything from the legislator except when activities are already conducted and also including the constituency project and the rest of that.

4.(b) What are the opportunities of scaling up or getting more positive results? What can be done?

Answer: Engage more, the state and the local government to also see how about the 52% of the federal allocation is domissant. The state governors not only controlling their state, they control the local government. So more than 52% of the federal government allocation disappears through the state governor under the guise of the state and the local government allocation. There is a whole lot of work to be done at that level. If applied to the branches of government at the state level, it should be more on the executive branch of government at the state level.

B. Accountability Related

5. What has civil society done in advocating for compliance with legal and policy framework by public institutions? Are the state actors becoming honest in behavior as a result of civil society efforts?

Answer: We have been heavily involved in advocacy and also legal advocacy with the public legal action earlier mentioned which made it very important many times for them to do as it is necessary their public interest litigation. There are also advocacy in terms of political advocacy, protests, rallies and sometimes engagement for collaborations. Civil societies have really done a lot in that to ensure that they operate within the ambit of the law and then also laid down policies.

In the aspect of being honest in behavior, yes, they are. Willingly or unwillingly,

they are being forced to release more information that is required. That is why you see quite a whole lot of opportunity for media to also report on some of those activities. For the purpose of honesty, there is a fact of conscious level of information and media engagement. Information's are coming out to push the frontier of accountability.

6. Do you think civil society's work supports public institutions to attain accountability in standard operating procedures? How?

Answer: Yes. That is the purpose of civil society engagement. It is to push for public institutions and politically exposed persons to operate within the standard operating procedures that are laid down.

7. How do civil society efforts support public institutions to achieve their objectives? What alternative programs have CSOs suggested and supported? May be cost of governance?

Answer: Many of the public institutions are departing from their responsibility to their objectives. If you look at the situation with the former CBN and CBN governor, the CBN actually completely abandoned their primary responsibility of the Central Bank of Nigeria. Not only was it meddling in other activities that this statutory responsibility of other ministries. It was also for the CBN governor himself to delve into politics. Civil society organizations also condemned that departure from the primary role and responsibility of the bank including HEDA, instituting a legal action against the CBN governor for acting against the laid down provision of the CBN Act which forbid him from engaging in partisan politics. Civil society organization deployed the legal and the political actions also to keep the public institutions within their stated objectives.

7.(b) Alternative Accountability Programs:

We consistently also engaged the government to see the chances of reducing the cost of governance. For instance, by possibly or keeping a unilateral cameral not the bilateral cameral national assembly which in our opinion consumes a large cost for the nation. We have also criticized the revenue of not just the minister appointed but also aide appointed by the minister once appointed by the president. There is consistent engagement with the government, the same goes with the state governor who are now in the habit of appointing thousands of special assistant and all the rest of that. Those for us are very important of what civil societies have been doing. A part of that is also the need for digitization and technology driven governance that reduces the opportunity for exploitation and the same time corruption in government.

8. Are CSOs able to convince public institutions to take responsibility for

future impacts of their actions?

Answer: Yes. Civil societies have been doing it. We have reasons to hold public institutions and public office holders also responsible for some of their actions. But for us at HEDA for instance, we have had reasons to sue even at the ECOWAS Court, the Attorney General and the Federal Government for the failure to hold accountable the oil multi-national corporations that are flaring gas in the oil producing Niger-Delta area. We have also taken some bold steps to report the Chief Executive of some of those to the law enforcement agencies so they can be held accountable for misgovernance, corruption, lack of transparency and even abuse of office. Civil society have been able to convince them to now seeing that people and non-civil society are monitoring and quite a number of them are actually being conscious of the impact of their actions.

C. Good Governance Related

9. What specific governance sectors have benefitted from civil society efforts? What areas have yet to gain support from civil society?

Answer: Technology driven governance. That has been very conscious and can be traced to some of the involvement of organization such as 4G that have succeeded in pushing them to bring the budget and also the budget operation to some measure of digitization and also some engagement at the social media level. Areas yet to open up for the active engagement are at the local government level. That is because local government officials are not independent and they are incapable of taking decisions without the approval of the governors. And this is what governors will not naturally do because there is a whole lot of mis-governance, corruption and abuse of office at the local government level.

10. What is your organization doing to promote good governance in Nigeria? Please tell us the progress made so far.

Answer: We have been at the forefront of holding government accountable both at the individual and institutional level. We have not only been involved with the enforcement of the FOI law, we have also been directly getting involved with the anti-corruption agencies by instituting several amount of petitions against public office holders that have been accused of mis-governance or mismanagement of public resources. We have also taken the judicial necessary actions including monitoring of judges who are involved in adjudicating on high profile corruption cases and reporting suspected infractions to the National Judicial Council and the rest of that. This for HEDA is very critical and crucial. We have also been involved with some measures of collaborations which gives some opportunity to allow for those who want to learn and also use the resources of anti-corruption agencies to achieve their underlining purpose in terms of promoting good governance in the

system.

D. General

11. What are the gaps left in advocacy and agitation by your organization? What challenges have you encountered? Are there any risks? How can these risks be mitigated in the course of your organization's intervention?

Answer: Some of the gaps have to do with the resources that are actually required in terms of financial resources and sometimes even human resources to take some of the advocacies to a political conclusion. Because some cases last for years or takes years before they are concluded or decided.

Challenges: The challenges have to do with dealing with independent and responsible media. Some of the independent media are only independent in the mention of their ownership to some extent but their operations are influenced by several interests including those who are enemies of the society and also corrupt government officials.

Risks: we have faced several attacks such as physical attack, media attack, legal attack that are also threatening not only our work but also our lives and existence. So there have been so many threats in the leadership and organization.

Risk Mitigation: mitigating the risks is for us also to try to get some of our international partners to be conscious of what is happening and then also have them use their diplomatic involve support from the big countries and international partners to make it clear for the government and some government officials that they are been monitored and that consequences may abound for their activities and actions that will shrink the civic space. There is a lot of work to be done on exposing then repression of the civic space.

12. Do you think the progress made by civil society can be preserved? How do we improve upon these efforts? What are the points of coordination for the 'Joinbodi Cohort' in their areas of interventions?

Answer: It is very much possible to have the progress actually preserved, if there is a continued;

1. Favorably environment for civil society to operate which is very critical. That is only when it is possible for there to be action and also some support.

2. Support that civil society will enjoy from some of the development partners who values and understands the enormity of the work that civil society does and

also the implications of these work for many of civil society operators and the mechanisms in terms of the anti-corruption agencies and also the judiciary being open to favorable dispositions toward activities of civil society organizations

Coordinating Points: The 'Joinbodi Cohort' has not really been that much well-coordinated for collaborative execution and implementation of the project. Foundation has been so wonderful in trying to make sure it bridges the gaps that are within the individual members of the court.

It is important to see how the organizations are brought to some measures of very important realization of connecting the dots with their different activities to actually make the circle go round rather than having the dot that only forms that shape without really connecting with another. There is a need to consistently and continuously provide that leadership and coordination for those who will really value what is inherent in the achievement of individual organizations.

Paradigm Leadership Support Initiative

Thank you very much! Hellooo! I think there was a disruption. Hello sir! My name is Oscar E. Ubhenin, and I am doing this study on behalf of BudgIT Foundation, and the organization was recognised as a member of 'Joinbodi Cohort.' Yes my name is Olusegun Elemo, I am the executive director at P... leadership support initiative (PLSI). I am happy to meet you and I got your BudgIT as well. (Tape skips)... I am dressing up to go for my meeting this morning. The time here now is 6:09a.m. Thank you sir! *So, we will start very quickly so that we don't waste much time.*

On the first question, which is transparency related, we will like to know if you are of any intervention by CSOs that has resulted in appropriate behavior by the Nigerian public officers. Ok, initiatives that have resulted in appropriate behavior. One is the budget access or budget itself. I know that there have been different interventions from various quarters, including from the World Bank initiatives, the state fiscal transparency, accountability and sustainability initiative, the SFTAS program of the World Bank. That include access to budget document, of course you that the program the World Bank implemented also have some component of civil society interventions. So, it wasn't just a World Bank initiative, it was the World Bank initiative that accommodated the various actors. So, to guarantee the sustainability of the initiative, civil societies were embedded in the implementation of that project.

As such, organizations like BudgIT, PLSI, and several others were engaged in the process to sustain some of the gains. Some of the gains are of course visibly around budget access, including you know, access to budget process,

ensuring that budget documents are published online by state public officers. (Tape skips)... that whether some of the gains that were recovered. On the part of government officials especially around budget access, of course that also led to some of the improvements we saw in the audit, in the public audit system, (Tape skips)... which now started to do so.

But of course you need to mention that some of, all of these efforts were incentivized, in that states were given money, you know, as grants to be able to continue to do these things. And that is why I said the sustainability of that initiative was also put to test (Tape skips)...the initiative lasted. Of course there have also been different initiatives by civil society organizations. World Bank is not a civil society organization but a development partner. But like I said embedded in that SFTAS project are civil society organizations that brought in their own social capital to be able to engage in the process.

There are also other initiatives by civil society independent (Tape skips)... implementing since 2011, and that opened up the space for citizens to have access to budget documents, maybe not as much as when we now had the SFTAS program coming, right? But there were improvement in the public audit system which meant that they are now providing (Tape skips)... aggressiveness of the reports that are being provided by public officials whether at the federal and state levels. And when the SFTAS program also came in it opened up the space even further. There are also, and there also the public private development centre (PPDC) that always work around procurement issues (Tape ceases)... *I can hear you!*

Ok, I was talking about the PPDC. PPDC has been working around procurement access, ensuring that citizens had access to procurement information to be able to demand accountability (Tape skips)... budget access (Tape skips)... audit (Tape plays incoherently)... *Hello! Yes, I am with you please. Thank you very much! Ok, can it be said that eh-h without financial incentives for the state government that the fiscal transparency stuff wouldn't have been effective. Say that again sir. So, I am looking at the area of incentive for, for the state government to participate. Does it mean that if we removed financial incentives that civil society organization would not have succeeded as much.*

Well, you mean without the financial incentives, right? *Without the financial incentive by the World Bank, well, is that CSOs would not have succeeded.* No, not like CSOs would not have succeeded, the success were coming in trickles, not at scale, that is the difference. With what BudgIT was doing with their budget access, it started opening up the space gradually. The successes were recorded in trickles, not at scale. And eh-h it wasn't even, we can't say that it was a financial incentive from the World Bank per se, emm, it was a loan to the federal

government of Nigeria.

The federal government of Nigeria gave it as grant to the state governments. So, it wasn't even the World Bank that was providing financial incentives. It was the federal government of Nigeria that was providing that financial incentive. *Ok!* The World Bank gave it as loan to the federal government and the federal government gave it as grant to the state governments to be able to work. *Ok, collected as loan from the World Bank, thank you very much.*

Let's move fast. Question number 2: Ehhh in your opinion, who are the people outside government that should have access to government information?

Well, basically, civil society, the media, the organised private sector, the different associations, women groups, youth forums, traditional institutions, religious organizations, (Tape skips)... that should have access. Of course we can even go further to provide gender... of course I have done, I mentioned women groups, persons with disabilities, because there are policies that concern them that are being implemented at different levels, and they should be aware of how these policies are affecting them especially how the implementation is going, how public funds are being allocated, appropriated and spent and things like that. You know, these are the different groups that should have access. *Ok, thank you very much.*

Are civil society efforts, that is, number 3: Are civil society efforts leading to a redefinition of information exchange in terms of speed, accessibility, ease of use? For example, are civil society efforts leading to, redefinition, perhaps one can allude to the freedom of information Act, maybe the extent to which it has enabled access to information and then we are looking at speed. When you request for information, how long does it take to get government organization to respond?

I will say that it depends on the information you are requesting and from which organization, from which public institution, at which level of governance you are requesting. You see, there are some kind of information that you request from the federal government, if there are not sensitive fiscal information, or they don't compromise national security as they always say, they will provide (Tape skips)...

We can talk about the timing, there currently no efficiency of how government is being run in Nigeria. The public sector is not efficient at all. But the freedom of information Act was there to provide some efficiency when requesting for information. Yes, some public institutions (Tape skips)... written letters to (Tape skips)... PPRA, NRC... they don't stick with the provisions of the freedom of information (Tape skips)... you know, the stipulated number of days that information should be provided.

However, maybe a month or two months after you will just get a letter from the office on your desk saying that they are requesting for clarification on the

information that you are requesting and things like that. And it can go (Tape plays incoherently)... in a way that... let's say some organizations are not providing information. And you might be aware about the freedom of information ranking that is being done annually including the (Tape plays incoherently)... they access the responsiveness, the responsive nature of federal ministries, departments and agencies regarding freedom of information.

So, you might want to look into the previous reports that they have published. When you are requesting, at which level of governance, whether federal or state and ehhh if they are not sensitive fiscal data, and they don't compromise national security as they always say, you might have some response. Like for instance, we have written letters to Kaduna State ministry of women affairs before and yes recently and they responded. They responded to us. Some of those information were useful and some of them were not. And we have also written, we also wrote some freedom of information request recently to several agencies of government and we are still awaiting their response and the time ahhhh the due time is past already. That is what we are talking about when it comes to how responsive agencies of government are. But if you ask me generally, I think to measure it, they are not responsive enough.

Ok, thank you very much. We move quickly to the next question, number 4: In your opinion, which of the domains of government's activities have become transparent as a result of the efforts of civil society in Nigeria? Is it possible to scale up for more positive outcomes? By domains I mean..., which of the... maybe the levels of government, federal, subnational and local government, and in terms of the institutions of government, the legislature, executive and judiciary. I didn't hear the former part. Ok you didn't hear it. I didn't hear the former part of the question.

I said which of the domains of government have become trans..., domains of government activities, the activities in the domains that have become transparent as a result of the efforts of civil society in Nigeria? Ok, when you say domains, are you talking about sectors? Which of the sectors of government? The question is actually broad. For example, we can look at the levels of government. Which sector of government now? Is the agricultural sector, the education sector and all of that? And then you can also look at the institutions of government, the legislature, executive and the judiciary.

