Linking & Learning

3rd Workshop Report

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Linking & Learning

Introduction

Linking and learning (LL) is at the heart of the Voice Programme. It has been instrumental in boosting collaboration, connection, sharing of learnings, innovation, and application of new knowledge for project implementation and delivery effectiveness of participating grantees to achieve their project trajectories.

So far, Grantees have worked together to produce and showcase evidence-based learning and innovative solutions to project implementation challenges. Linking and Learning highlights the transformative change and effects that these projects have had on their rightsholders who have been faced with marginalization and discrimination. The Linking and Learning events provide an avenue to share project learnings, showcase collaborative projects and consolidate experience sharing.

This report provides details of the workshop sessions, highlighting the daily key contributions, conversations, learnings from the third edition of the Linking and Learning event.

Objectives

The objectives of this event were as follows:

1.   To share experiences from implementation – especially for Grantees closing out.
2.   To showcase learnings from the Communities of Practice
3.   To engage in coaching sessions and build capacity.

Venue

The venue of this edition of the Linking and Learning event was the *Lekki Conservation Center, Lagos, and the Swiss International Hotel, The Vistana, Lekki.*

The Lekki Conservation Center in Lekki, Nigeria, is an oasis of nature within the urban chaos of Lagos. Founded in 1990 by the Nigerian Conservation Foundation, the center preserves a large part of the region's biodiverse coastal ecosystem and educates visitors on the importance of coexisting with nature. The reserve is home to a plethora of wildlife, including monkeys, tortoises, and rare birds. The center afforded LL participants the opportunity to co-exist with and appreciate nature in its purest form, to relax and have fun. Most of the formal LL event activities (presentations, group work, plenaries and capacity building sessions) took place in the Rotunda hall. In spite of the rainy weather however, participants were able to experience the canopy walk and visit the picnic area of the center, taking time to enjoy the sights and sounds, and have a group 'self-care' session.

Lodgings were at the Swiss International The Vistana, located in the beautiful lush green vegetation of the international community of Victoria Garden City - Lekki in Nigeria's city of Lagos. Voice guests enjoyed the upscale rooms, exquisite dining venues and the meetings and event facilities.

Event Dates

The event took place from the 29th to 30th of June, with guests arriving on the 28th and departing on the 1st of July, 2022.

Participants

43 persons attended the event, made up of the Voice Nigeria team (3), Voice Grantees (29), Cognito and Nine team (8) and Now Us award grantees (3).

Notes on Agenda:

The proposed agenda aimed to stimulate and capture rich, thought provoking discussions aimed at developing new knowledge, ideas and approaches. Activities were designed to help grantees connect with each other, towards empowering, amplifying, and increasing their collective influence.

Touching on themes of self-care/mental health and the benefit of practicing mindfulness, a partial device detox was planned for the hall-related sessions where participants would submit their devices at the start of the day to pick them up in time for outdoor activities or when needed. By so doing, the LLE would provide an enabling environment to promote connection and encourage grantees to discover ways they can help themselves by telling untold stories, listening to and learning from other people's approaches to problem solving and empowering them with the correct perspectives aimed at building the transformative change their respective rights holders need.
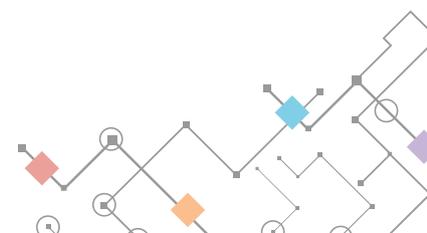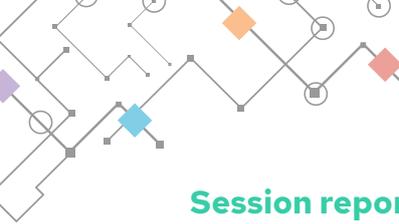
Session reports

Activities:

1. Welcome Dinner at the dining hall of The Vistana – Arrival Day, June 28th.

To set the tone for the event, all LL workshops usually start with an informal dinner to break the ice and build up some warmth and camaraderie and this edition was no different. Most invited grantee organizations were represented and participants were asked to offer greetings in their local languages while introducing themselves. Thereafter they were treated to a delightful array of Nigerian cuisine and refreshing drinks. The dinner was very brief to allow weary travelers to get some much needed rest and wake up early for the main event the next day.

2. Linking and Learning Workshop Day One – June 29th.

Registration and Opening Activities

The day started with a welcome session where brief introductions were made, and Seun from the Cognito/Nine team facilitated discussions around the ground rules, house-keeping and welfare issues. Old participants (those who had attended previous LL events were asked to share their key learnings from the past LLEs, while new attendees were asked to write down their expectations for the LLE. Some of their expectations included connecting with other grantees, sharing and learning from experiences, and hoping to find lessons to adapt and/or adopt for their organizations.

In keeping with the conceptual framework for this third edition of the LL event, the participants were introduced to the idea and practice of digital detoxification – keeping away from mobile, internet-based devices and social media for a brief period of time. Research suggests that such detoxes can have mental health benefits. The presentation of this concept was planned to help participants be present and focused during the formal sessions, as it has been shown that the uncontrolled use of laptops and phones during workshops, reduces the quality of participation and undermines the intended objectives of meetings.

It was pleasing to witness the full cooperation of participants as they submitted their phones to a 'digital detox center', a section of the room where they would keep their phones, away from their seats. They also shut down their laptops. As a result, a high level of participation and contribution was noticed during the 2 day event.

Opening address by Ijeoma Okwor, VOICE

Ijeoma welcomed all participants officially, gave a refresher talk on the background and value of Linking and Learning to the Vice program, stating that Linking and Learning is at the heart of voice. She then introduced the NOW US award as an award that focuses on celebrating inclusion under the Innovate and Learn grant, facilitated by ACHA. Three organizations emerged as finalists at the recently concluded NOW US bootcamp, attending the LLE for the first time. They include: Mother Hen

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Development Foundation, Coalition of Societies for the Rights of Older Persons in Nigeria (COSROPIN) and Gender Mobile Initiative.

She commended the strides achieved by all grantees so far and raised the issue of civic responsibility and the need for political participation. She raised pertinent questions for reflection such as "how can we as Voice get engaged to support the forthcoming elections? How can we collaborate to support voter registration and advocate for voter turnout during the general elections?"

She urged everyone to take advantage of the Voice legacy of Linking and Learning to connect, learn and network with each other.

How is it going - Programmes update

This section provided grantees an opportunity to present updates on their respective program implementation, impact stories, challenges, learnings so far. Using a poster format, grantees shared the following:

PPDC

Project Title:

Promoting Inclusive Governance Through Civic Engagement (PIGCE)

Location:

Abuja

Rightsholders:

Project Implementation Highlights:

- Clan-based sensitization
- Contract monitoring and investigation by groups
- Capacity and knowledge building on data use for improved service delivery
- High level advocacy to relevant state actors
- Stakeholder's engagement to improve service delivery in FCT
- Production of film for change

Learning Questions and Answers:

- *How do we increase citizens participation at the grass root level?*
  - Ans: By unbiased sensitization?

- *Will rightsholders access to contractual information enable them demand accountability and improve perpetration ignorance?*
  - Ans: Yes. With that information, they can actually trace projects in their community.

- *Are right holders carried along during project implementation?*
  - Ans: No, but we are bridging the gap by bringing the information to them.
  - Ans: Also facilitating meetings with community members and government representatives

Setbacks and Lessons:

Unavailability of political reps due to election campaigns

What have you learnt from the setbacks?
- To utilize the charter of demand to elect and re-elect officials

Success Stories:

The impact recorded from Buzunkure community in Kuje FCT, following our advocacy and engagement. The people in the community now have access to water.