Ok! *Their activities!* Ok, I get your... ehhh well I wouldn't say much about the judiciary because you know; our intervention does not cut across what is happening in the judiciary. For the legislature, there is still issue about the legislature, very, very big issue and I will limit, I will limit my intervention to the areas that we work in. We work with public accounts committee, ahh, ok,

federal parliaments, the house of Reps and the senate, we also work with public accounts committee in all the state ehhh you know, Assemblies in the 36 states.

For the federal, we have issues with the report of the public accounts on after they have reviewed the (Tape plays incoherently)... to provide their own reports. I don't understand (Tape skips)... we did not see that report (Tape skips)... we call it (Tape skips)... and the (Tape skips)... regularly we attend and they just shut the door against us. It's not consistent. Of course there is a new assembly now, the tenth assembly; we don't know that... we are hoping that the engagements are going to change as regards the federal parliaments. You can also talk about the budget of the national assembly. Emmm there was, I think it was the former senate president Bukola Saraki that tried to provide information regarding the budget of the national assembly.

Even that, even that information, I mean civil society saw it as incomprehensive, insufficient information that was provided. But maybe the something is much better than what we have some years ago. Now, we need to build on that and ensure that every, you know, the budget of the national assembly is open completely such that every ehhh ordinary person, ordinary citizen can understand what the national assembly is doing with his money, how he is appropriating, how he is allocating and spending it. That is it for the national assembly. For the state assembly, emmm we still have issues, we have a, aaa flagship work that we do at PLSI. It's called a subnational audit efficacy index. It's done annually where we measure the accountability temperature ehhhhhh PFM practices, policy implementation practice and one of our key, one of the key institutions of governance that we engage with in measuring all of these is the subnational parliament.

Sometimes they provide, yes, they do provide information to us sometimes, and if you need more information about the work we have done on subnational audit efficacy index, you can visit our website, check the essay index report, especially the 2022 report that we published ahh March 2023 this year. It will tell you what the parliament, how the parliament is behaving with regard to audit process in Nigeria. How each of the 36 states, we gave an update on each of the 36 states, how they are behaving. Ehh the information we are requesting from them, how they are engaging citizens, how they are... and all of that, it will tell you that ehhh, that ehhhh, that information.

So, that is with regards to the legislature. For the executive, of course we engage with the office of the Auditor-General at the federal and in all the 36 states. Also through our essay index report we also engage with the office of the Accountant-General ahhh in all the 36 states. I can say that for the office of the Auditor-General at the federal, yes they published their reports now, we don't... we use

to really, really ehhe be on their neck to say where is the report. That was maybe seven years ago, six years ago, but now they do publish their report even though we still have you know, some areas that we are discussing with them that, you know, we see that they hide some report away from the public.

But largely, most of the reports they put it out, some they put it out very late when they have become irrelevant and unuseful again. So, those are the constraints that we see here and there. For the sun-national, the office of the Auditor-General at the subnational in all the 36 states, in fact, those ones are even terrible. Ehh there is something we call the audited financial statement and there something we call the audit reports. The audited financial statement is different from the audit report. Many of these are... I don't know are public (Tape skips)... but many of the states just print audited financial statement that is not useful, that is useless to any citizen, even useless to the public account within their state because (Tape skips)... cannot even use the audited financial statement (Tape skips)... in the state now is that you need to find the audit report so that the people can see how the (Tape skips)... are spent and some of those things.

So, those are issues that we are still faced with at the state level and we are (Tape skips)... without which demand for accountability will be very difficult. Citizens' engagement will be very, very you know, cumbersome. Hello! Yes, *thank you*. Hello! *Now we move to the, hello, can you hear me? I hope you can hear me?* Yes! Ok!

We move to the next question now. The accountability related. Ok! We are moving to the next set of questions. What has civil society done in advocating for compliance with legal and policy framework by public institutions? (Tape plays incoherently)...

I can't hear you.

Ok, what has civil society done in advocating for compliance with legal and policy framework by public institutions? In advocating for compliance?

Yes, compliance, to comply... Ok, yes ...with public institutions. I will also say what PLSI has done because I much of what other people have done. But emmm let me just leave it as what PLSI has done in advocating for compliance with legal framework. At the state level, through our essay indexing, I will refer you again to our essay index report. It tells, we measure, we measure, one of the indicators that we measure, one of the eight indicators that we measured in 2023, there is the compliance with audit legal framework. The financial autonomy, the administrative autonomy, the, theee, ehhe publishing of the report of the Auditor-General and all of that, there are five sub-parametres that we measured in that

report.

Now, eh hh eh hh each of those five parameters have provisions in the audit law of the state and all the provisions are also captured in our report. The report is online. I can, I can eh h pull it up and just share with you after this meeting. *Ok!* So, what I am saying is that... that is for us on ensuring compliance with audit legal framework at the state level, at the state level. Now, for the... we do all of that. We do all of that regularly and we, we, our findings are clear, our findings are also detailed in our report.

Many are... the states are not complying but we always do our assessment anyway to encourage compliance. Now, for the federal, the federal does not have an audit law. So, we don't even, we can't even pursue any compliance with any audit law. What we are currently doing now for the federal is ah hh that we are advocating for the audit law to be enacted and the house of rep have passed it, we hoping that the senate will pass it very soon and the president will sign it into law. When that is done, we can now begin to push for compliance with that legal framework.

For policy frameworks, yes I can talk about the work we are doing around policy tracker initiative. Our policy tracker initiative now is tracking the implementations of public policies across all the SDGs, the sustainable development goals, right? *Yes!* Eh hh eh hh whether with regard to climate, gender, education, water, healthcare, and things like that. We are looking at policy, implementation of policy eh hh eh hh eh hh eh hh objectives. So, what we are doing is that we are now eh hh ensuring that agencies or institutions of government that are saddled with the responsibilities of implementing certain policy comply, comply with the policy eh hh objectives and of course you that you don't implement policies without spending public funds.

So, as we are looking at the policy objectives that they are being... the policy activities vis-à-vis the policy objectives, we are looking at it through the lens of the programs and projects of government that have been crafted in any particular fiscal year, how they will be able to achieve those policy objectives, how funds have travelled to those programs and projects and what are the delivery rates of those programs and projects. That's what we are doing around the policy framework.

I have told you what we are doing around the legal framework. Now this is what we are doing around the policy angle. Our policy tracker initiative emmm and is pursuing compliance with policy guidelines, policy objectives and what have you. *Thank you!*

Number 6, Ok, but there is a rider to that question 5. Are state actors becoming honest in behavior... are what? You can say are they complying? In terms of compliance, now are they complying, state actors, are they becoming honest or are they complying with the rules? It's a rider to the question. Ehhh did you get that?

You mean as they, as they, are they becoming more honest as they comply? Yes! Well, I think that ehhh we... well, that question is a bit tricky. Well they are becoming honest, well it's somehow, is it honest in providing the information to us or honest in carrying out their own activities? So, that means... because when you say honest, so, emmm are they honest with the information that is being provided to us regarding their compliance with policy framework and all that or are they honest in the execution of their own mandate with regards to policy? I will take the two. Ehhh emmm whether it is, whether they are honest with executing their own mandate with regards to compliance with legal framework and ehhh and policy framework, we wouldn't know as much, right?

Because it requires certain ehhh ehhhh the kind of, the kind of ehhh the kind of emmm emmm activities that need to go in to show us whether they are being honest and all that, that is the kind, that is the accountability element that the audit can unveil you know, when you audit, when you go ahead and audit the activities of MDAs you will know whether these people have been transparent, and honest and executed their mandate with integrity and all of that. When you see monies that are not being accounted for, or when you see ehhh you know, eh hh eh hh emmm regulations that are not being, that are being flouted, that are being you know, disregarded, you that hey, something is happening here.

There is no integrity here, there is no honesty here and all of that. But what tells you that civil society cannot just ehhh weave that up in their head. You need, you know, authoritative evidence to be able to say that, and it is only in the audit report I believe can show you that kind of signal. As to whether they are being honest with the information that they provide to us, of course there a way we can measure it. If you tell us that you published so, so, so something so, so, so date and we cannot find it on your platform, maybe we deploy questionnaire to you, you told us this is what you are doing ehhh in your state to enhance citizens engagement or to deepen collaboration between govern and the people and we asked the people, we ask ehhh eh hh citizens or civil society organization, whichever one we ask and they say know there is nothing existing like that, of course we will be able to make, to draw our inference and that you are telling us something that is not factual. *Ok, thank you very much!*

Then number 6: Do you think that civil society work support public institutions to attain accountability in standard operating procedures, if yes, how? Do I think

that civil society work... *ummm if it is supporting public institutions to attain accountability in standard operating procedure?* Ahhh yes, civil societies work of course, like I told you now, a pure example is our subnational audit efficacy index. By measuring a lot of parameters, a lot of indicators and you will be shocked. And I have just sent you three, the report, the work, you can go through our 2022, the latest one that we published, read the executive summary of that report, it will tell you the kind of work that we are doing at the sub-national level. *Ok!* Ahhh so, so yes I would say that civil society work is helping with that.

Emmm you know three three the state of state that Budget also do annually, they just published a state of state 2023 ahhh just few weeks ago. You can also look at their work, you know, it's an embodiment of work that has been done over the years. They do it annually. All of that work help state government to sit up knowing that a group of civil society and eh you know, citizens groups are watching the and ranking and those ranking are actually being used by development partners to determine how much investment they make in these areas, in these states. So, so they know, they know, they know the implication. So, our work actually contributes, it's contributing largely ahhh to, to, to operations of public institutions. *Ok, thank you very much! I am really impressed with that... with the way you are able to tie it to investment by the government partners.*

The, number 7: How does, do civil society efforts support public institutions to achieve (Tape skips)... accountability programs, have CSOs suggested and supported maybe cost of governance? The network broke at some point; I will like you to take that question again. *Ok, I am actually on question number 7: How do civil society efforts support public institutions to achieve their objectives, what alternative programs have CSOs suggested and supported?* OK, so, objectives, the first part of it is objectives, the second part is what programs have they suggested? Yes, I have just told you now, we are working, our policy tracker is tracking implementation of policies and this is the heart of public eh eh eh governance, right?

Public governance is about implementing policies that will ultimately result to public good, and that is the primary responsibility of government institutions. So, what are we doing? We are tracking eh eh what they said they will do, how they said they will do it, whether they are doing it or not, we are tracking it. Ahhh it may be cumbersome in the sense that the information that should be available for us to be able to make conclusive eh eh you know, judgment on some of those things, but we are tracking it, we are tracking it here and there and I said across the SDGs, we are tracking it. And ensure that eh eh that public institutions are behaving properly, especially with regards to implementing their own policies.

Aha, that is on the one hand. On the second hand, what alternative program have

they introduced to strengthen accountability? Yes, emm emm there are different initiatives. There is the tracker initiative of BudgIT looking at public projects, constituency projects and things like that and tracking implementation of across different communities in Nigeria. There is the value for money initiative of the PLSI also looking at audited projects, not just projects now, you can see the difference. Tracker is looking at public projects. The value for money is looking at audited public projects.

Audited, ahhan the ones that have been audited, and ensuring that we are able to clad audit issues around it, engage citizens, ehhh ehhh whether with tracker or with value for money, whatever evidence we generate from that place, we are using it to engage accountability actors including anti-corruption agencies, parliaments and the likes, and what have you. Including media and others, and ultimately, it is to strengthen accountability mechanism in public institutions whether at the federal or at the state level. I think there are alternative programs, yes, governments have their own programs and their initiative.

There is the IMAC initiative the federal ministry of budget and national planning, you know, put together to be able to also monitor public projects. But of course civil society have ehhh alternative programs to those things too. *Ok! Now... please how many more questions do we have? We just have ehhh... we are stopping at twelve; some of them are not really loaded.*

We are in number 8 now; let's see if we can just thrash it. Thank you for time. Eh hh are CSOs able to convince public institutions to take responsibility for future impact of their actions? Absolutely, absolutely, OK! But you know you can't impose, you can't enforce. Civil society can only advocate, can only suggest, can only propose, can only recommend, but in our proposals, in our recommendations, in our advocacies, we do tell them the consequence... emmm we do tell them the consequence. If you want for instance poverty to go down, these are things you need to do. If you want out-of-school children to reduce, these are things you need to do, if you want healthcare to improve, these are things you need to do, if you want you know, these are things we do. We tagged one of our tools development priorities and make policymakers understand that if you take this course of action, this is the result you are going to get. So, it is now left for them choose the course of action with what they want to get. At the end of the day, the evidence will tell which course of action they took. Thank you!

Number 9: Number 9 now, emmm question number 9, which is on the eh hh eh hh is eh hh what specific governance sector have benefited from civil society efforts? What areas are yet to the support from civil society? Did you get that? Hello! What specific governance sector... Yeah! Say that again sir, ummm say that again sir. Ok, what specific governance... Say that again sir. Ok, number 9: What specific

governance sectors have benefited from civil society efforts? What areas are yet to gain the support from civil society? I wouldn't ehhe ehhe hahhaa whether it is judiciary, whether executive, whether parliament, civil society are engaging all of them and if you want to even do sectorally, civil society are engaging.

Which subject, which subject? Whether education, health, water, hygiene, ehhe emmm climate, gender, any subject you want to talk about, you want to think about, civil society are engaging. And they are engaging at a very high technical level, some ehhe you know, not so technical, they have been around, providing policy alternatives, recommending policy alternatives to government you know, to be able to improve governance in Nigeria and in different, at whatever level of governance, in different arms of government and in different sectors of the economy, especially for instance as the sustainable development goals is concern. And you know sustainable development goals cover all the sectors, all the areas of human endeavour. So, there is nothing... is technology, is it (Tape skips)...