NG -YOUTH SDGS/CEYAD/AYM

Project Title:
Speak Up Stand Out
(SUSO)

Location:
Enugu/Lagos/Abuja

Rightsholders:
Youth (18 – 35)

Project Implementation Highlights:
- Over 25 communities engaged across the locations
- Achieved community participation and ownership across project
- Mid-year harvest meeting celebrating activities' outcomes

Learning Questions and Answers:
- *What is the significant story from the community actions led by youth activists and advocates?*
  - PVC registration after sensitization in Enugu
  - Political party registration after voter education
  - In secondary schools, students exhibit recycling skills after training in Abuja.
  - Artists engagement for good governance advocacy in Lagos.

- *How have the 20 teams embraced and utilized the digital skills acquired from the tool kit?*
  - The activist integrates the skills in social media engagement, step down training for advocates and a training of trainers' activity.

- *What is the level of social media engagement on the project?*
  - There is an optimal level of engagement on social media (esp. twitter)

- *How have the 20 team community projects led to community projects led to community involvement and ownership? (Sustainability)*
  - Over 10 projects are led by the advocates assigned to activists. In 5 projects, the engagements are led by indigenous community members.

Setbacks and Lessons:
Our Setback with Activists
- Lag in communication/feedback
- Problem of flexibility following events/happening (aligning project to trends)
- Problem of team members' engagement

Setback with Communities
- Non-response of community stakeholders/gate keepers
- Myths and bias towards project agenda
- Delay due to monetary or material expectations
- ASUU strike limiting project around education/employment

Lessons
- Periodic physical monitoring of projects is key
- Smaller teams work more effectively
- Regular CoP encourages lag-performing projects

Success Stories:
- Timid girls in secondary schools now make public speeches reflecting their leadership development in Enugu.
- Established reading clubs in 3 schools strengthening reading culture among 600 students in Enugu.
- Over 50 students were successfully trained on waste recycling.
- Raised over 15 ambassadors advocating for GBV (Gender Based Violence) and Women's Rights in Lagos.

CSAAE

Project Title:
Soro Soke or Park Well

Location:
Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo

Rightsholders:

Project Implementation Highlights:
- Stakeholders engagements and onboarding of partners
- Training boot camps for youth anchors
- Set up of pro-bono lawyer team across the 5 states
- Set up of toll-free lines for reporting human rights violations and police brutality.
- Radio sensitization and advocacy campaigns via jingles and shows
- Digital advocacy via television, newspaper blogs, social media
- Establishment of joint community youths and NPF forum

Learning Questions and Answers:
- *Are all stakeholders actively involved in the programmatic process?*
  - Ans: Yes. The NPF, Ministry of Justice, Human Rights Commission, Community Leaders, Youth Leaders, etc. have all committed to ensure project success.

- *Have we mobilized all material, human and capacity resources to achieve the big goal?*
  - Ans: We have identified and onboarded key stakeholders and partners. While the project progresses, we are also identifying and onboarding other partners that we discover along the way that are critical to project success.

Setbacks and Lessons:
- Insecurity challenges in the South East
- Monday sit-at-home practice
- Inflation rates
- Delayed funds release affecting project timeline
- Some youths are unwilling to speak up for fear of backlash

What Did You Learn?
- With proper knowledge transfer and support provision, youths are willing to speak up and tell their stories using various platforms.
- Necessary to gather extensive security intelligence before setting out into the field.
- Adjust project activities and carry out less cost-implicative activities during the wait period for funds release.

Success Stories:
- Establishment of joint forum of community youths and the NPF
- Establishment of team of pro-bono lawyers who have begun the process for release of unlawfully detained END SARS protesters
- Marginalized youths who have been victims of police brutality are speaking up and educating other youths on how to safely and respectfully engage the Nigerian Police.

CITIZENS COMMONS

Project Title:
From Protest To Action

Introduction:
Connecting young Nigerians with opportunities and platforms to engage – connect – empower beyond protests – in order to inform the narrative of a new Nigeria. A Nigeria for the many.

Location:

Rightsholders:

Project Implementation Highlights:
- Youthaction.ng website platform social network for young change makers. Sign up @ www.youthaction.ng
- Community Change Champions + Enablers Bootcamp. 5 days. 20 Enablers. One Conversation – New Nigeria
- Youth conversations for new Nigeria (YANN) – conversations in 24 cities – town halls – community dialogue – informal focus group
- Youth led engagements for the conversation for the Nigeria we desire.
- Legal Commons – support for #EndSARS victims. Training for pro-bono attorneys master classes – 4 sessions! With certification

State of Implementation:
- Ongoing – extension will be required to finish YANN conversation component

Learning Questions and Answers:
- *How can we engage more young Nigerians in the conversations?*
- *How do we leverage policy makers in this election season?*
- *Are youth interested? Are we assuming?*
- *Should Social Justice empowerment go beyond the physical space – online – virtual*
- *How do we capture the interest of informal youths e.g. Okada riders?*

Setbacks and Lessons:
- COVID response
- Election season
- ASUU strike
- Cash flow
- Insecurity in Nigeria
- High Inflation

Learnings:
- Reprogram
- Innovate
- Start with what you have
- Engage stakeholders
- Seek support

Success Stories:
- Youthaction.ng
- 4,000 plus registration
- Resources engagement
- CCEnablers – Active stories of impact and community engagement
- Bail of #EndSARS detainees
- YANN conversations – Excitement to contribute
- New skills on social impact SJA
- Pro-Bono Attorneys?

FOSER

Project Title:
Know Your Right To Fight Against Police Brutality

Location:
Bauchi Metropolis.

Rightsholders:
Recalcitrant Youth, Student from Tertiary Institution, Transport union rep, Market association representative (Whistle Blowers), security personnel, social media influencers and Persons With Disabilities.

Rightsholders:
500 direct
5,000 Indirect

Stakeholders:
45 direct
225 Indirect

Project Implementation Highlights:
- Training of youth groups on appreciation of civil rights in governance and seeking justice.
- Lectures on identified constituted authorities and their constituted limitations.
- Demonstration of peaceful rally on police brutality.
- Radio studio programs/phone. Discussion on Justice/conflict
- Social media campaign using various platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, twitter etc.

Learning Questions and Answers:
- *How can the project best include relevant stakeholders?*
  - Stakeholders and Religious Leader Engagement

- *How can we set up a feedback system should stakeholders not show commitment?*
  - Stakeholder Influencing
  - Social media promotion

- *How do we achieve less police brutality?*
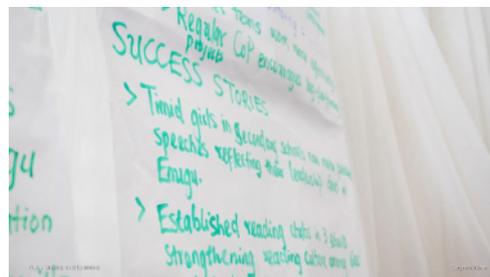 - Public enlightenment through media

Setbacks and Lessons:
- Challenges with the police authority participation
- ASUU strike

Learnings from setbacks:
- Resilience in advocating for Justice

Success Stories:
- Success story on federal high court Bauchi judgment in favor of Altine Dauda Vs Nigerian Police Force

YOUTH HUB AFRICA

Project Title:
You Matter in this Matter

Location:
FCT, Bauchi, Ebonyi and Oyo States

Rightsholders:
Youths and PWDs

Project Implementation Highlights:
- The project is in the close out phase.
- YHA is looking to continue the social activism on a quarterly basis.
- YHA is looking to partner with Police Radio, Human right Radio to continue the You Matter Radio Program.