Thank you, to promote good governance in Nigeria. Please tell us the progress made so far. The progress made so far in terms of... in terms of what? What you have been doing, what your organization has (Tape skips)... Ok, the progress made so far! Well, I will say that the progress made so far, we have strengthened... I will say that in terms of the progress made so far, we have strengthened engagement mechanisms... (Tape skips)... *This is an opportunity for you to just go straight, you know, to just* (Tape skips)... Hello, hello, can you hear me sir? The network is cracking, the network is cracking, (Tape plays incoherently)... Hello sir! *Ehhe that is what we find there.*

Hello! So, what we should just do ehhe... *Hello! Hello!* I can hear you. *Ok! I want to as the final question, yes, the final question and the final question is broad, in the area of ehhe in the area of ehhe risk, ehhe challenges, how you are mitigating the risk. And do you think the progress made by civil society can be preserved, how do we improve upon these efforts? What are the points of coordination for the 'Joinbodi Cohort' in their areas of interventions?* The progress can be preserved, *if the progress can be preserved, yes, yes the progress, well, you know the progress we have made so far is also dependent on certain extraordinary factors that are not solely within the control of civil society. For instance, let me give you an instance, if tomorrow there, if tomorrow, God forbid, if there is a coup in Nigeria, how many civil society can engage with ehhe with ehhe the military?*

You know, or if tomorrow, if tomorrow (Tape skips)... refuse to provide information at all you know, civil society need data, they need information to work, so, if government doesn't provide that level of access you are going to erode all the gains. So, to be able to, to be able to ehhe preserve the gains, we need to

stabilize democracy, ensure that we hold credible election that does not result in chaos, so that democracy is stabilized. Once democracy is stabilized and people find themselves in government at whatever level, in different arms, then it is now left for civil society to continue to engage the process, ahhh to engage the actors, whether at parliament, at ehhh the executive or even the judiciary.

So, once that is done, the gains can then be preserved, we can build upon the gains achieved. The other part of the question has to do with what again? *Ummm we are looking at...* the point of coordination with the joinbodi cohort. *Yes!* Yes, the point of coordination well, is there, the 'Joinbodi Cohort' is ehhh is ehhh cohort of many civil society organizations working in different, from different angles. But ultimately, what we are looking at, we are working toward development, growth, right? *Yes!* So, we are working in different sectors, we are working with different approaches, we are using different tools. What we need to do is to know where our strength lies and leverage each organization's strength. If there are organizations that are strong in this sector and all of that; to just you know, continue to leverage each other's strength, you know, to move the different sectors of the economy forward.

Like I said, all the organizations in the cohort are working from different angles, but for the same purpose, you know, toward the same goals, development, growth, stability ehhh improve quality lives for the citizens and things like that. So, it's to know that organization X is strong in this area, organization Y is strong in this area and we can leverage each other's strength to achieve common goal that we have. *Ok, thank you.*

Just for a recap before we say goodbye. You know question eleven was actually looking at the challenges you encountered in the course of doing your work, the risk and how the risk are being mitigated or how they can be mitigated. Just refresh with that while we round off. The challenges have been that; number one ehhh the issue around ehhh political turnover, turnover of politicians ehhh you know, for instance, this ehhh 2023 elections, the turnover was high. You had many legislators that did not return to Assemblies and that impacted on our work seriously, because our work has to do with investing in politicians, building their technical capacity to be able to ehhh provide good governance.

Good governance doesn't just come. If you have politician that does not know anything, how will the person provide good governance? Does he even know what it means, what good governance means? So, those are the issues. So, if you have invested in some politicians and they don't return, ehhh you know, then the investment is gone, you have to start afresh. Those are the kinds of risks that we face. Also is that, also is that we have also seen in our work that when you have some public officials that are benevolent, you know, truly it's not all politicians

that are benevolent, if politicians that are benevolent, they don't see problem in providing information to... *ummm* because there is nothing to hide. Yes, so, they provide information so that civil society can work freely.

But if you have some that are very, very, you know, you will ask for information, they don't provide it, they won't take down the ones that have been previously provide. Those are some of the risks that you then see. Ehhh ehhh in mitigating it, it's through... continue to leverage for instance, the open government partnership initiative, which brings civil society and the policy actors to the same table to discuss and to co-create, to co-create initiatives for good governance. So, when we co-create initiatives, even though there could be imbalance of power, as to whether the public ehhh official that is on the table stronger than civil society in terms of how they are sitting, are you getting my point? *Yes!*

But for the fact that we co-created the initiative, it then brings sense of responsibility to co-implement that initiative. If the initiatives that were co-created are now co-implemented, then we are able to preserve this partnership between civil society and government and you know, ensure that ehhh whatever gains that we are achieving, we can build on it and the ones that we have achieved are not eroded. I think it's to understand where ehhh you know ehhh emmm the responsibility side of the divide... how to, to... *Ok, thank you very much. Olusegun Elemo. Thank you very much sir! 2 O' clock now, I am sure you would like to exit, but do you have any question for me? No, I do not hehehe I do not. Ok! I just hope that, the only thing I will say is that I just hope that you are able to also look out for some of the resources like the ones I have shared from our work and maybe the ones that other organizations have worked on you will be able to draw your inference and so as to make your report. It's alright. Thank you sir! So, once I do it, I will get back to you to ensure that it is a representative of what were ehhh we discussed. Once again, I appreciate and I wish you a happy stay over there. Thank you very much. So and ehhh thank you, bye! Bye!*

Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project

Hope we can start ehhh? Thank you! We will be starting very soon. Just give me few minutes. Alright sir! (Tape plays incoherently) ...particularly in the area of your work, your work in the area of transparency, accountability and good governance. So, first we would like you to give us a brief introduction about yourself and your organization, so that we can start straight away. Thank you. We can quickly do that. My name is Kolawole Oluwa... (Tape skips) ehhh ehhh I work with SERAP, the Director, and other colleagues will be joining us as we progress. My colleague, I think Ruth Olore will be here after. I think she has already joined. We eee ok, I

think I... alright. Thank you Mr Kola, good afternoon everyone.

My name is Ruth Otores. I work as a program officer with SERAP. (Tape skips)... thank you. You are welcome. Thank you. So, we can go on. Other colleague will join us... eh in SERAP we use (Tape skips) secret investigation. We call it... (Tape skips)... People have said that we use it to watch government; I would say we use it to ensure transparency and accountability in governance processes, and it includes the promotion of socio-economic rights. We have offices in Lagos and Abuja. And I think that pretty much covers what we do.

I think we can go ahead. If you have a copy of, or if you saw the template as regard, I sent to you, the draft interview guide, you see that they are in streams. First, the transparency related questions, then you have the accountability related questions, the good governance related questions and the general questions. But in the course of the interactions, some other questions will arise. We start with number 1: Do you know of any interventions by CSOs that have resulted in appropriate behavior by Nigerian public officers? Ruth, in case you have answer to any of the questions, feel free to jump in please. (Tape plays without sound) Hello!

Can you hear me please? I was saying the if you could please come again with the question. *Ok, emmm I was saying do have, do you know of any interventions by Civil Society Organizations that have resulted in appropriate behavior by Nigerian public officers? Oh emm, I thank you very much. So, I will like to say that as a CSO, ah (Tape skips) ...that public officers, was is right by Nigerians and what is appropriate as per governance. So, I will make reference to a particular case of emmm pension, emmm I mean the case of double emolument where sitting senators' salaries, (Tape skipping)...governors before they became senators. So, we were able to...I might not be able to give details of the event.*

But I knew that particular case in court and resulting from the court case and the advocacy we did around the... I mean some governors now... senators I mean, senators' salaries has pass them... I mean pension as past governors while they are senators or while they are still in public offices. S, that significant result that we got that, that our efforts as CSOs to see that members of government, I mean public officers did what is right by Nigeria. The former senator Bukola Saraki, I think he was the one that said that he was going to stop taking pension as a past governor while he was a senator. There are other people too, I could just take a look at some of our documents and probably furnish us with that information. But, so, that is one of the events that was very significant as regards the question you asked.

So, emmm another one was the tweeter ban. So, when the tweeter ban

happened, we went to court and of course we got, eventually we got like eh hh a very emmm like a positive court order stopping the government from prosecuting people who were accessing the inter... ah h I mean App, that is tweeter at the time. You know, after the tweeter thing happened, the government said that anyone who access the, the platform before it was brought back were going to be prosecuted. So, we went to court obtaining a court order stopping the from eh h doing that, from prosecuting the people who were accessing emmm the App with BPN or other means.

And I think that was something that stood out that made the government sat well to do what is right by Nigerians. There are so many other ones. So, I'll just handover to one of my colleagues here to also say some things. Ok, can you hear me? *Very well!* So, my name is Odun Ayo, I work with SERAP as a program officer. So, in addition to what my colleague just said, ah hh the one that I can mention here about our work with SERAP as a CSO that has led government official to do the right thing is a case of water project in Oyo State and Osun State, if I am not wrong, that was being ah hh handled by the former speaker of the house of representatives, whereby that contract was appointed to his company and then it was abandoned. We got information from a whistle blower that, that was the issue.

So, we raise the issue up by calling in eh hh getting in touch with him to ask him about that project and all the information we gathered that the project was appointed to his company as a deputy speaker of the house of representatives and was abandoned, the water project in Oyo and Osun State. And eh hh through our intervention and advocacy, he actually called SERAP to apologise and actually went back to site to complete ah hh the project. It happened some years back. It's the former ah hh deputy speaker, emmm his name is Yusuf, but I can't remember the surname. Thank you. Ok, *thank you very much.*

Sorry! I don't if I'll be able to add. Like the first case I mentioned about the pension, I mean the double emolument issue. So, as a result of that ah h advocacy and then the legal, legal case, issue that we pursued, ten states repealed their pension laws in Nigeria. So, it was very significant for us. I think that put the government on their toes to do what is right or appropriate as far as the law is concerned, as governance is concerned. *Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. I think we can proceed.*

In your opinion, this the second question. In your opinion, who are the people outside government that should have access to government information? Ok, if I would go with this question, I think ummm from the constitution and ah hh the freedom of information Act, I think every Nigerian is entitled to access to information about the running of the government. Everything ah hh the government

are doing, they are doing it on behalf of the people, which are the Nigerians. And every Nigerian has the right to those information, what is going on, the way and manner they are managing the funds, the resources, the projects being done and every other thing.

Apart from ahhh some security information that we can agree that ehhh that the ordinary people are not suppose to have because of the implication as it pertain to security, every other information, every Nigerian has the right to know what is going on. Thank you. *Thank you very much, any other contribution to this?* Not at all, my colleague has already said it. Basically, by law, every Nigerian has the right to access information and ehhh government have the responsibility to provide that information. So, as Nigerians, we have the right to access of government through any means. So, whether we are going through their tweeter, their instagram, whatever form we want information about public events, we have the right as Nigerians to access those information. So, basically, evry Nigerian has the right to access information from the government. *Thank you.*

Then question number 3: Are civil society efforts leading to a redefinition of information exchange in terms of speed, accessibility and ease of use? Please explain based on your understanding. Ahhh, do you want to come again with that question? It was a bit lengthy and we are like trying to get to understand it. Do you want to please come up over it again? *Ok! The question is: Are civil society efforts leading to a redefinition of information exchange in terms of speed, in terms of accessibility and in terms of ease of use?* Ok, if I may come in on this question itself, from our own work in SERAP, asking for information from government, various agencies and parastatals and ministries using the instrument of the FOI, we can say ahhh the level of access to these information are very, very slow and ehhh ahhh majority if not all of the government institutes are not willing to ahhh release information. And when they do release these information to us, either they are releasing it in bits or they are giving us information that is not actually what we are asking for. They are not releasing the actual information.

So, I will say ahhh the CSO work is actually helping in, in accessing these information, but ahhh it's coming not the way we want it to come. It's coming, they are releasing the information not very encouraging and ehhh the access to those information are not where it's supposed to be. Ahhh, when you send FOI, some ministries will not even reply while some will even reply and tell you they are working and that will be all, while majority of them will not give you any reply or response. They are not telling you why they will not giving you any information, why they are not releasing the information. And that is why there is slow access to these information (so, my colleague will...) I will like to add that it's most important for us to know that without testing the use of FOI, you know, only few people will get to know the rate. And testing the rate of FOI has enabled SERAP to educate a

lot of Nigerians.

So, we have been able to do a lot of media advocacy using FOI in asking information from MDAs, from, right from the time that FOI was passed in 2011. And it has really worked a lot. I mean, I mean, I mean encouraging the MDAs to release information to Nigerians. Most Nigerians have come up to the space, also, also making request themselves. Many Nigerians have even tested the use of FOI as well and it seems to be working for them. And you know, the problem I would say of MDAs not giving ummm Nigerians access to information would be because they are coming from the old laws whereby it's about secrecy, that you don't release information to Nigerians.

That is where they are coming from. So, there is need for them to be trained. Many of them do not know about FOI. And you know, over the years, we have trained a number of these MDAs to know that FOI is most important and even for Nigerians to gain their trust, you know and also, a lot of them are coming up also to understand the need for them to release these information to Nigerians. And more so, the major issue there is the Nigerian... you know, the education is paramount for them to know that when they ask for information, it is their right for government to release information. You know, most Nigerians they have this apathy and I don't care attitude. You know, and they don't bother to ask for information, they think that after all if they ask, they will not release the information to them.

But it is most important for them to know that from now on that there is a need for them to ask. And when they ask, if they don't release those information, then they need to go to court. SERAP is there to help them out in these challenges. Thank you. Just to sum up what my colleague has said, I think basically it use to be very low response, it use to be low response before when we send FOI to access information and it graduated to low responses and then insufficient responses and then some states like Kaduna will that they have their state laws, FOI laws, so, there has been a progression since trying to access information.