Learning Questions and Answers:
- *How do we ensure a pathway to report police brutality?*
  - Through constant engagement of the police and security agencies in our youth related programs e.g. Advocacy, Radio program, chatbot, Toll free lines

- *How do we ensure young people understand and trust the process?*
  - Through the town hall meetings, we were able to gather stakeholders to think and work together on issues plaguing them from the security agent POV and youth POV

- *How do we sustain the overall objectives of the project beyond funding?*
  - There are certain components of the project that YHA will carry on irrespective of funding e.g. the Social Activism Training, the Radio program, Media engagement etc.

- *How do we ensure young people take ownership of the reporting methods?*
  - By involving them in the process e.g. town hall meeting, Radio programs, sensitization process.

- *How do we get the commitment of states and non-state actors?*
  - YouthHubAfrica is in constant communication with stakeholders and will continue to bring issues that affect our target rightsholders in the context of all political or Socio-Economic issues.

Setbacks and Lessons:
- Lack of response from MDAs
- Delay in funding from Voice
- Exchange rate back and forth
- Issues have moved from Social Justice to politics.

What we learned:
- Constant meeting with MDAs
- Voice should send the naira equivalent of the agreed budget to prevent exchange loss.
- Stick to issues even as political issues remain and after elections

Success Stories:
- 80 young people trained
- 48 radio episodes in 4 states
- Radio program caught attention of security agencies
- Town hall meeting in 4 state featuring over 500 participants
- Growing relationship with state parastatals on Social Justice issues
- Toll free line 0800-500-5555 – 200 people reached out

Project Title:

Politeracy

Introduction:

Promoting political literacy using digital skills

Location:

10 communities in Enugu State

Rightsholders:

Youths in rural and Semi-urban communities

Project Implementation Highlights:

- Selection of rightsholders in each community
- First phase of training on digital skills completed in 9 communities
- Continuous training and conversation through project social media platform
- 2nd phase of training has commenced

Learning Questions and Answers:

- *What is the best approach and methodologies to mobilize the youths in the rural communities?*
  - The use of liaison officers and community gate-keepers who understand and serve as the authority in the communities made mobilization of youths easier.

- *How do we get them to create and maintain an active and social media platform for social political engagements?*
  - This will be done by equipping them with digital skills and social media etiquette and imbibing in them the importance of active participation in socio-political engagements.

Setbacks and Lessons:

- Allaying the fears of the project authenticity/implantation
- Challenges of fixing days for training due to community burial arrangement and collision with community market days.

Success Stories:

- Valuable digital skills were imparted on the rightsholders.
- Rightsholders now have an improved awareness and understanding of the importance of their participation in political engagements.
- 20 rightsholders in each of the 10 communities are participating in the project.

CAPIO

Project Title:
POLLRITE23

Project Implementation Highlights:
- Advocacy to NCOS, INEC, Ministry of Interior.

Location:
Enugu, Abuja, Lagos

Rightsholders:
Inmates

Learning Questions and Answers:
- *How can the project create awareness of the situations in the correctional centers in Nigeria?*
- *Will achieving voting rights of inmates improve detention conditions in Nigeria?*
- *Can achieving voting rights of inmates improve democracy in Nigeria?*

Setbacks and Lessons:
- Upcoming elections distracting public office holders.
- Poor coordination between the relevant govt MDA

Learning from Setback
- Elections advocacy related projects should start earlier enough before elections begin.
- MDAs should be held accountable.

Success Stories:
- The project has received approval from the Minister of Interiors, though yet to be backed up by significant action.
- There is a new multi-stakeholder strategy to ensure implementation.

"THIS LINKING & LEARNING EVENT HAS BEEN SO INSIGHTFUL IT HAS GIVEN ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD NETWORKS, SHARE EXPERIENCES AND GET INSPIRED TO DO MORE.
Participant feedback

"LINKING & LEARNING HELPED ME SEE HOW COLLABORATING WITH OTHERS CAN HELP ME REACH MY PROGRAM GOALS FASTER AND MORE EFFICIENTLY. LEARNING WHILE HAVING FUN IS AWESOME.
Participant feedback

"LINKING & LEARNING PROVIDES A SAFE SPACE FOR PARTICIPANTS TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES, LEARN FROM SET BACKS AND BUILD ON SUCCESSES.
Participant feedback

YIAGA AFRICA

Project Title:
RunToWin NG

Location:
FCT, Lagos, Enugu

Rightsholders:
Young women and men running for elective offices

Project Implementation Highlights:
- Run To Win NG Radio Programme
- Voter registration community outreach (FCT Election)
- Publications for voter education (Why you should not sell your vote)
- Quiz on Zikoko (To increase political awareness and participation among Gen Zs and Millennials
- Townhall for young people running for local government and area council offices (FCT & Enugu)
- Run To Win Festival (Partnership with SPF) to encourage voter registration.

Learning Questions and Answers:
- *Are more youths and women engaging in political discussions?*
  - Yes.

- *Did we engage youths during CVR?*
  - We did

- *Do political parties now have more youths and women running for public offices?*
  - Yes... marginal but yes.

- *Are political parties more supportive of youth and female candidates in all levels of government?*
  - Yes.

Setbacks and Lessons:
- The two major political parties were principalities and powers set to discourage progress.
- The political process created too much distrust among citizens.
- Young people don't like to talk too much.

Learnings from the Setbacks
- Conquering giants is not a day's job (or a year to be honest)
- People will eventually learn from mistakes.
- Put fun and music and young people will align
- Partnerships are really great!

Success Stories:
- In the FCT Area Council Elections, 18 of our youth candidates won!
- Young people have been bursting at INEC seams to register.
- Two of our female candidates who did not win their elections have decided to run again for higher office, rather than give up.
- Our Zikoko quizzes recorded a reach of over 700k young people.

YSAD

Project Title:
No Dey Give; Follow
Traffic Rules

Location:
Imo and Abia States

Rightsholders:
Youths and Transport
Union Workers

Project Implementation Highlights:
- Advocacy calls/visits
- Social media advocacy
- Complaints mechanisms and toll-free lines
- Radio shows and Jingos
- Stakeholders workshop
- Youth summit
- Reflection workshop and evaluation

These activities have all been carried out in the two pilot states of Imo and Abia.

Learning Questions and Answers:
- *What departments do we need to strengthen within the organization to achieve our goal?*
  - Capacity-building around
  - Advocacy and lobbying
  - Partnership and collaboration
  - Civic education
  - Data visualization
  - Strategic approaches
  - Project management

Setbacks and Lessons:
- Sit-at-home orders of separatists
- Regional insecurity
- Getting stakeholders, especially the security agencies, was a demanding task
- Delay in release of funds by Voice

Lessons from Setback:
- Time management
- Being security conscious
- Planning and execution
- Flexibility
- Resource management

Success Stories:
- Forming a community of victims
- Fostering a conversation
- Extending the frontiers of conversation stakeholder-to-stakeholder engagements
- Traffic rules enforcement among NURTW (consciousness heightened among union members).
- Youth rights awareness and participation.

ACHA

Project Title:
Now Us Award

Introduction:
Nothing About Us Without Us (Celebrating Inclusion)

Location:
Ekiti, Kano, Abuja, Gombe, Borno

Rightsholders:
Vulnerable, elderly and youth, Indigenous people and ethnic minorities, Women facing exploitation, abuse and/or violence People with disabilities, LGBTQI

Project Implementation Highlights:
- Successful call for proposal (100)
- Media engagement and press release
- Selection of top 21 for interview
- Selection of the top 10 for bootcamp
- Had a successful bootcamp/pitching session

Learning Questions and Answers:
- *How do we select competent organizations that will carry out the process of inclusion of the rightsholders group?*

- *How do we monitor CSOs to ensure that our target beneficiaries participate actively in this initiative?*
  - Monthly reports
  - Quarterly meeting
  - Step down create and document feedback channels
  - Follow up calls
  - Site visits

- *How can we help our rights holders spread their initiatives beyond this project*
  - Forging strategic partnerships and linkages
  - Integrating an inclusive approach
  - Capacity strengthening – agency

Setbacks and Lessons:
- External disruptions (elections, aviation crisis, communication)

Lessons from Setbacks
  - Research needed to understand national events
  - Opportunities for more inclusion communication channels.

Success Stories:
- Selection of 10 innovations from organizations across the 6 geo-political zones
- Successfully conducted a 5-day boot camp/pitch which produced the top 3 inclusive innovations
- Expansion of ACHA's CoP from rightsholders
- Identified opportunities for collaborative work

CENTER FOR CITIZENS WITH DISABILITIES (CCD)

Project Title:

Enhancing Access to Justice and Political Participation for Persons With Disabilities (PWDs)

Location:

Lagos

Rightsholders:

Persons With Disabilities (PWDs)

Project Implementation Highlights:

- CCD conducted research to generate empirical evidence which was used to engage relevant stakeholders like LASIEC, IPAC, INEC, LASODA.
- Advocacy visits were carried out to INEC, IPAC, LASIEC using the report publication and IEC material, and recommendations were made to the stakeholders.
- CCD carried out media engagements like radio television talk shows.
- Sensitization of frontline political parties at the national and state level.
- CCD conducted a consultative meeting on provision of legal support services.
- Engagement of clusters heads of PWDs across Lagos State.
- Commemoration of the international day for persons with disabilities.

Learning Questions and Answers:

- *Will there be an increase of PWDs in political participation?*
  - Yes there has been a significant increase in PWDs participation in political party activities, participation in politics.

- *Will building that capacity of PWDs on the provision of the National Disability Act ensure they demand access to Justice on an equal basis with others.*
  - Yes, PWDs have to a large extent demanded further rights to access political participation.

Setbacks and Lessons:

- Political parties have llimited understanding of what 'access' means to PWDs
- Delays in funding
- Low bank exchange rate

Success Stories:

- Obtained second commitment from key stakeholders e.g. LASIEC to establish a disability desk officer.
- Political parties gave slots for executive positions to PWDs.
- 1,400 slots of political positions given to PWDs.
- Commitment of INEC to PWDs PVC registration
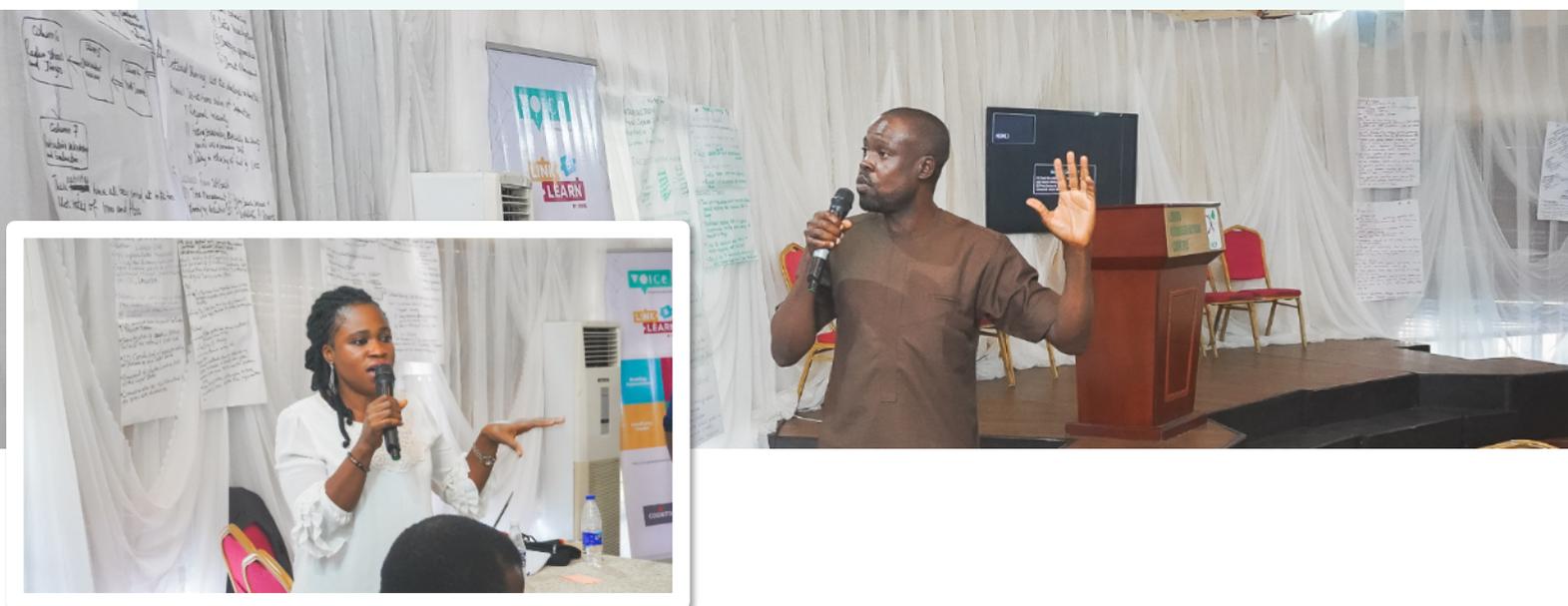
CODE/BQA

Project Title:
Project SABI

Location:
Abuja, Lagos and Enugu

Rightsholders:
Women facing exploitation and abuse

Project Implementation Highlights:

Project Inception Meeting:
- Consolidated project plans and outcomes
- Mapped out stakeholders to strategies

Advocacy Visits
- To NURTW, Religious leaders, DSVA, FMWA, NOA, NAPTIP, ETMA
- To seek their buy-in and support on the campaign
- To discuss data and resources that are peculiar to their status
  Outcomes
- Consolidate partnership through signing of pledge cards and MOU
- Increased support from stakeholders by endorsing them as SABI Ambassadors

How did we amplify our work?
- Created a social construct platform (sabimovement.org)
- Created vox pop across 3 states
- Created docu-story on victims/survivors of SGBV
- Infographic cartoon illustrations fact sheets
- Radio Episode
- Of course, our social media platforms: #sheyyousabi - Instagram, twitter, FB and voice platform.
- Town Halls: Motor park town hall meetings, across 5 states
  Outcomes
- Created gender desk across 5 states (Abuja, Enugu, Lagos, Niger and Nasarawa)
- Ensured female participation through making a female in Alimosho LGA our Gender focal person.
- Played SABI jingles across motor parks through our engagements with commercial road users, we have been able to pass across our campaign messages in various motor parks through jingles to stickers.
- Develop workbooks/manuals for commercial road users to cascade learnings during the train the trainer module.