From no response to low response to insufficient response and then some states say they have their different FOI law governing the state. Thank you. *Thank you very much. Thank you.* Hello, yes, good afternoon! I want to speak brief to the issue about speed like what my colleague has said that speak has increased, it is not very well, but it should be, but the rate of access and response to information has increased. Accessibility has increased, and the increase in government website for instance, even the way the website is constructed and accessed, you understand, the Auditor-General of the federation, it is easier to access his document. As to ease of use also, like the budget office of the federation, you see that even some of those things are broken down into histograms. That has

also been an increase. That is my point on speed, accessibility and ease of use. Thanks. *Ok, thank you.*

The next question is eh number, number 4: In your opinion, which of the domain of government activities has become transparent as a result of the efforts of civil society in Nigeria? Is possible to scale up for more positive outcomes? Sorry we were off for a while, we just joined. Do you want to come again with that? *Question number 4: OK! In your opinion, which of the domain of government activities has become transparent as a result of the efforts of civil society in Nigeria? Is possible to scale up for more positive outcomes?* Ahhhh I will say that from the works that we do I think even the portal of the Auditor-General's office, like the major one I think from our activities if I am not mistaking, I think we have more information there and we are able to access some information for our advocacies. And also I think (Tape plays without sound) ...our bigger and other advocacy.

So, I will like to speak to... report. Sometimes ago, that was 2016, it was not easy for the (Tape plays without sound)...to collaborate with PLSI at that point in time and through that FOI, you know, we were able to ensure that Auditor-General report is being released to Nigerians. From that year we were able to discover that we were set for it (Tape skips). As a result of that, since then, such information have put in the public for Nigerians to have access to it from time to time. Thank you very much. *Thank you.* Yes, whether they can improve, I think yes (Tape skips)... Thank you! *Ok, in terms of scaling up, in terms of scaling up, how do we (Tape skips)... and have positive outcomes?*

Yes! So, ahmm (Tape skips)... and individuals in the society and also training and empowering the common Nigerians on how they can mount pressure on the government to make information, or do what is right by Nigerians, I mean to provide information in domains and make them accessible, I mean recent, update information and not just information, so to speak, updated information so to speak, and we can also use the instrumentality of the law like we do at SERAP to compel them to do this thing. So, I think that is how we can scale up. *Ok!*

Then number 5: (Tape plays without sound)... Yes, the next question, what has civil society done in advocating for compliance with legal and policy framework? What has civil society done in advocating for compliance with legal and policy framework by public institutions? Are state actors becoming honest in behavior as a result of civil society efforts? (Tape plays without sound)... To some extent there is improvement in this regard. But ahhhh to say they are totally honest ahhh is what I cannot put word on, but (Tape skips)... What we need do is to (Tape skips)... We can't say the data or the percentage of increment in honesty or has changed, but through the course of our advocacy efforts, they have given us

very significant, I mean we are seeing changes... using honesty now, yes, there's been ahhh like some obvious improvements in the course of the work that we do. Thank you.

My colleague wants to say something. Ummm from my own point of view, you know, the number, judging from the number of FOI we have sent, I can say that responses have not (Tape plays without sound)... maybe 4 or 5 responses. And such responses might be negative, might not really be positive at the end of the day. So, I will say it's not really be... (Tape plays without sound)... There is a need for us to advocate more in this direction to ensure that more people will begin to (Tape skips) Thank you very much.

Ok, number 6: Do you think civil society's work supports public institutions to attain accountability and standard operating procedure? Did you get that? Yes they probably... I didn't get the question actually. We are looking at how ehhh the work of civil society or the work done by civil society organizations, to what extent does it support public institutions in attaining accountability in terms of standard operating procedures? Sorry, on second please emmm... yes, we think that the work we do as CSO is supporting public institutions to attain ehhh... I think we do a lot in that regard. Weeee, we give advisories, like at SERAP there no week that passes by that we do not release a statement inform of advisory just to see that the government does what is right by Nigerians in terms of transparency and accountability.

Our belief is that this effort contributes to the standard of procedure of operation. So, we believe that our work, advocacy, even the legal advocacy trying to do advocacy on some of the judgments helps for them to reveal and improve on their operating procedures. So, we believe that CSOs, the work that we do supports public institutions in attaining transparency and accountability. Can I just also add? Can you hear me? *Yes I can.* Ok, just to add to what my colleague has said emmm we think the works CSOs do support public institutions. We do such work specifically emmm in for m technical support, which include trainings, dialoguing (Tape plays without sound)... CSOs that also support... *So, can we proceed?* Yes, we can. *Ok!*

Question number 7: How do civil society efforts support public institutions to achieve their objectives, that their organizational objectives? (Tape skips)... alternative programs supported, maybe in terms of governance or whatever. Just like what one of my colleagues has said, I think she has used that opportunity to answer this particular question. We collaborate a lot with the government to see that they achieve their objectives. So, we collaborate a lot, we invite them to advocacy events where we have citizens too, and the media so that we can interface, dialogue and proffer solutions to how, I mean issues they are also

experiencing in their operations. So, there are a lot of things that we do. In fact, I think there was a time we actually trained, we trained, so, like my colleague has said we do a lot of training, we do a lot of dialogue, round table meetings with them to see that we contribute our quota to; we support them in ensuring that they achieve their objectives ahhh.

So, my colleague is saying something here, we also review... Stop! I will like to add that some of the time, they do send for us to contribute to reviews of laws at any point in time they want to review some of the old laws they have on ground and you know, agencies and government ministries send for us to attend some meetings as regard the review of laws in their own end. So, we contributed to that! And some of the cases that we have got today in court as judgment, some of those reviews of laws, you know, that we have had in the past. Thank you very much.

Ok, now, further to that; so, see the need question that I have here in terms of suggesting alternative accountability programs maybe ehhh you know when you say you have mentioned something like that; if you want to reduce the cost of governance like when a former governor is earning pension and you are also sending to a senate; that is double. So, apart from that, what has SERAP done to reduce, you know, to advice government, to support them to reduce the cost of governance as an alternative to ehhhh the public service that we have.

Ummm I think we do a lot of advisories like we mentioned before advocating that some of these international banks should not provide loans for them so that we can be... the more they have access to loans, the more the waste. We do a lot of advocacies to see that they reduce the cost of governance by not having access to certain ahhh we are always very available (Tape plays without sound)... to see that if they going to access another loan (Tape plays without sound)... The CSO do more advocacies (Tape skips)... called this ehhhh (Tape plays without sound)... this advising them to reduce cars of 50 million (Tape skips)... as that will increase the cost of running (Tape skips)... that benefit the ordinary... (Tape skips)... reduce the cost of government. Thank you. *Thank you very much.*

Question number (Tape skips)... can we proceed? Hello! Question number 8. Yes! Can you hear me? Hello! Hello, Kola can you hear me? Hello! He is trying to say something and I was trying... Maybe he is trying to fix it. (Tape plays without sound)... Can we proceed? Hello! Hello! Hello! Hello! (Tape plays without sound)... Kola I don't think... Hello! Yes! Hello! Hello Mr. Kola, I can hear you. (Tape plays without sound)... Hello, can we proceed? Yes, we can pro... number 8, question number 8: (Tape skips)... public institutions...of their actions (Tape plays without sound)... Did you get that? We could barely hear you, maybe you should come again. (Tape skips)... Ok, question number 8: Are civil socie... (Tape

skips)... *Hello!* I think the network is... bad. Yes! (Tape plays without sound)... *I should take the question again, should I take the question again? Hello! Can you hear me now? Hello!* Dr. can you hear me? Yes, *I can hear you.*

Your network has been very bad for the past 20 minutes. *I am so sorry.* So, we have four of us in this meeting and we are in different locations and we can hear one another. So, that means the challenge from the network is not from our side. It is from you. *Ummmhehe I am so sorry,* I don't. No, I can understand, it is not you, it is the Nigerian infrastructure. *Ehhh I can hear you now.* I think we should go ahead with this position you are in now. You can go on with question number 8 please. *Ok, question number 8: Are civil society ehhe organizations able to convince public institutions to take responsibility about the impacts of their actions?* So, if it is about convincing with the use of our different advocacy for a, we've been able to do that; because there is no point in time that we mention the issue of transparency and they did not agree with us.

So, if it's about con... (Tape skips)... have been committed in collaborating with us to see that they do what is right for the future and NHRC, the Delta State government in a recent event of ours, about what happened in the Niger-Delta region at a time... so if it is about convincing, civil society organization, especially SERAP we've been able to leverage our tools, the media to convince the government to take responsibility for future impacts of their actions. Thank you. *Ok! Thank you very much.*

Very quickly, as we enjoy this network now, number 9: What specific governance sector has benefitted from civil society effort? What area has yet to gain the support of civil society? So, on the specifics in our work nationally, I think in every area of government, I am not sure there is any area we have not touched. I think every area of government, I mean of governance has felt our touch so to speak. I think at SERAP, at civil society organization when talking about... on behalf of other civil society organizations, I think we have been able to like emmm reach or impact nationally all the governance sectors. Yes! *OK, ok. Which means there is no sector that we can say has not been attended to.* Although, we are still making some improvement to reach them the more, or even more effective, yes, we are reaching them, yes, just that we are improving on our reachable.

Ok, number 10: What is your... this one is an opportunity for you to maybe reorganize what we have been saying concerning SERAP. What is your organization doing to promote good governance in Nigeria? Please tell us ehhe about the progress made so far. So, as an organization, SERAP leverages different strategies to attend to every area of governance. We use the media, we do a lot of media advocacy, you know, media is a very effective tool in reaching all and sundry.

So, we leverage the media at all times. For example, when there are issues about government, maybe they are being sued for airing a particular thing they are not supposed to air, and we know that by law it isn't wrong, we come through for them by going to court on their behalf. So, with that we are able to like build rapport and leverage them to also reach government and of the good work that we are doing and also to reach citizens on their roles to demanding transparency and accountability as far as governance is concern. We also do legal advocacy. By legal advocacy, there are so many aspects of legal advocacy but the one that stands out is that we after we have tried all advocacy measures through media, through legal advisories and the government is not forthcoming, we go to the court. That is the next thing we do because you know, there is nothing we can do outside the law.

So, we go to court, file a suite, make sure that with the instrumentality of the law we are able to ensure that government is mandated or compelled to do what is right as far as governance in Nigeria is concerned. And we do a lot of public education, sensitisation, through town hall meetings, through emmm posts on social media, we leverage ehheh the ex- platform formally tweeter, we used that platform a lot, we used instagram, we used facebook, we also used dialogue, roundtable where we see them one on one, you know, we interface with them one on one, I mean the government aand even Nigerians. And we tell, we advocate all these things. The media advocacy, public education and sensitisation are very great tools that we use at SERAP to attain the result we want to.

We also do a lot of training and empowerment for government, for individuals, I mean for Nigerians, we are almost like the bridge between the government and Nigerians by ensuring that the government does what is right and Nigerians are able to access information from the government and also actively seek good governance from the government. So, basically, we the training to empower them to know how to demand for transparency and accountability, and we have at SERAP, we have a body of young people, students that we have put together. We called them the SERAP accountability club. What do we do here? We are trying to use... you know, young people these days; they are one, they are the future leaders that we use to sing about in those days.

So, we are leveraging these youths, these young people in the universities, public universities so to speak, empowering them to know what is right according to law, and teach them how to access information and demand accountability from government because of course as we use to say we are the leaders of tomorrow. So, we leverage media advocacy, legal advocacy, public education and sensitisation, trainings to achieve the good work that we are doing. *Thank you very much.* Thank you.

Question 11: We will stop at 12. 11, what are the gaps left in advocacy and agitation by your organization? (tape cracks)... Alright! Probably some of my colleagues maybe they are off ehhe but before they come up I will just like to say that some of them have to include emmm maybe on the part of government, reluctance to grant us information when we seek them and this slows down the pace and result we want to get. Also, it also include is disobedience now of public officers emmm emmm abiding by court orders. So, we have a lot of others, we have a lot of positive arguments, but they are not being enforced. So, I will just leave my colleagues to also answer. I think they are... Mr. Odunfolo... Ok, thank you Ruth.

If I would add to what my colleague has said, I ahhe from my own point of view, some of the gaps in advocacy by CSOs not only SERAP, CSOs in general, the gaps that we need to; as CSOs do more in terms of is that various CSOs have various ahhe methods in achieving their objectives and aims. SERAP mostly, we use the media advocacy and legal advocacy to achieve our aims. That is some of the methods we use. While I will say lobbying in some organizations, we don't do lobbying, some organizations can be good at lobbying the government, you know, as they say, it is not every time you confront them, organizations that use lobbying can increase their lobbying to ensure that government is doing the right thing. And also organizations that use protest can also use it as a tool to perform advocacy to create awareness that might also make the government to do the right thing. Thank you. *Yeah, thank you. Then further to that question number 11, what challenges have you encountered? Did you get that? What challenges have you encountered? I was thinking that was the question we just answered. Ehhe! Ok, now, have there been risk, risk, how can this risk be mitigated in the course of doing your work?*

Of course there are risks ehhe we try to foresee that before they happen, so, how we have been able to mitigate some of the risks like security risk, when I say security risk in terms of probably our systems being attack, we have like a, we have emm a measure to ensure that our, our technology is safe and free from threat. So, we have like a monitoring, a monitoring, I don't know what to say, I mean a monitoring tool to see that our computers are not attacked. As well the physical risk, we do a lot of events, we ensure that we do our advocacy events in spaces where there are measured and we see that there are no risks, because the kind of work that we do we know that there is the possibility of us being threatened and being harassed. And then I am not sure we recently faced anyone but we are able to do that by doing survey, make assessment of event centres to ensure that we are safe and our guests are also safe. Thank you very much. *Yeah!*

Then finally, finally, number 12: Do you think that the progress made by civil society can be preserved? How do we improve upon these efforts? What are the

points of coordination for the joinbodi cohorts in their areas of interventions? Ok, sir I just wanted to emmm add up to the last question and then I will just attend to this question. I don't know if you can hear me Dr. Yes, I can. Ok sir! So, for some of the challenges that we have experienced in the course of our work with SERAP, over time we had minimum challenges and risks and ehhe like my colleagues have said we have international procedures and policy to avert some of the risks associated with the kind of intervention that we do at SERAP, especially the legal intervention and advocacy intervention. So, our internal security policy is what has helped to mitigate some of those risks.