Boys Summit (Lagos)
- Set-up boys against GBV clubs in 81 schools across 10 states
- Developed ABC
- Appointed Boys as SABI champions

Guess What?
- We reached over 2671 Boys
- Boys are now leading SGV clubs in Zimbabwe

CODE/BQA *continued*

Project Title:
Project SABI

Location:
Abuja, Lagos and Enugu

Rightsholders:
Women facing exploitation and abuse

Learning Questions and Answers:

- *Can men be allies with women to fight against GBV?*
  - Yes

- *How can men and boys be education, empowered, mobilized and re-educated about their roles in ending violence against women and girls?*
  - Through aforementioned activities

- *Why motor parks and marketplace?*
  - Data shows that most GBV occurs in these places.

- *Why the 3 states?*
  - Data shows that most GBV occurs in these places.

- *What new approaches/innovations have we identified?*
  - Ability to re-strategize and innovate
  - Explore alternative means
  - Expand our reach to 2 more states
  - The importance of and power in grassroot engagements

Setbacks and Lessons:

-

Success Stories:

- Through this project, we have been able to:
- Create 3 learning manuals
- Develop one of Nigeria's digital social platform for men and women to unpack their misogynistic tendencies
- Hit our goal and exceed our numbers halfway into the project
- Reach more states
- Have women (our rightsholders) lead some of our interventions
- SABI posters and jingles are being placed and played in parks
- Hear direct impact stories from participants

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CARE

Project Title:
Accessible Aviation

Location:
Abuja, Nigeria

Rightsholders:
Persons With
Disabilities (PWDs)

Project Implementation Highlights:

Learning Questions and Answers:
- *How do we make airports more accessible for PWDs?*
- *How do we get the right stakeholders to implement an inclusive policy in the aviation sector?*
  - Creation of awareness and advocacy to the right stakeholders in the aviation sector on the implementation of inclusive aviation policy.

- *How do we address negative attitude/behavior towards PWDs at the airport?*
  - Training of aviation personnel on disability inclusion and the right terminology.

Setbacks and Lessons:
- Slow implementation of aviation policy by some airline operators
- Some stakeholders are not available for meetings.

Lessons from Setbacks
- Using the setback as a tool for further advocacy to meet desired target and project goals

Success Stories:
- The accessible aviation project has caused a higher reception and implementation of a disability-friendly environment in the aviation sector with strong commitment from key operators (FAAN and NCAA) to make life easier for PWDs when traveling by air.
- Through the project, inclusive policies have been put in place to guide all airlines operators on inclusive and accessible aviation.
- Through the project NCAA have appointed handlers at the airport for easy movement and boarding of PWDs at the airport and the work is made easier with the help of CARE
- Accessible Aviation project equipment and personnel are now at the airport.
- Through the project, PWDs are allowed to travel alone without an extra ticket for aid.
- Through the project, the NCAA act which was redundant and abandoned before now which states that PWDs must be given priority and assistance at the airport has fully been implemented.

SPF – STREET PROJECT FOUNDATION

Project Title:
ARTvocacy

Introduction:
An articulate rant for a New Nigeria

Location:
Abuja, Enugu

Rightsholders:
Youths (18-35 years): 50 in total

Youths with disabilities

Project Implementation Highlights:
- Abuja (25 youths)
  - Youth convening for 6 weeks
  - Theater production (Barcode)
  - 13-episode podcast
  - Short film (Glitches)
  - Street Photography
  - Establishment of the Abuja ARTvocacy movement

- Enugu (25 youths)
  - Youth convening for 6 weeks
  - Theater production (Bolo bolo)
  - 13-episode podcast
  - Short film (The other side of a coin)
  - Establishment of the Enugu ARTvocacy movement

Learning Questions and Answers:
- *Yes, the establishment of the ARTvocacy movement in both locations has significantly contributed in young people's political participation and social justice advocacy.*
- *Yes, we have been able to establish a strategic relationship with Yiaga Africa towards mobilizing young people for the upcoming elections. Other partnerships are currently being explored.*
- *SPF has developed a blueprint of the methodology and we are in the process of rolling it out, so that other CSOs can adopt and replicate our model across the country.*

Setbacks and Lessons:
- Initial difficulty in securing buy-in of stakeholders in government. We conducted advocacy visits and
- We were able to secure the buy-in of the FCT youth department and the Enugu state ministries of youth development and arts and culture respectively.

Success Stories:
- Monthly community meetings of the ARTvocacy movement in both locations have recorded over 800 youths and counting, joining for the physical meetings
- They have attracted over 3,000 youths and counting across various social media platforms for their virtual engagements
- Uzoamaka Asiegbu, a rightsholder, has been selected to represent Nigeria for the Pan-African Youths with Disability Leadership program in Ethiopia
- Pelemo Nyajo, a rightsholder, has been selected by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands for their global youth advisory board
- We have other rightsholders, selected and currently working on other Voice grantees' projects such as Citizens Commons and Nigerian Youths for SDGs
- Paul Ahiawu, a rightsholder, has been selected for an international visual arts exhibition in Ghana focusing on youth political participation
- Michal Ogbochukwu, a rightsholder, won a national photography competition organized by the Nigerian Sovereign Wealth Fund and Office of the Vice President. His entry focused on the resilience of Nigerian youth in the Covid-19 pandemic
- SPF won the United Nations Intercultural Innovation Award for our efforts in mobilizing young people from different ethnic and religious groups across Nigeria towards a common goal of social justice advocacy using the creative arts.

DEWDROP FOUNDATION (Elderly CoP)

Introduction:

Community of Practice on eldercare to promote awareness on issues of the elderly population, re-awaken and redirect the concerns of stakeholders on eldercare management and welfare.

Implementation Highlights:

- Baseline research across six geopolitical regions
- Formed a coalition with organizations whose thematic areas are on eldercare welfare and management across the six geopolitical regions.
- Engaged with stakeholders.

Learning Questions and Answers:

- *What are the major problems of elderly persons and factors that contribute to the problems?*
  - Elderly persons suffer rejection, abandonment, health challenges, lack of properly trained caregivers, lack of accessible healthcare systems, lack of social inclusion.

  Factors that Contribute
  - Lack of awareness on elderly issues, lack of interest on eldercare management reduced social value.

Location:

Abuja, Enugu

- *How will learnings affect organizational practice going forward?*
  - Need to protect the interest of the elderly population
  - Increase knowledge sharing on the rights of elderly persons
  - Promote the need for the creation of safe spaces for elderly persons in communities
  - Encourage the need for training of primary caregivers of elderly persons
  - Need for social inclusion and promotion of intergenerational activities for elder persons.

Rightsholders:

Youths (18-35 years): 50 in total

Youths with disabilities

Setbacks and Lessons:

- Short time for the baseline research.
- Lack of interest in eldercare management
- Less awareness on eldercare management
-

Learnings from Setbacks
- Need for amplified awareness on eldercare issues
- More timing for data collection on issues of elderly persons

Success Stories:

- Coalition of organizations across six geopolitical regions
- Stakeholder engagement

A walk Through Nature: The Lekki Conservation Center Canopy Walk and Picnic Area

Participants took advantage of a temporary improvement in the rainy weather to experience the conservation center. After a briefing by one of the guides, participants joined other tourists to take a walk along the boardwalk, and also the canopy walk, the longest in Africa.

Afterwards, everyone converged at the conservations picnic area, a part of the conservation area with flat grassland, a large fish pond, a few huts and floor game spots. Some sampled the fresh coconut treats that were being sold by locals. And many took time to walk around to enjoy the sights, watch the monkeys approach tourists and take lots of photographs.