Like my colleagues had mentioned and like some of those challenges... again, like my colleagues mentioned earlier as in reaching more of ahhe stakeholders we have also been able to mitigate them. To answer your final question, emmm you said the progress made by civil society... I think yes, the progress by civil society can be preserved. And how do we improve upon these efforts? So, like we have mentioned earlier, one of our major focus is to be able to bring Nigerians to a place where they own the fight against corruption, so, donor in, donor out, whether there are funds or not, one of the things that can preserve and sustain our advocacy efforts and gains from emm advocacy effort is the fact that citizens are now owning the fight against corruption and with or without the push of civil society organizations.

And I think that is one way as well that the joinbodi cohorts can improve on the areas of their interventions. So, coming together, I t think that is one of the purpose of the joinbodi cohorts such that civil society organizations are now working in silence, they are working together as cohorts to put citizens themselves, as individual Nigerians in the forefront of the fight against corruption such that beyond the end of all Nigeria project, individual can continue the fight against corruption and demand for good governance. Thank you very much.
Thank you very much.

I think we are coming to the end of this interview. I don't know if you have any question for me, as far as this project is concerned. Not all sir, I think we have made our declarations. Thank you so much for having us. Thank you. Yeah ehhe and if think there is any document that will support your presentation, you can also share with me. I know SERAP have done a lot of work. And then particularly I want to appreciate Mr. Kolawole for giving us this ehhe ehhe space to have this conversation. I hope he is still with us? He can still hear us. Yes, we can. Sorry, do you want to come again with the last thing you said? I was off. I said ehhe ehhe perhaps you can share some of your publications that relate to our conversation so that I can make reference to them when I am writing the report and after transcribing, ehhe after transcribing, I intend to send it to your office so that you will also have the opportunity to cross check to ensure that it is a representative of

what we discussed.

That's ok. *Ok, Mr. Kolawole, can you hear me? It appears he left his system.* Yes, he is hearing. He is jotting so many things. So... he has other things that he also attending. *Once again, I appreciate everyone, ehhh Folasade Arigbagbu I appreciate you, Ruth Otori, Ojo Ayo thank you, thank you everyone and thank you most sincerely. Thank you very much.* Thank you very much. Please have a good day. *And you too!*

Resource Centre for Human Rights and Civic Education

Hello! Hello sir! Can you hear me now? Yes, I can hear you clearly. So, so, sorry for the hitches. No problem. Let me go video... You asked me to introduce myself? *Yes sir!* My name is Armsfree Ajanaku, I am the Programs and Communication Manager for the resource centre for human rights and civic education (CHRICED). So, we are a civil society organization, a not-for-profit and nongovernmental organization working to promote democracy, human rights, accountability and good governance. The organization was (are you with me?), *yes I can hear you clearly.* Ok, the organization was founded in 2006, implementing programs and human rights in the area of accountable governance, in the area of monitoring financial flows within government and in the area of amplifying the voices of citizens in the governance process.

Currently we have offices in Abuja; we also have an office in Kano. So, as members of the 'Joinbodi Cohort,' we started implementing MacArthur's funding interventions since 2017. We implemented several accountability-driven projects around things like youth employment, youth participation, democratic participation, using maternal health care as an entry point. So, in a nutshell, that is it about me and the organization I represent. *Ok! Thank you very much! Without wasting much time, we will just start with questions, which are in four streams, transparency related, accountability related, good governance related and the general.*

So, on the transparency related, we have the first question: Do you know of any interventions by civil society organization that has result in appropriate behavior by the Nigerian public officials? Yes, I know of a transparency related project that has resulted in appropriate behavior by public officials. The particular intervention in question involves incidentally our organization, but we did not work alone on that intervention. We worked in collaboration with other civil society organizations and I am referring specifically to the intervention in Kaduna State NorthWest Nigeria where we mobilised citizens to demand for the implementation of universal basic

education funds.

Incidentally, that particular intervention was funded by the John D and Katherin T Mark foundation, complementing enlightenment program called (tape cracks)... and raise the skills level of citizens in rural areas so that they are able to demand accountability from political officials, government officials and political office holders. So, what this project entailed was the tracking of funds meant for the universal basic education. As you know, (tape cracks)... objectives and directive principles of state policy specifically chapter two referred to the educational objectives of the Nigerian State. And the educational objectives talked about the fact that the Nigerian State should where practicable provide basic education for all its citizens.

Basic education here, referring to early childhood education up to the junior secondary school level. This is also encapsulated in the universal basic education Act, which makes it compulsory for every Nigerian child of school age to be in school. So, the essence of this particular intervention was to ensure that the funds being provided by the universal basic education commission (UBEC) based in Abuja, through counterpart funding with the state governments is properly and adequately and efficiently utilised for the purpose of providing everything that is required to educate Nigerian children, especially in rural areas where people cannot afford to patronise private schools with their exorbitant fees.

So, having said that, what we did in that project was to things like the bills of quantity for school buildings, budget for procurement of school materials and we did that in conjunction with a structure known as the school based management committee (the SBMC) in three local governments of Zaria, Kubau and Kawu. Now, this project was a community centred project, because in the project we were designated as the voice actors. Our role was to amplify the voices of the communities, help the communities involved to be able to speak because the project was based on what we refer to as a sandwich strategy.

The sandwich strategy means that when you bring the voice of the people, and you combine it with role of the chief actors, the chief actors now are talking about the anti-corruption agencies. Then you (tape cracks)... and in the middle. So, that is exactly what we did in playing our roles as voice enablers in the project. So, by the time we did our tracking and we were able to collect the bill of quantity, we were able to find lots of projects abandoned, some halfway, some completely abandoned without starting, and then we were able to take up those issues with the duty bearers, because don't forget that the project was also a right based project and the right of the Nigerian child to education.

So, we were able to share our findings with the duty bearers and that way, the

duty bearers had no option than to find ways to ensure that the right thing is done in cases where projects were abandoned, where haphazardly constructed, not properly constructed, they were now pressured and influenced to go back and do the right thing. As a result of that project, we were able to get communities speak up about the state of schools in their communities. Cases where the schools were dilapidated the people were able to raise their voices and say through this project we want to bring the attention of our government to this particular school. And we were also able to create a process for what I will call a proper neat assessment of maybe chairs and desks. We saw some schools that needed extra classrooms, they got toilet.

So, there was a mix match of priority. But through the project, we were able to change to some extent the behavior of the duty bearers, the educational authority, the local government, the state and even the state basic education board itself. As a matter of fact, the very first time the Kaduna State universal basic education board started a building round, it was as a result of the project we implemented that they started doing bids for contracts whereby they call for bids, ok, we have this work to do, all qualified contractors can bid for the work. And that brought in some measure of participation; it also brought in some measure of transparency and accountability. So, if you talk about change in behavior, that to us, is a clear sign that the work we did influenced the governance actors to also change their behavior and start doing something, which they did not do before. So, that is one dimension of behavior change.

The other dimension of behavior change we saw as a result of that project had to do with the fact that communities were now becoming active in their approach. So, when a contractor comes to a village and maybe does a shoddy job we were now able to get communities to speak up to say that the contractor is not using the right materials, he not doing the work according to the scope of the program and in that way the anti-corruption agencies will be brought in because we shared the addresses of all the anti-corruption agencies with the communities and we taught them how to write letters like freedom of information request and so and so forth. So, those developments combine together to make the duty bearers to become a lot more responsive, and to become a lot more accountable for the public resources they entrusted to spend on behalf of the people. *Thank you very much, this is really elaborate.*

The number 2: In your opinion, who are the people outside government that should have access to government information? To me it's for all citizens, all citizens in terms of the fact that every citizen has a stake in the governance of the country, whether they are of voting age or not. For those of voting age, they need information about how government operates and specifically how government is expending resources for the purpose of the government because there is a saying

that democracy dies in darkness. The darkness is when there is no transparency. (tape cracks)... for those that of the voting age and those that are not even of the voting age to know and understand what is going on within their government, how the common wealth of the country is being utilised in the pursuit of a better life for all citizens. I deliberately mentioned those that are of the voting age and those that are not up to the voting age for a reason.

As far as I am concerned, even children have the right to certain information about the direction of their country and how the (tape cracks)... So, there are (tape cracks)... because the children, you have to give them hope that the country is working in their interest and that is how you also raise up citizens and that is why we subjects like civic education in the school curriculum to build the civic knowledge and civic awareness of citizens and part of that civic awareness is how government is functioning, what government is doing, what are the ground rules, what are the ground norms shaping the way government does its business? So, I will say that, but more critically, there are some citizens who are active citizens, operating in civil society organizations, operating in the media space, operating in the knowledge space and by that I mean researchers like you. There are those who operate in opinion formation space and by that I mean columnists, writers in newspapers, researchers in universities.

Those people are scientifically molding opinions on daily basis and they are integral part of the socialisation process of the society. So, a democratic system, a democratic and accountable system cannot afford to hide critical information from this category of people, because these are the people that shape the knowledge base, they shape the opinion, they shape the thinking and they shape the direction of the rest of the population by reason of their influential position through the knowledge they acquired over the years and things like that. So, that group is also an important group and more importantly, those groups are also legal entities in their own rights because they have been institutionalised through the process of registration in places like the corporate affairs commission.

And as such, they are in a sense part of the governance structure of the country even though they are citizens. They are in a sense a channel for even the government to reach the people with ideas, with perspectives and policies that the government is implementing. So, these are the broad categories I know of and in the course of the work, I have been privileged to interact with. Thank you!

Thank you, thank you very much. The number 3: Are civil society efforts leading to a redefinition of information exchange in terms of ease of use of civil society? You get the question? Yes! Through the efforts of civil society, first and foremost was the freedom of information law. Notwithstanding the challenges, that law that was passed has in a sense redefined the rules of engagement when it comes

to access to information. But of course, implementation is usually a different ball game in terms of the fact that they still refuse to do what we know in information parlance as proactive disclosure of information.

Those challenges notwithstanding, I can say that civil society efforts in terms of the passage of the freedom of information law and in the sense of some measure of progress in getting information from government agencies has redefined that space in a lot of respect. There has also been public interest litigation, public interest court actions, which had led to the release of information, which had led to agencies that are reluctant to release information being brought to the public square to be named and shamed. And this is now making a lot of agencies to comply. But of course, there is also the challenge of the security sector in terms of information disclosure, there are information that cannot be disclosed, there are certain categories of information that are under the freedom of information act, you know, you cannot disclose. But by and large, I believe strongly and there are evidence under the military where even the question of your right to information is not in existence.

But now we have right, we have a legal mechanism backing up those rights. The challenge now is that ensuring that the governance actors or the government officials do not stand in the way of those rights. Where they do so, civil society has the option of going to the judiciary and getting interpretation of what the law says and there has been many cases, test cases, cases of denial of information illegally that have been challenged in the court and successfully so. So, this is my take on that question.

Thank you very much. Number 4: In your opinion, which of the domains of government activities have become transparent as a result of the civil societies in Nigeria? Ok, when you look at... there are several of them, but let me just think through in terms of... ok, let me give you a very practical example. Let me give you a very practical example. You see when the first recovered Abacha loot was brought back to the country; the story goes that the money was re-looted. The project... can you hear me? *Yes, I can hear you.* Ok, *I can hear you.* The projects they implemented with those money, nobody knows where they were, the people they claimed they empowered, nobody knew and so it was as if it was a case of frying pan to fire because the money that stakeholders struggled to repatriate back to Nigeria after it was looted from the country was again not transparently and accountably.

That was when the clamour came that civil society should be involved. And the moment civil society was involved, civil society was able to track and monitor how the second trench of the loot was referred to as Abacha2. (Tape skips)... an organization which I see from the series I have worked with, the African network

of development and economic justice, led by Reverend Ugolor was the lead organization that worked on the tracking of the Abacha2 loot 325.5 million dollars, which was distributed across the six geopolitical zones, they sent monitors to all the cash transfer offices and they also sent monitors to the cash transfer points where there were cases of poor people being beneficiaries being short changed. They were able to spotlight those infractions and they were able to write comprehensive reports that provided data on how (Tape skips)... the process became a lot more transparent.

That is one. Now, the fact that you instill transparency into a process does not mean that the process will automatically or completely be free of corruption. But it means is that you are able to (Tape skips)... where there are flaws, you can identify those flaws and then do advocacy to the government for corrective measures. So, that is exactly what happened on that project. The second one, which is constituency project, when the lawmakers were doing the constituency projects, they can award the contract to their personal companies, nobody cares, but the moment join body cohort came on board, and the join body cohort was focused on putting the searchlight and the spotlight on constituency projects then you started to see some elements of transparency, accountability, probity, citizen participation, citizen knowledge, citizen driven design of constituency projects.

Before the join body cohort started doing that, it was free for all; constituency project was a flush fund. And the join body cohort got enormous support from the independent corrupt practices and other related offences commission, which in itself also started some tracking, started tracking constituency projects and that was how some contractors that did shoddy work in places like Kano, they were asked to return back to site and complete the work. But this was a collaborative process with civil society, because civil society provided the reach, provided the network with the local people in rural communities and ICPC provided the muscle in terms of if a contractor is trying to be funny, he doesn't want to do the right thing, then he can be taken before the law and prosecuted. And so, that was how that project went.

So, I will say that these two areas of cash transfers and constituency projects are have seen a lot of transparency, and like I said, transparency does not mean that there is no corruption anymore because we also have to cement the areas of the work. Like our organization worked in Kano in constituency projects, the other organization emm CLP (community life project) worked in Lagos and Ekiti States if I am not mistaking, and then we have our cohort member connected development that worked in Kaduna State under what we called Nigeria 2.0 portfolio of the Mark Arthur Foundation. Thank you. *Thank you. Then a rider to that question, obviously, there are successful stories regarding the domains of government activities that have become very transparent. Now, is it possible to*

scale up for more positive outcomes?