Participants eventually converged on one of the huts, where they were treated to a sumptuous three-course meal.

Self-Care Check-in: A facilitated discussion on issues affecting mental health in today's Nigeria

In one of the huts, the participants converged to take part in a facilitated discussion, led by Ijeoma. The discussion centered around 2 main themes:

• *How do you protect your mental health in light of the current political climate, where people attack one another on social media based on comments on the state of politics in the nation?*

• *How do we address gender roles in parenting, especially for women working in the civil society space?*

Participants were given the opportunity to freely express their views and experiences without any fear of judgment. Different ways people cope with online conflicts in the social media space were examined. In addition, women in the group shared their experiences on how they were able to manage their roles as wives and mothers, alongside their work as civil society advocates in various fields. Views on how the country can move forward against the present odds were aired, with most participants chipping in to add their thoughts.

Overall, the session gave participants an opportunity to share personal stories of their lives behind the scenes of Voice work, in an atmosphere of empathy, shared understanding and hope for the future.

3. Linking and Learning Workshop Day Two – June 30th.

Registration and Recap

Participants arrived early the next day, signed the attendance and settled down for the days activities. Seun facilitated a quick session to recap highlights of the previous day, asking volunteers to share their key learnings from the previous day. He also invited all to continue the 'digital detox' exercise where everyone submitted their phones to the digital detox desk, close down their laptops, and be present in the moment.

Values Clarification exercise

All participants were taken through an exercise, facilitated by Christy, to help to clarify belief systems in order to work better with rightsholders, and deliver program interventions that are based on respect, human rights and tolerance.

The exercise allowed people to express their opinion in a manner that ensured a safe space with no room for intolerance or discrimination. Participants were forced to examine the lines drawn between what we believe and what others believe.

Voice is hinged on the principles of diversity and inclusion. The exercise threw up pertinent questions such as: How can we ensure better representation of marginalized communities even if we don't agree with them? How can we include other and all voices in the conversations? How best can we co-exist peacefully together?

The exercise also threw up the question of legalities versus values. It was maintained that values should not contradict the laws of the land because that ensures that everyone's human rights are well protected for an orderly and just society.
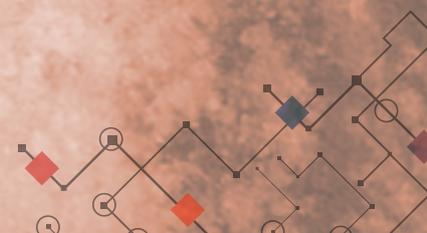
Panel Discussion – A Deep Dive Into The Impact Stories Of Grantees That Have Concluded Their Programmes.

A panel discussion was convened where seven grantees whose Voice-funded programs were closing were encouraged to share their impact stories and insights from implementation, by responding to carefully selected questions. The grantees and panel representatives were as follows:

> YouthHub Africa - Hassan
> Integriti -
> Citizens Commons - Ola
> Street Project Foundation - Ezenwa
> CSAAE - Davidson
> YSAD - Obinna
> FOSER -

The session was anchored by Christy and below are some of the highlights of the session:

YHA

How do we ensure a pathway to reporting police brutality?
This was and is still being addressed through targeted communication on the subject matter including phone-in radio programming, social media engagement and face to face conversations during town hall meetings as well as the launch of the toll-free line to report incidents of police brutality. They shared that for the first month after the launch of the toll-free line, people kept calling to "check" if the line was functional! This is indicative of the public suspicion of toll-free lines due to past experiences. However it also showed that on the flip side, people do seem interested in having a functional toll-free line.

How do we ensure young people understand and trust the process?
In addition to media engagement, and toll-free lines, the town hall meetings aimed to bring stakeholders together to collectively address the challenges of police brutality. The law enforcement agencies, human rights agencies, civil society as well as young people were brought together to iron out the issues they faced. The conversations fostered the creation of a network for sustaining and improving the social justice milieu. There was an incident where a young person reported police extortion the day before the town hall engagement and the matter was promptly investigated. By the next day, the police officer had been fished out, dealt with accordingly and the money was returned to the young man including an extra five thousand Naira in damages.

Overall, the organization found constant engagement to be the answer across the 4 states they were implementing the "You Matter In This Matter" project – Ebonyi, Bauchi, Oyo and FCT. They also learnt that consistency in creating awareness and building capacity was key, though admittedly a long process. Hopes were expressed that the end goal will be achieved over time and sustained via the networks established during the townhall meeting. For sustainability, YHA

planned to integrate the gains made, into future projects of the organization

How has linking and learning has helped the organization?
- The Program officer shared that he has met mentors for his personal and professional life via the linking and learning platforms.
- His engagement with the Social Justice CoP has enriched their organization's project implementation.
- Learnings from the linking and learning has been infused into the organizations projects because a grant ends but projects do not, and therefore, the "You Matter In This Matter" project will continue even after the Voice grant is over.

Integriti

Uchenna started out by pointing out the peculiarities with programming in rural communities which he shared as follows:
- Due to the close-knit nature of rural localities, they are aware and wary of new entrants into the community.
- It is vital to start by advocating to community gatekeepers and get their buy in. The Politeracy project did this successfully by recruiting liaison officers in each of the 10 communities they worked in. The liaison officers are members of the community who are influential within the community and open the doors for the project team.
- There are usually a set of assumptions based on community experiences which the gatekeepers hold. They see visitors coming with projects as politicians with fake promises and anticipate gifts as a way of getting their cooperation. It is important to help them understand what the project aims to achieve so there is a mutual understanding. The tip here is to have key messages and support points to get them on board in a win-win situation.
- Due to communal living, project events should not be fixed on market days, town festivals or communal activities. For instance, the market day in Enugu communities falls after every four days. There was a time an activity had to be rescheduled due to a burial ceremony in the community. Sometimes, due to farming engagements, they may prefer weekends for project activities. It would be helpful to always be flexible.
- In terms of effective means of passing out information, town announcers are important. It is also a good idea to leverage on gatherings.

The organization looks forward for opportunities to expand the trainings in rural communities

CSAAE

When asked about the "AHA" moments in the project, they began by sharing that they discovered incessant human rights violations and police brutality and seeing more young people speak up and share their experiences rather than continuing in the culture of silence is a big deal for the project.

The platform created by the project empowered youth representatives from every LGA across the entire South-east, giving young people the opportunity to sit down, dialogue and negotiate terms for more peaceful co-existence between young people and law enforcement agencies, and this was another huge "aha" moment in the project life cycle.

The consultative forum with the Police authorities gave birth to enhanced access and, via a digital platform (WhatsApp), youth representatives can report incidences of police brutality and the Police representatives on their own part can expedite action to address such issues. Seeing resolutions via this network was also an "aha" moment as well for CSAAE.

Citizens Common

The project was built on the assumption that young people can move from reacting to events to taking more proactive measures. The "AHA" moments recounted include:

- The influx of applications for 20 youth representatives was overwhelming with over a thousand applications received. This demonstrated how young people are interested in driving positive change. To this end, the organization hosted resources so that those who couldn't make the cut still benefitted.
- The dedication and flexibility shown by young people was a real "Aha" moment as well. During the boot camp organized for the youth representatives, there was a sudden aviation sector strike and the young people were willing to alter travel plans and travel by road to attend the event.
- The hunger and passion for learning based on their personal experiences with police brutality as well as the ability to get bail for unlawfully detained ENDSARS protesters was another illuminating moment.