Absolutely, at this point, if the research has a way of capturing it, it will be a milestone to express our profound gratitude to the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation for what a monumental impact it has enabled civil society organizations in Nigeria to achieve. You see, the literature on corruption tells us that there are two levels at which the fight against corruption must be waged and the level of the society because the push of anti-corruption efforts at the level of the state alone, you are just going to address what is known in the literature as grand corruption. But if you take it to the lower level, that is, the level of the society, then you are now comprehensively taking a bigger step further to address corruption at the level of society, and that way, you are addressing petty corruption. In fact, petty corruption is as devastating and destructive as grand corruption; reason being that petty corruption directly, you understand, just like the grand corruption, it directly affects the lives of the citizens.

For example, if a citizen goes to a hospital and the citizen is asked to pay 5000 naira before he has access to services that are free, by the time that 5000 naira across 1 million people, you will then understand the cost of that corruption that even if for one person it may seem like a small amount, when you put it collectively, it is a very, very huge cost that is being taken from the life blood of citizens. So, I have to give that background to answer that question, which is taking about scaling up. So, the scope of our intervention so far has been in pockets of states. In Kano you have 44 local government areas, in Ekiti, in Kaduna I think you have 23, in Lagos, Ekiti, so we have touched very important points. Kano is the most populous, Lagos is the second most populous according to the census figures. So, you go to Ekiti, you know those are rural emm ehh what you call in quote "civil service states" where they have endemic poverty. You go to Kaduna, you understand, you also have similar situation.

Now, my point is that you need a critical mass of Nigerian State, Nigerian Senators, you understand, Nigerian National Assembly members to be on board such that the project we now multiply its effects. So, as it stands, we are not yet at that critical mass. We have achieved phenomenal results in the areas where we have implemented. So, scaling it up of course will give an opportunity for us to reach a critical mass so that if for example we are talking about 36 states and the federal capital territory currently, for the constituency project work for instance, I think we are in Kano, Kaduna, Lagos that is just around 3 or let's say 4 states, you understand, for my understanding based on the partners we are working together in the same cohort.

So, if we can take it to a number like 4 states per geo-political zone, so, let's assume that there are no resources and everything, 4 states per geo-political

zone will be 24 states. We can even do, ok now let's do 3 states per geo-political zone, you understand, coming to 18 states and we have different (Tape skips)... we have organizations in a (Tape skips)... that is the sale up. So, we now have a uniform measure or a near uniform measure of results you know, across the geo-political zones. *Thank you.*

Thank you very much.

Quickly we move to the next in accountability related, then number 5: What has civil society done in advocating for compliance with legal policy framework by public institutions?

Yes civil society has done a lot. In fact the gains and the progress that have been recorded in terms of the anti-corruption struggle and the anti-corruption fight is majorly, has been pushed by civil society to ensure that some of these policies are in place and when those policies are in place, to ensure that those policies are implemented and the result of that implementation is also properly evaluated to be sure that we are on the right track. To answer a question like this we need a very clear understanding of some of those anti-corruptions (Tape skips) .. in advocating the implementation, not just implementation, but the proper design of some of those policies. I will take the example of the legislation that was passed sometimes last year in 2022 specifically, I think that was in May, the Proceeds of Crime Act, that is, that was called the POCA bill, which has now become the POCA itself, that is, proceeds of crime act.

It was the agitations, and the struggles, and the exertions of civil society that influenced the government to see the need to create that proceeds of crime management agency, because the argument of civil society was it is embarrassing that anytime they ask EFCC how much have you recovered from the money that was stolen by the corrupt politicians, corrupt people and all of that, how much have you recovered, EFCC is always struggling to give an accurate figure. In many cases EFCC will recover properties, hotels, buildings, the next thing; the building will just be abandoned for years and rats and rodents will take over the place. Businesses that were recovered, we know they are proceeds of corruption but there are human beings working there. What will it cost you to keep those businesses afloat while you keep the investigation going or even after you have finished the investigation and you are now prosecuting the person, at least those properties and those assets should not become wasted, we should not leave those properties to rot away in the name of you are fighting corruption.

So, those properties have to be managed in a transparent and accountable way. So, those agencies like EFCC and ICPC were not designed to play that function. So, civil society needs to keep agitating. I remember the role played by Senator

Nicholas Utazi who was the chair of the senate committee at the time pushing for legislation and at the end of the day, civil society was able to through advocacy, through statements, through rallies, through discussions was able to win over the government side and now saw the need for... so, after many years of struggle, the proceeds of crime act is now a legislation. *Thank you!*

Now, ok, now talking about implementation also, we also had challenge in terms of audit report of the Auditor-General of the federation, because the Auditor-General will issue audit report, he will issue audit queries for ministries, departments and agencies of government to come and answer questions in terms of how they spent public funds, but our experience has shown that the agencies in question, they refused to respond to those audit queries. But (Tape skips)... that is why every year (Tape skips)... documents for organizations working for anti-corruption because that is where you go and see the grand scale corruption being perpetrated in the institutions of government and we have done advocacy, we have been able to do press statements to ensure that the people responsible are held accountable. So, in that sense our advocacy is contributing to the implementation of policy.

And then finally, I will like to mention the question of data. It is not just enough to go and do advocacy on the basis of just some head knowledge that is not fixed in research and it is not driven by research. So, one way to providing data, we have also provided data because if you look at the role of civil society, our role is to also interrogate what government is doing. Not to sit (Tape skips)... if the government in our estimation is doing the wrong thing that will bring about the wrong result, we try as much as possible to tell them there is another way you can do it, and the way you can do that as civil society is to provide the data, to do the research, to go in there and dig out where the knowledge is and share the knowledge with the government. So, in those areas, I think civil society work, advocacy, activism have been of real benefit.

Ok, thank you and there is a rider to that question. Are state actors becoming honest in behavior as a result of civil society efforts? Hello! I mean there is a rider to that question. In continuation of that question, we want to find out if state actors are becoming honest as a result of the efforts of civil society. Well I do not, well, honesty, I don't know whether honesty is the right description, but are they becoming responsive, responsive in the sense of responding to the citizens' concern, yes they are becoming responsive.

Maybe not to the extent that we want it to be, but in that process, honesty, I do not think in the framework of the analysis, honesty is the best word because don't forget that you are dealing with politicians here. Yes! Truth to the politician is anything that favours his political goals. In that sense, to any politician, the

truth usually dies. In that sense, I want to say in terms of responsiveness or for example, the whole argument going about the yacht or whether the president ordered for a yacht and something like that. You can now see that the explanation going on, the senate has come out to explain, the presidency itself has come out to explain. In explaining they may not tell you the truth completely; at least they are giving you data. If you put that data together, you will be able to understand what is happening in the space. So, I will say responsive is what we have seen as civil society such that the moment you raise an issue, they are forced to respond and in that process you can have data to further your advocacy. *Ok, thank you.*

Number 6: Do you think civil society's work support public institutions to attain accountability in standard operating procedures? Absolutely, absolutely our work supports public institutions. In fact, our work has become the reference point for the push in accountability in government institutions. If you want me to give you examples, I can give you so many examples, but so that I will not overload with you too many information, I can say that our work has been very impactful in that regard, in pushing the institutions, supporting them, providing them with data, then when institutions do well also, we have a role to commend. We can say you are doing the right thing, do more of it, it is not all the time we are condemning them, it is not all the time we are fighting them, but when they do wrong, we have what it takes to challenge them and also to get them to do the right thing. Thank you very much!

*Then question number 7: How do civil society's efforts support public institutions to achieve their objectives? Ok, so, since our program is anti-corruption program, you understand, we are meant to raises voices as active citizens to and promote accountability. There are several ways, I think I have basically shared those ways, accountability sections whereby we bring the government officials; we bring them face to face with citizens. Right? *Ok!*, such that they can exchange perspectives. The citizens can now tell them, oh this project you are implementing is not being well done, and they can take feedback. In that way, we are helping them to realize their objectives because their objective is to deliver to the people, provide them with infrastructure, and improve their welfare in line with what professor Amartya Sen the Nobel Prize winning economics called or referred to as "development as freedom."*

The role of the agencies is to go and be spending money the way they want. They are to deliver development. If it is education for example, deliver quality classrooms that are well equipped such that a child that goes into that classroom is able to get education and become a better citizen. If it is healthcare, deliver proper hospitals. If it is infrastructure, deliver proper roads. So, by the time we bring those agencies concern and sit them down with the citizens, the citizens are able to tell them, oh, the road you awarded in our community, the contractor is not

doing well. So, in that way, they are achieving their objective of ensuring that they deliver for the citizens. They honour very important point like I mentioned earlier, at the risk of repeating it is data, providing them with data because you see, the government institutions cannot be everywhere. They need citizens to also support them to provide critical information that is required to enable them do their work. I will give you example in healthcare. If there is diphtheria outbreak somewhere, the government institution may not be everywhere to track it.

It is citizens through organizations, civil society, community group that will first of all provide information that so and so person died in that place with so and so ailment. That is when the government will now swing into action and then move in to do the needful. So, we are doing that role of providing the data through research. Don't forget we do a lot of research. In fact the research you yourself is handling now. We do a lot of research and we provide... the research does not sit with us when we are done with it. We use it a basis to... advocate. Absolutely! And we share the findings with relevant agencies.

A rider to that, alternative programs, alternative programs on accountability. Maybe your organization has supported other CSOs, has suggested and supported, do you know of any?, maybe in terms of how to reduce the cost of government. Ok, for that, our organization has done... in fact we don't see the work of anti-corruption and promoting accountability, we don't see it as a 100 metres dash or sprint. It is actually a marathon. Right? So, having said that, we are constantly, issuing advice with media releases, press releases on issues of anti-corruption.

If you go on the media or just type CHRICED accountability or anti-corruption, you will see a lot and lots of the things we have done, those are generic responses to specific issues. Those are like reinstating or restating the core principles of transparency and accountability, which should govern the conduct and the work of any institution of government. That is it. But beyond that alternative programs, we have alternative program on maternal health for instance, whereby again, we are bringing citizens face to face with the duty bearers on issues of maternal health. We had programs on employment, on empowerment, trying to deepen transparency and accountability in the distribution of government run employment and empowerment projects. We are currently implementing a program, which now call flagship program on promoting the human rights of the original inhabitants in the federal capital.

Now, can you hear me? Yes, *I can*. Ok, these programs are all driven with mindset of core democratic tenets, transparency, accountability, participation, you understand, yes, because corruption is not only when somebody steals money. Corruption is also when those who should benefit ordinarily, they are being short

out. That is a dimension of corruption, because it means that the resources that should have gone to those people, other people are cornering it. And it is not fair. It is not equitable. So, these are the issues. *Ok, thank you!*

Then question number 8: Are CSOs able to convince public institutions to take responsibility for future impact of their actions? Well, maybe that's a long short, because you see, we live in a country where increasingly the civic space is shrinking. The civil liberties are eroding and the agency of the citizens is also under challenge. In Nigeria today, you and I know the level of impunity that even despite all those works we are doing, we know the level of impunity that is still out there. We know how the electoral process is being rigged to favour certain outcomes. We know how money is playing its role in the political process.

We know how our electoral process is producing characters who own their own do not believe they are accountable to anybody. So, getting them to take responsibility...ahhh, responsibility means that if you have done something wrong you resign, right? *Yes!* Ehhen, how many of them are ready to resign when they do something wrong. Responsibility means that if it is found you wasted government money, you will refund it. *Yes!* Ehhen, how many of such cases have we had? So, probably that is emmm, that question is more of we are still in the journey toward getting there. We are not yet there at all. We cannot kid ourselves. The state of our country, we have the highest number of poor people, our institutions, you know, still have very major accountability issues. So, when you talk about people taking responsibility... and you can even see it from this eh hh eh hh, this whole we ordered for yatch, we did not order for yatch discussion.

Nobody is owning up, that is what it means to take responsibility, nobody is owning up, oh, I am the one that put this thing in the budget, I made mistake, apologise to Nigerians and move on to the next... everybody is busy denying, we didn't put it, no it was the navy that put it, no it is not the navy, the senate will remove the money and put it on student loan. So, they are just having excuses all over the place. Whereas in places where people take responsibility, what we will be receiving by now is resignation letters, right? *Ummm!* So, Nigeria (Tape skips)... we are hopefully we can get there someday. *Alright, thank you very much, your comments of course to this question is displaying a lot of gaps for future work. Thank you very much!*

Now quickly we move to question number 9: What specific governance sectors have benefitted from civil society efforts? What areas are yet to gain support from civil society? So, I think it is a very diverse set of sectors. Education for one has benefitted from our work as a join body cohort because we are focusing on schools. Healthcare has also benefitted because we are focusing on hospitals. Infrastructure like roads, cottage industries, cottage initiatives have also benefitted

because we are focusing on those areas, constituency projects that have to do with roads and everything. Then human capital development has also benefitted, farming programs, whether financial empowerment or training to have a skill and have an equipment to be able to use that you know, in the job market.

Yes, those are some of the areas that we have concentrated on. I think other areas we can do more is like tertiary education now, you understand, like tertiary education is an area I think we can do like tracking expenditures in those areas is something we should do. And then the issue of how our citizens outside the country, you know, the issue of justice, we have a lot of Nigerians that are stranded in one country or the other in the search for greener pasture. You have this irregular migration problem, maybe preventing it is something we should be looking at in a way to educate young people that the grass is not always greener on the other side. If you sit back and put the right pressure, things can change in Nigeria. If you are now travelling abroad and coming back, that way better than going to the Mediterranean Sea to cross to God knows where and in the process lose your life.

Maybe that's an area we can look at in the future emmm, resources permitting. Then emmm, yeah, issues around culture also, we can look at that Nigeria is imagined as a culture power house not just in Africa, but the world, you understand, with our musical talents exporting to the world, how do we create a structure for them?, because it is all about empowerment also. There are many areas we can look at but broadly those are the areas we have work on as an organization. Then the issue of debt transparency is also important because our governments are just borrowing money both state and federal borrowing money up and basically borrowing away the future of the country. So, that is an area we should also look at. *Thank you very much! Let's be fast a bit.*

What is your organization doing to promote good governance in Nigeria? I think you have mentioned that already. Just highlight them. You have already mentioned the progress made, but just highlight. Yes, so, our research, our advocacy to governments not just at the federal level, but also at the subnational level, also at the local government level, our robust citizen engagement through social audit we conduct from time to time, we conduct social audit where we bring people in town halls to tell us their priorities, you know, so we can help them sign social bonds and contract with you, know their political representatives. Our legislative advocacy, though that is not on Mark Arthur's project because Mark Arthur has roles (Tape skips)... others we have to do with legislative advocacy, it has led to the passage of free maternal and child healthcare law in Kano State as we speak.

Yeah, those are some of the things. Then periodic public engagement to remind the public that this thing that is happening is wrong, though Nigerians have been

de-sensitised, we have been de-sensitised by the impunity of the political class, sometimes what you just need to do is to sensitise people. Just let them that buying a yacht at this time is not acceptable (Tape skips)... at a time millions of Nigerians are going through. (Tape skips)... *Hello!* Yes, I can hear you. *Hello!* I can hear you. *Yes!*

The next question, we move to the general question, just two: What are the gaps in advocacy agitation by your organization that you have encountered in case of any risk, how can these challenges be mitigated in the process of your intervention? Ok, so, in terms of the gaps, I already mentioned it that we need to scale up our work, you understand, so that we can reach the large mass. *Hello! Hello!* Can you hear me? *Hello! Hello! I can hear you.* (Tape skips)... So, I have mentioned the gaps earlier, which are... we need to reach for more work (Tape skips)... *Maybe the risks...* Yes, that is what I am answering. That is what I am answering (Tape skips)... is shrinking and there is assault on civil liberties. They feel we are trouble makers... (Tape skips)... it is a risk because it is making more difficult for us to deliver on our programs, So, if you want to bring citizens together for a meeting before we are paying for or lunch, it is no longer worth what you are paying, you understand.

Now, there is a risk of insecurity, insecurity in many communities where we do our constituency project work. There is eh, what is it called?, kidnapping, banditry you knowing this pose serious risk to not the people doing the work, but you know, the quality of the work itself. But for every risk there always a mitigation strategy and our mitigation strategy like security, is to do security assessment in implementing projects, we work with stakeholders, community gatekeepers, do proper community entry before we move ahead with anything we are doing. *Ok, thank you.*

Then finally, finally emmm, emmm, we are looking at the possibility of scaling up, preserving what CSOs are doing, emmm, improving upon these efforts and (Tape skips)... *in terms of coordination. That's all. So, just tell us, give a word using the point of coordination for preserving the work of CSOs.* Yes, So, the beauty of Mark Arthur Foundation funded on Nigeria 2.0 joint body work is that we are already coordinating, right? *Ok!* Eh, from time to time interfacing as a cohort, having meetings, as a matter of fact, we were all together at vthe open government partnership meeting in Estonian recently as a cohort and we made presentation at the meeting as a cohort.

So, coordination is already ongoing. In terms of sustainability, the sustainability of our work is anchored on (Tape skips)... many community organizations that are learning from us, we are also transferring knowledge to them and they are able to take forward the work if in future we are no longer implementing those projects.

So, that is what I can say about coordination and collaboration. OK, thank you very much. I appreciate this opportunity to have this section with you. Maybe, you are an insider of this project, I am not sure you have any question for me. When we were... in the course of our conversation, you mentioned emmm, when you started mentioning ehh, the voices... the segment that eh, should have access to information, eh, you started mentioning researchers, media space and all of that. There is one work I published just some few years ago. So, I will share it with you to help you to organise that part of your conversation, ok, and the way forward. And I want to say that I really benefitted from this interview. So, I will share the paper with you. Ok! I call it eh, Tink-Tanks in Policy Diffusion: Advocates or Enemies?

So, you see the way I categorised the functions of tink-tanks and the rest. I will share it with you. Ok! So, once Mr... I appreciate; I will like to see your face again. Thank you! My intention is by the time we (Tape skips)... if there is any guarantee that (Tape skips)... I will share it with you and then you will be able to make input before I proceed. It's alright! (Tape skips)... Thank you very much! Thank you, thank you. You know you are a researcher, I am an activist. So, so...In fact, you are a practitioner, we need your work to do our work. Hehehehe, yes, yes! Thank you very much. (Tape skips)... the knowledge you know... thank you so much (Tape skips)... for the question, it is my pleasure (Tape skips)... not for now, maybe (Tape skips)... for now thank you for the questions, very insightful because it is also the (Tape skips)... yes, thank you. We will continue the conversation. Alright! Thank you!

Annexure V: Responses to Google Forms Survey



Community Life Project

e-Mail: clpnig@communitylifeproject.org

Age: 49

Gender: Male

Ethnicity: Ika

Religion: Christianity

Education: Masters

Marital Status: Married

Work and Professional Experiences:

Over 20 years in the development sector.

Hobbies/ Community Service: N/A

Question No.1: Do you know of any interventions by CSOs that have resulted in appropriate behavior by Nigerian public officers?

Response: Yes. We are aware of interventions by CSOs that have resulted in appropriate behavior by Nigerian public officers. Recently, the Womanifesto Women's Rights Network called the Minister of Women Affairs, Bar. Uju Kennedy-Ohanenye, for interfering with the process of investigation of the case of sexual abuse against Prof. Ndifon at the University of Calabar and attempting to intimidate and stifle the voices of the victims. Womanifesto demanded a public apology from the Minister and the Minister apologised publicly and gave a commitment to refrain from further interference in the case

[<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/626378-after-pressure-from-women-groups-minister-apologises-over-comments-on-unical-sex-scandal.html>]

Our organization, Community Life Project (CLP), has seen changes in the approach of government officials to budgeting. For instance, in Ekiti and Osun States where we are currently working, we have seen a shift in the budgeting culture at the local level. Local governments and state agencies are working with communities to prioritise their needs for inclusion in local budgets or as a tool for direct project execution by State governments.

Question No.2: In your opinion, who are the people outside government that should have access to government information?

Response: Every Nigerian citizen should have access to all information enabled by the Freedom of Information Act, including such information as how much public officers are paid - the executive, legislature, and judiciary; budgetary information, including contracts, budget performance documents, audit documents, and policies like local government by-laws, etc., should be on

government websites and available to members of the public who request for them.

Question No.3: Are civil society efforts leading to a redefinition of information exchange in terms of speed, accessibility, ease of use, etc? Please, explain based on your understanding.

Response: Yes. Civil society efforts have led to the establishment of several Acts like the Freedom of Information Act and the Electoral Act, which have redefined information exchange.

a. FoI Act has made it possible for citizens to request and access information from government agencies. Some government agencies are also putting out some information in a manner that makes it easy to consume; e.g., the use of infographics by the Ministry of Finance for presenting the Federal Allocations and publishing the same on their websites. And where the Federal Government has details of recurrent and capital expenditures, governments at the subnational level do not always include such details in their budgets; thus, making it difficult to track and monitor.

The point, however, must be made that government institutions often do not respond positively to the requests for information by citizens, even after the courts have ruled in favour of the CSOs. A case in point was when the Citizens Wealth Platform got judgment asking the Ministry of Finance to release the details of officials responsible for the ghost workers scam

[<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/165806-exclusive-finance-ministry-budget-office-among-agencies-with-thousands-of-ghost-workers.html?tztc=1>]

b. With the Electoral Act, the Election Management Body, INEC, brought in technology to enhance citizens' access to electoral information such as voter registration status, PVC distribution and tracking, voter education, etc.

Question No.4: In your opinion, which of the domains of government activity have become transparent as a result of the efforts of civil society in Nigeria. Is it possible to scale-up for more positive outcomes?

Response: One of the domains is Election, where INEC, has tried to improve its system to make it more transparent – use of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) machines, INEC Result Viewing (IReV) portal, the Continuous Voter Registration Portal, etc. However, even though the Electoral System has everything in place to achieve high-level integrity, the behavior of some of the officials, politicians, and duty-bearers undermines the efficacy of the system. Another area where there is greater transparency is in the Budgetary Activities.

The Federal Ministry of Finance has been publishing its Federal Allocation to Local Governments, Zonal Intervention Projects, and Budgets, (Constituency Projects), enabling citizens to know the specific projects initiated by their Representative.

Some local governments in a few States are also practicing inclusive budgeting, opening the space for citizens to influence the allocation of funds to projects and track project implementation in their communities.

Possibility of Scale-Up: These positive practices are happening mostly at the Federal level and not so much at the subnational level; there is need to push for such positive practices to be replicated at the subnational and local levels. For instance,

- a. States and Local Governments should be encouraged to replicate the practice of publishing details of their budget on their websites;
- b. Inclusive budgeting needs to be practiced at the local government and state levels nationwide.
- c. The use of Needs-Based Community Development Plans across all local governments in the country as tools for inclusive budgeting needs to be scaled to other local governments across the country to encourage the judicious use of resources;
- d. The use of technology to improve electoral processes, transparency and access to information needs to be replicated in the conduct of local government elections. This will, of course, require legal and constitutional reforms and the ability of citizens to exact influence on INEC and enforce compliance.

Question No.5: What has civil society done in advocating for compliance with legal and policy framework by public institutions? Are state actors becoming honest in behavior as a result of civil society efforts?

Response: Civil society organizations carry out litigations to get public institutions to comply with legal and policy frameworks. For instance, getting court judgments to back the implementation of the 35% affirmation action for women; compelling the Federal Government to disclose the status of recovery of stolen assets; status of delinquent contracts/contractors in the electricity sector; and recovery of pension collected by ex-Governors now serving as Ministers, etc. There are quite a number of court judgments against the government, but the state actors are not complying. Sometimes, they appeal the judgment and simply refuse to comply. CSOs have also engaged and continue to engage public institutions, like the Judiciary, the Police, the Correctional Service, etc in fast-tracking the

implementation of the Administration of the Criminal Justice Act; including training of public officers.

They have also carried out advocacy to get the government to comply with the Fiscal Responsibility Act. There are some wins in terms of getting actors to behave better as a result of civil society efforts, only such positives are not commensurate to the efforts that have been put in. On the contrary, impunity and lack of respect for the rule of law are increasingly becoming the norm.

Question No.6: Do you think civil society's work supports public institutions to attain accountability in standard operating procedures? How?

Response: Yes. CSOs have supported several public institutions to attain accountability. For instance, they have supported INEC to standardise its Electoral processes; and instituted reforms aimed at improving the modus operandi of the police, and judiciary, as well as the Bureau of Public Procurement.

Question No.7: How does civil society efforts support public institutions to achieve their objectives? What alternative accountability programs have CSOs suggested and supported? May be cost of governance?

Response: Civil society has been instrumental in equipping public officers with the requisite knowledge and skills to operate optimally within their respective roles and responsibilities. Civil society has also worked with several public institutions to review their laws and make them more effective. For instance, they worked with INEC to amend and make Election laws and also supported them with resources to increase their capacity to deliver. CSOs have also:

- helped to develop tools that public institutions can use to educate the public;
- created awareness of public institutions' policies and laws;
- worked with public officers to promote Open Government Partnership in the country by building the capacities of public officers and reviewing strategy documents;
- supported public officers with resources to attend conferences that increase their knowledge and capacity;
- sponsored bills and participated in public hearings that strengthened our laws. They have also suggested and supported reforms in public procurement and accountability through their consistent advocacy on the high cost of budgeting, and pointing out frivolous items in the budget in a bid to curb corruption.

In our work at 'CLP-ReclaimNaija,' we have suggested and supported the efforts of local governments to use evidence-based data for fiscal planning and implementation of projects.

Question No.8: Are CSOs able to convince public institutions to take responsibility for future impacts of their actions?

Responses: CSOs are striving to get public institutions to take responsibility for the future impacts of their actions. Periodically, CSOs issue statements, call out governments on policies and point out the future impact of the government's proposed actions. Many times, the government does not listen; however, there have been instances where the government has reconsidered its position as a result of CSOs' intervention. For instance, the current government was forced to reconsider its decision to lead ECOWAS in attacking the military government in Niger.

Question No.9: What specific governance sectors have benefitted from civil society efforts? What areas have yet to gain the support from civil society?

Response: Virtually all governance sectors – Women Affairs, Election and Governance, Environment, Health, Education, Law, Works, Finance, Humanitarian Affairs, etc – have benefitted from civil society efforts. We are not aware of any sector that has not been supported by Civil Society in Nigeria.

Question No. 10: What is your organization doing to promote good governance in Nigeria? Please, tell us the progress made so far.

Response: Elections: CLP has supported INEC with resources to administer elections effectively over the years. For instance, in 2011, the Commission adopted the use of CLP's Election Situation Room for use during the elections; we got INEC to make a shift in its norm by embracing citizen participation in Election Day Management through real-time election incident reporting and resolution of issues while they are still happening; to create space for popular participation in Election Day Management, and promote the participation of marginalised groups and low-income citizens, Persons with Disability, the Elderly, Faith-Based Organizations. In other elections, we provided support to INEC in voter education of the hard-to-reach population and the resolution of issues. In 2023, we provided IT facilities and a Short Code for the INEC Citizens Contact Centre.' We are credited with changing the paradigm of Election Day Management by ensuring real-time reporting by citizens, which allows INEC to quickly troubleshoot and resolve electoral incidents while elections are still ongoing [Catie Snow Bailard & Steven Livingston (2014) Crowdsourcing Accountability in a Nigerian

Election, Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 11:4, 349-367, DOI: 10.1080/19331681.2014.947056

Social Accountability: We worked with key government ministries and departments – Administration; Budget, Research and Planning; Community Development; and Works - to achieve transparent and inclusive budgeting in 16 local governments. We have also made it possible for governments to accept demands for projects and collate the real needs of citizens for inclusion in their budget in 46 local governments. We have equally built capacity and increased the agency of public officers – budget officers, finance officers, Directors of Administration, Council Managers, Community Development, and Works – on participatory and inclusive budgeting. We have equally witnessed efforts by the State Governments to adopt our processes by engaging communities in town halls to prioritise their needs for inclusion in the budget.