How has linking and learning has helped the organization?

The Program Manager attested to the fact that the connections made during the linking and learning events have really benefited the organization.

In the spirit of linking and learning, he shared that their organization has a co-working space in the heart of Abuja that other grantees can leverage on. Citizens Commons supports young people and start-ups with a hub for creation, empowerment and capacity building.

YSAD

How did the realities of the South-east region affect programming?

- The sit-at-home order every Monday, issued by the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB), affected project activities greatly. There were also further sit-at-home disruptions determined randomly by IPOB to the extent that there were instances of up to 3 sit-at-home days per week. This made planning and execution difficult and cumbersome.
- Political events have also had an effect. For instance the elections in Anambra State greatly affected planned activities in the neighboring states like Abia and Imo to the extent that

project activities needed to be shifted.

- The team has also observed that as much as the public is afraid of the police, the police officers themselves are afraid for their safety in civilian gatherings. An example was shared of a police officer who said, "Hope I will be safe" when told the program would be delayed for thirty minutes. These realities have made it necessary to ensure that the timing of programs were punctual and ended early due to security and safety concerns in the region.
- The inflation rate affected prices thus affecting program activities negatively. Having some flexibility in budgeting and financing could help the program adjust to the economic reality of the day.

Thoughts on sustainability

- The organization has helped set up a committee of stakeholders that will continue as a working group to help stem the tide of police extortion
- The National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) has self-initiated town hall meetings with the security agencies to enhance and maintain the collaboration stared during the project

FOSER

- In sharing their major setbacks, the FOSER team gave a summary of their rightsholders which includes a youth group called "yan sarasuka", young people with disabilities and students of tertiary institutions. The intervention idea for these different groups of young people is to provide a platform for them to reason together, share their experiences, and change the narrative, by educating them on their rights and how to seek justice so as to chart a course of action that caters to their realities.
- The project manager shared an incident of a young lady on her way to attend a project activity who was taken off her requested route by the bike rider. When she accosted him, he threatened that if she didn't pay five times the amount for the fare, he would claim that she had "blasphemed" the Prophet and she would be lynched to death. He shared that such cases were rampant and there is the need to establish a track record of reporting such cases and ensuring the protection of the victims from further attacks.
- There was also the challenge of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) prolonged strike action which has affected the participation of university students. The team improvised by engaging students from other tertiary institutions such as the College of Education and the State Polytechnic.

In terms of successes and future outlook

- The speaker observed that many of FOSERs rightsholders are now better informed to be able to demand for their rights.
- There was an evident increased use of social media to garner support and share experiences, updates and learnings.
- The project plans to continue to engage gang leaders and ensure positive reinforcement through their networking with other young people.

Youth Hub Africa
- In response to the setbacks the team underwent, the team started by sharing how the country's focus shifted rapidly away from police brutality to politicking. This reality made engaging with government stakeholders pretty difficult.
- Securing the buy-in of government stakeholders and getting their formal commitment is a long process. During the implementation of this project, the team had been trying to get the National Human Rights Commission to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) so that young people can leverage on the platform of the NHRC to get justice for police brutality related rights infringements
- Another challenge is the widely held assumption that the issue of police brutality is solely a police affair. More people need to realize that police brutality is a multisectoral and multi stakeholder affair.
- Another issue is the poor collaboration and coordination between affected government agencies which heightens public distrust in addressing police brutality.

Street Project Foundation
- As an overview, ARTvocacy is a project that uses creative arts as a tool to mobilize young people to pay attention and take action for the things that matter most to them using their creative platforms as a vehicle for self-expression.
- In responding to how the organization has been affected by Voice, Ezenwa of SPF stated that the Voice program helped their organization leap from "local obscurity to global relevance". SPF now have government and other partners requesting to work with them
- SPF are 2021 recipients of the United Nations Intercultural Innovation Award for their efforts in mobilizing young people from different ethnic and religious groups across Nigeria towards a common goal of social justice advocacy using the creative arts.
- They also shared many other success stories of cohorts from their programmes which include:
    - Uzoamaka Asiegbu, a rightsholder, has been selected to represent Nigeria for the Pan-African Youths with Disability Leadership program in Ethiopia.
    - Pelemo Nyajo, a rightsholder, has been selected by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands for their global youth advisory board.
    - Michal Ogbochukwu, a rightsholder, won a national photography competition organized by the Nigerian Sovereign Wealth Fund and the Office of the Vice President. His entry focused on the resilience of Nigerian youth in the Covid-19 pandemic.

How linking and learning has helped the organization:
The platform has helped them build relationships and expanded their networks to the extent that they still collaborate with past and present Voice grantees.

Open Space sessions 1: Small learning groups for open discussions on specific topics.

Kaseina introduced the 'Open Space Sessions' to participants, where the entire house would be broken up into smaller discussion groups focusing on specific topics related to Voice program work. The topics for this first episode and the respective discussion group leads were as follows:

Data visualization: Seun, Cognito
How to develop a toolkit: Micheal, Capio
Youth engagement: Hassan, YHA
Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning: Cedric Oworu, Oxfam

Some highlights from this session:

**On Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning**
- Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) can be said to be the 'Police' of programming, in the words of Cedric Oworu, who facilitated the M&E open session. The term police is basically used because M&E provides for 'accountability' of the programme.
- Evaluation is paramount because it helps maintain focus on goals and objectives of the project without deviations. It is therefore safe to say that 'Evaluation is the project check system that assesses the health of the programme'
- M&E starts its journey from a Learning Question (LQ) which is an enquiry you have about the intended project/initiative that will be answered via data gathered during the life-cycle of your project implementation.
- LQs guides the Baseline assessment. A Baseline Assessment is an assessment carried out at the beginning of a project to understand the context or identify the needs of the target population in order to fashion out a strategic focus on the project.
- From a learning question, instruments of measurement called key indicators are derived. For example, the Centre for Ability, Rehabilitation and Empowerment (CARE) in its project called 'Accessible Aviation', seeks to figure out how to address inaccessible airports for people with disabilities (PWDs). Key Indicators (KI) for this project include - availability of electronic carriers in airports, training of airport workers, favorable policies by relevant authorities amongst others.

On Data Visualization
- Four Principles of Data Visualization were discussed:
  - **Think about your audience:** When preparing our data for visuals, the target audience should greatly be considered as various audiences have different data visuals that help communicate better. A school might have different visual preferences over a bank and so on.
  - **Research and data validation:** Present accurate and up-to-date information.
  - **Identify the key message:** All data visuals must have a central message that is being communicated and therefore identifying what we want to pass across to our audience should be clearly listed as this will serve as a guide to the data tools and visual elements that can help deliver them.
  - **Select the best visual elements:** Charts, Graphs, Icons, Photographs, Graphics etc.

On Youth Engagement:

- Young people continue to remain a driving force towards achieving the goals of organizations, the sustainable development goals, and contributing largely to the development of a society.

- Yiaga started as a youth-led and youth-focused organization that works on youth issues, governance and development programs targeted mainly at young people. Yiaga supports young candidates to run for office, and also led the campaign for the "Not Too Young to Run" bill. The Run To Win, which supports young people to run for electoral office, is currently a Voice-funded project implemented by Yiaga Africa.

- During the conversation, we learnt that NINE had supported the establishment of hubs in Nigeria, which had helped young people—who are the primary users of these innovation hubs—grow and build their capacities, and in turn brought more innovations from young people.