We have trained and equipped grassroots communities to constructively engage their local governments and advocate that resources should be allocated to their real needs. We are seeing the real needs of communities being included in local budgets for implementation as a result of the citizens' demands and the shift in the behavior of local government officials to practice inclusive budgeting processes [Improving Rural Life through Participatory Budgeting - The Ekiti State Experience: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZcuMfPr0DY>

Citizens have also been empowered to track and monitor constituency projects and report the status of such projects to the ICPC. We have seen real agency being displayed by trained community volunteers demanding that abandoned constituency projects should be completed. At the Federal level, we have engaged the National Assembly on the “wasteful” expenditures in the Federal Budget <https://punchng.com/nassembly-committee-detects-fresh-errors-in-2016-budget/>;

<https://thenationonlineng.net/lawmakers-set-remove-n37b-items-budget/>

We have also collaborated with other CSOs, led by the Centre for Social Justice, to itemise and publish such frivolous items in the budget on the Citizens Wealth Platform.

Question No. 11: What are the gaps left in advocacy and agitation by your organization? What challenges have you encountered? Are there any risks? How can these risks be mitigated in the course of your organisation's intervention?

Response: One of the big gaps in advocacy is in the area of Zonal Intervention Projects (i.e., Constituency Projects). Some constituency projects, especially

empowerment projects, do not have specific locations, or number of beneficiaries; projects assigned to the wrong government Agency [e.g., Public Complaints Commission constructing Community Halls; or Federal Cooperative College, Ibadan constructing Mini-Stadium in Osun State]; the choice of constituency projects not aligning with community needs, thereby, leading to abandonment of projects.

Risks: There is a high level of impunity, flagrant disregard for the rule of law, and blurred separation of powers.

Mitigation: We equip communities with knowledge and tools to enable them to engage their Representatives on the choice of constituency projects; hold conversations with their Representatives on the details of empowerment projects, track and monitor these projects, and report the status of project implementation to the ICPC. We are also canvassing/advocating for national conversations on the development of a framework for Constituency Projects that would form the basis for initiating, formulating, disbursing funds, and the execution of constituency projects by relevant ministries and agencies.

Question No.12: Do you think the progress made by civil society can be preserved? How do we improve upon these efforts? What are the points of coordination for the 'Joinbodi Cohort' in their areas of interventions?

Response: Yes. We believe that CSOs' progress can be preserved. One of the ways to improve the efforts of CSOs is to institutionalise the work they are doing. For instance, getting the State Assembly to pass policies that will institutionalise the conduct of needs assessment before local budgets are developed, or getting the National Assembly to create frameworks that will the implementation of constituency projects.

Coordination with 'Joinbodi Cohort': for CLP, our areas of coordination with our colleagues would be in the area of transparency and accountability in the management of constituency projects.

Joy Incredible Limited

e-Mail: dorcas@joyinc.xyz

Age: 26

Gender: Female

Ethnicity: Yoruba

Religion: Christianity

Education: Bachelors

Marital Status: Single

Work and Professional Experiences:

Product Lead - Joy, Inc.

Hobbies/ Community Service: N/A

Question No.1: Do you know of any interventions by CSOs that have resulted in appropriate behavior by Nigerian public officers?

Response: The commendable efforts of YIAGA Africa, and other civil societies in championing the “Not Too Young to Run” bill reflect a concerted push for increased inclusion and representation within Nigeria’s governance system. The successful passage of this bill into law signifies a significant stride toward fostering active youth participation in politics by dismantling age-related barriers. Simultaneously, the impactful #ENDSARS campaign, supported by these organizations, has tirelessly addressed issues of police brutality. Amidst these interventions, BudgIT has played a crucial role by providing valuable data and holding public officers accountable. By offering transparency through data-driven insights, BudgIT contributes to the broader objective of promoting accountability in governance. This collaborative effort not only spotlights systemic issues but also emphasizes the need for sustained engagement with policymakers, continuous public support, and concrete steps to address challenges in law enforcement, ensuring lasting impact and positive change.

Question No.2: In your opinion, who are the people outside government that should have access to government information?

Response: In a democratic society, transparency is fundamental for accountability and citizen participation in governance. Beyond the government, certain groups should have access to government information to ensure an informed and engaged public. Firstly, citizens, as the ultimate stakeholders, benefit from knowing about government activities, decisions, and policies, enabling them to hold officials accountable. Journalists and media organizations play a crucial watchdog role, requiring access to government information for investigative reporting and public awareness. Additionally, researchers and academia rely on this information for evidence-based studies, fostering knowledge and informed discourse.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), advocacy groups, businesses, legal professionals, and civil society leaders also play vital roles in utilizing government information for various purposes, such as advocating for social justice, making informed business decisions, and engaging with local communities. Striking a balance between transparency and safeguarding sensitive information is crucial, ensuring responsible governance in the pursuit of a well-informed and participatory society.

Question No.3: Are civil society efforts leading to a redefinition of information exchange in terms of speed, accessibility, ease of use, etc? Please, explain based on your understanding.

Response: Civil society organizations in Nigeria, exemplified by entities like BudgIT and Joy Incredible Limited, have redefined the landscape of information exchange through various strategies. Organizations like BudgIT employ data-driven approaches to simplify complex government data, making it more understandable for the public and enhancing accessibility. Concurrently, online campaigns, such as the impactful #ENDSARS movement, showcase the power of mobilization and advocacy using social media platforms. Moreover, Joy Incredible Limited stands out in transforming information exchange by utilizing innovative storytelling methods.

Through narratives addressing issues like healthcare and education, they make seemingly intricate data digestible, engaging citizens in a relatable manner. This approach, employing multimedia like videos and infographics, ensures that information is not only disseminated quickly but also resonates with the diverse demographic of everyday citizens. Civil society organizations also play a pivotal role in monitoring government activities and reporting findings through various channels, ensuring timely and accessible information on government actions, policies, and accountability measures. Together, these efforts redefine how information is presented, understood, and engaged with by the public in Nigeria.

Question No.4: In your opinion, which of the domains of government activity have become transparent as a result of the efforts of civil society in Nigeria. Is it possible to scale-up for more positive outcomes?

Response: In Nigeria, civil society initiatives have played a pivotal role in enhancing transparency, particularly in the domain of infrastructure and government spending. The concerted efforts of these organizations have resulted in increased accessibility to detailed information about infrastructure budgets, allocations, and overall spending. By shining a light on the intricacies of government expenditure in the infrastructure sector, citizens are now empowered to scrutinize spending patterns and project timelines, fostering a culture of accountability. The use of online platforms and interactive tools by civil society organizations has significantly improved the comprehension of complex infrastructure data among the public.

To scale up these positive outcomes, sustained collaboration between civil society groups, the government, and relevant stakeholders is crucial. Advocating for open data policies, providing real-time updates on infrastructure projects, and leveraging secure data-sharing technologies can further amplify transparency in

government spending across various sectors. This success story in infrastructure transparency serves as a valuable model for extending similar efforts to other crucial areas of government activity in Nigeria.

Question No.5: What has civil society done in advocating for compliance with legal and policy framework by public institutions? Are state actors becoming honest in behavior as a result of civil society efforts?

Response: At Joy Incredible Limited, our work within civil society involves active advocacy for compliance with legal and policy frameworks by public institutions in Nigeria. Through our storytelling initiatives, we strive to hold state actors accountable for their actions, shedding light on instances of non-compliance and emphasizing the significance of adherence to established guidelines. While making broad generalizations poses difficulties, our ongoing efforts, alongside other civil society initiatives, aim to increase awareness and scrutiny. We believe that our advocacy serves as a crucial catalyst for promoting honest behavior among state actors, contributing to a culture of accountability and commitment to legal and policy frameworks within public institutions in Nigeria.

Question No.6: Do you think civil society's work supports public institutions to attain accountability in standard operating procedures? How?

Response: Yes. By providing platforms and partnership with the public institutions to accelerate and amplify their work. Civil society significantly aids public institutions in upholding accountability in standard operating procedures (SOPs). Acting as a watchdog, civil society monitors and reports on institutional actions, advocating for compliance through campaigns and awareness initiatives. Additionally, they provide training and engage in legal advocacy, ensuring that institutions are equipped and held accountable for deviations.

Citizen engagement and independent audits contribute to transparency, fostering a culture of collective responsibility. Collaborative efforts between civil society and government agencies further promote the development and improvement of SOPs. In essence, civil society's multifaceted approach actively supports public institutions in maintaining accountability and transparency within their standard operating procedures.

Question No.7: How does civil society efforts support public institutions to achieve their objectives? What alternative accountability programs have CSOs suggested and supported? May be cost of governance?

Response: Through vigilant monitoring and evaluation, advocacy for governance excellence, and dynamic public awareness campaigns, civil society organizations

(CSOs) ensure that public institutions adhere to ethical practices and effectively communicate their goals to the citizens. CSOs also play an indispensable role in enhancing institutional capabilities through capacity-building initiatives, providing training and resources for staff empowerment. In terms of alternative accountability programs, CSOs frequently propose innovative measures, including initiatives to reduce the cost of governance, social audits, and participatory decision-making processes. By championing budget transparency, fostering collaboration with public institutions, and championing citizen feedback mechanisms, CSOs actively contribute to shaping a more accountable and responsive governance environment.

Furthermore, CSOs place a crucial emphasis on initiatives aimed at curbing unnecessary expenditures and championing fiscal responsibility, aligning with the overarching goal of achieving optimal service delivery and resource utilization within public institutions.

Question No.8: Are CSOs able to convince public institutions to take responsibility for future impacts of their actions?

Responses: Yes.

Question No.9: What specific governance sectors have benefitted from civil society efforts? What areas have yet to gain the support from civil society?

Response: Health, Education, Gender and Diversity have benefitted from Civil Society, more work could still be done across every sector.

Question No. 10: What is your organization doing to promote good governance in Nigeria? Please, tell us the progress made so far.

Response: In our first film, we dove into the challenges within the justice system, focusing on police impunity. Through compelling stories, we highlighted the difficulties people face when seeking justice from public institutions. The film unfolded against a backdrop of a flawed system, showing the issues that fueled the #EndSARS protests. It aimed to bring attention to the experiences of everyday people confronting obstacles and injustices due to police impunity. Using powerful storytelling, we aimed to amplify the voices of those affected and underscore the urgent need for justice system reforms.

The #EndSARS protests became a collective response to these systemic problems, sparking broader discussions on accountability and social change. Expanding our focus, we are actively sparking conversations about corruption in governance through our film initiatives. By narrating stories that uncover the

complexities of corruption within public institutions, our films aim to prompt meaningful dialogue on this pervasive issue. These narratives serve as a window into the widespread impact of corruption on ordinary lives, emphasizing the importance of transparency, accountability, and systemic reforms.

Our stories contribute to a broader narrative of social change, cultivating awareness that stimulates discussions, encourages civic engagement, and advocates for a more ethical governance framework. Through our films, we hope to serve as catalysts for positive transformations, inspiring individuals to actively join the fight against corruption and contribute to building a more just and accountable society.

Question No.11: What are the gaps left in advocacy and agitation by your organization? What challenges have you encountered? Are there any risks? How can these risks be mitigated in the course of your organisation's intervention?

Response: The risk we face is the further access to information from public official, most information which should be made public are labelled top secret or covered with evasive information that doesn't provide answers that helps us tell this story.

Question No.12: Do you think the progress made by civil society can be preserved? How do we improve upon these efforts? What are the points of coordination for the 'Joinbodi Cohort' in their areas of interventions?

Response: Yes, it can be preserved. Key to this preservation is the institutionalization of reforms, embedding changes within formal structures. Capacity building is crucial, ensuring that civil society organizations are well-equipped and resilient. Continuous community engagement and collaboration among organizations help maintain public awareness and support. Advocating for legal protections and implementing robust monitoring mechanisms further safeguard the effectiveness of civil society interventions. For the 'Joinbodi Cohort,' coordination can be enhanced through regular meetings, digital platforms for real-time communication, resource sharing, joint advocacy campaigns, and mutual support mechanisms. By prioritizing these strategies, civil society can not only protect their progress but also fortify their efforts for long-term impact and improvement.

Abbreviations

AFRICMIL	African Centre for Media and Information Literacy
ANEEJ	Africa Network for Environment and Economic Justice
ARDP	Arewa Research and Development Project
BVAS	Bimodal Voter Accreditation System
BVN	Bank Verification Number
CAC	Corporate Affairs Commission
CAMA 2020	Companies and Allied Matters (2020)
CBN	Central Bank of Nigeria
CCB	Code of Conduct Bureau
CCT	Code of Conduct Tribunal
CHRICED	Resource Centre for Human Rights and Civic Education
CISLAC	Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre
CITAD	Centre for Information, Communication and Development
CLP	Community Life Project
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CSOs	Civil society organizations
EFCC	Economic and Financial Crimes Commission
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
FATF	Financial Action Task Force -
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
Foi 2011	Freedom of Information (2011)
HEDA	Human and Environmental Development Agenda
ICPC	Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IPPIS	Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
MANTRA	Monitoring of Recovered Assets Through Transparency and Accountability
MDAs	Ministries, departments and agencies
NAP	National Action Plan
NEITI	Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
NFIU	Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit
NOCOPO	Nigeria Open Contracting Portal
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
OGP	Open Government Partnership
PACAC	Presidential Advisory Council Against Corruption
PCAR	Presidential Committee on Asset Recovery
PEPS	Politically exposed persons
PLSI	Paradigm Leadership Support Initiative
PPDC	Public and Private Development Centre
SERAP	Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project
SERVICOM	Service Compact with All Nigerians
SFTAS	State Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability
TSA	Treasury Single Account
UBE	Universal Basic Education
VAIDS	Voluntary Asset and Income Declaration Schemes
VAPP	Violence Against Persons Prohibition
WGI	Worldwide Governance Indicators



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