- As facilitators of the Voice project in Nigeria, Cognito supports youth-focused projects implemented by grantees, which includes CSAAE's Youth Anchors program, the ARTvocacy project by Street Project Foundation (SPF), the Speak Up, Stand Out (SUSO) program by NGYouthSDGs.

- NGYouthSDGs works with young people in four thematic areas; education, employment, governance, peace and security, through the 'Speak Up, Stand Out' (SUSO) program, a Voice-funded program where young people are encouraged to be change makers and advocates in their society.

- FOSER educates and enlightens young people to know about their rights to end police brutality.

- Youth engagement is critical for projects and organizations as youths bring in their passion, enthusiasm, voice and vigor to ensure project goals are actualized

VOICE Linking & Learning 3 - Workshop Report, June 2022
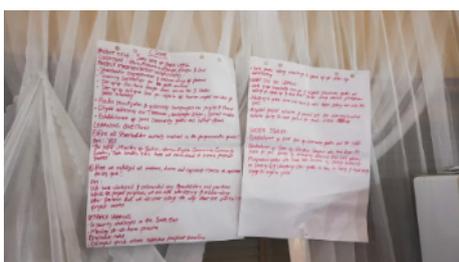
COP activities update - Elderly Care

After the first round of the open space sessions, Dewdrop Foundation, represented by Nkemka Nwobu and Coalition of Societies for the Rights of Older Persons in Nigeria, represented by Senator Ajoku, presented an update of the activities of the Community of Practice (COP) on Elder-care.

Highlights from this session include:

- The Elderly Cop leveraged on their network in COSROPIN (Coalition of Societies for the Rights of Older Persons in Nigeria) to carry out their learning project of commissioning a research on the status of eldercare in Nigeria.
- The unavailability of data on eldercare in Nigeria made it difficult to advocate effectively and was recognized as an activity that was worth the effort. For the CoP, this is a stepping stone for the continued advocacy on issues affecting the elderly across the country.
- Sharing highlights on their advocacy successes, the Chairman of COSROPIN, Senator Eze Ajoku, shared that the National Assembly has approved the passage of the Older Persons (Rights and Privileges) Bill 2020.
- The bill is currently awaiting assent by the President. Key provisions of the bill include ensuring that older persons enjoy the right to adequate standard of living, including the right to healthcare, food, water, clothing and housing and to improve their living conditions without discrimination on the basis of age.
- When passed into law, the bill shall ensure the provision of seats in walkways, other public facilities specifically designed for the comfort of older persons.

Open Space sessions 2: Communities of Practice

The second open space session was focused on the Voice Communities of Practice. Here the house broke up into four groups, each of which deliberated on the following COP thematic areas:

> Technology for Development
> Elderly Care
> Women and Youth
> Social Justice
> Open Governance and Institutional Partnerships
> Persons With Disability

Some highlights from this session:

Community of Practice on Elderly Care
- This session had representatives from Dewdrop Foundation, ACHA, COSROPIN and Mother Hen

- The group discussed current planned activities as well as sustainability plans
- *Current plans* include plans to strengthen advocacy to identified key players, and increase awareness and sensitization to rightsholders and other stakeholders.
- *Sustainability plans* include building capacities through webinar (COSROPIN hosts webinars monthly), development of resources on issues of elderly persons, collaborations with youth-centred organizations such as YouthHub Africa to help spread resources and knowledge of elderly issues to the youth population, creation of social activities around older persons to ensure participation and inclusion, establishment of a 'Seenagers' Association for elderly people across all regions and continuous stakeholder engagement to drive the goals of the COP.

Community of Practice on Women and Youth

- Organizations represented during the open space sessions were Street Project Foundation (SPF), Connected Development (CODE), Boys Quarters Africa, Carmelite Prisoners' Interest Organizations (CAPIO), Nigeria Youth SDGs (NGYouthSDG), and Cognito.
- COP members reviewed their existing learning questions and finally agreed on these two *learning questions*, 'How do we shape their mindsets of rightsholders in creating sustainable solutions to their unique problems?' and 'how do we amplify their voices to engage key stakeholders?'.
- The COPs *learning activities* will include capacity-building sessions for grantees and a monthly meeting scheduled to hold every last Friday of the month.
- To create more awareness, sensitization and amplify the voices of the rightsholder involved, the COP also decided to hold major activities on International Days with August 12 (International Youth Day) and November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) as the focal days.
- Video documentaries and the SDGs playbook are part of the learning products that will be produced by the COP.
- The group also discussed *sustainability plans* and ended on this agreeable fact: "Ending discrimination, violence and human rights violations against women and youth is a never-ending task, and if we have to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, women and youth cannot be left behind."

Community of Practice on Open Governance and Institutional Partnerships

- Open Governance is the process of demanding accountability from office holders.
- **Learning Agenda:** Better accountability practices in Governance
- **Learning Question:**
  - How do more Nigerian Youths understand the concept of Governance?
  - How can we improve the process of demanding accountability for Nigerian Youths?
  - How can we Nigerians be more sensitized about the improved accountability process?
- **Learning activities**
  - Design graphics with short messages with what Governance is
  - Radio activities for sensitization
  - Use of Ambassadors in radio programs
  - Leverage on civic technological tools to inform youths on the right info on how to demand for

accountability
- **Learning knowledge product:**
  - Directory of names of FCT Area council (know your Reps campaign)
- **Sustainability plan**
  - Making the directory publicly available and continuously updating it.

People with Disabilities Community of Practice (COP)
- The members include CARE, CCD, FOSER and MDF(Mother Hen Development Foundation)
- **Learning Questions**
  - How can we get stakeholders to mainstream PWDS in their activities and programs?
  - How do we use innovation to bring in awareness creation?
  - How do we get PWDS to get ownership?
- **Learning Activities**
  - We identified stakeholders across the federal government, state government, private agencies, community & faith-based organizations and households.
  - *The following are the learning activities:*
    - Advocacy and sensitization of relevant stakeholders.
    - Training session on disability act.
    - Webinar for the larger voice program on disability Act and creation of awareness on the
    - inclusive environment.
    - Training on the right terminology for PWDS.
    - Capacity Building on Leadership for PWDS.
    - Training session for media.
- **Learning Knowledge Products**
  - Printed (IEC) materials
  - Webinar
  - Jingles
- **Sustainability Plan**
  - Partnership with relevant stakeholders;
  - VOICE funded COP

Community of Practice on Technology for Development
- This group had representatives from Citizens Commons, Cognito, Integriti, Gender Mobile Initiative
- **Learning Question**
  - How can the COP support the Voice community to enhance their work through technology?
- **Learning Activities**
  - Conduct research with all old and current voice grantees, to understand how their different projects use technology as a tool to enhance their work.
- **Learning Knowledge Product**
  - Compendium of best practices in using technology for development.

- **Sustainability Plans** would be developed in the course of the project.

Community of Practice on Social Justice

This session had representatives from Dewdrop Foundation, ACHA, COSROPIN and Mother Hen.

VoiceNaija Update and Feedback Session

This session gave participants an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the digital platform created to enhance linking and learning among Voice grantees. Cognito/Nine, being the facilitators of the digital platform, was also able to give feedback to grantees on various aspects of the platform including utilization, engagement, etc.

Awards were given to grantees based on several categories of interactions with the platform for example, most consistent user, users with the highest number of posts and so on.

Key takeaways from the session include:

- On boarding of new profiles
- Post notifications via email is good and useful.
- Efforts should be made by grantees to review posts for quality before uploading to the platform.
- How can non-grantees have access? This was discussed.
- Does the platform have the ability to share and re-share posts?
- Can posts be shared easily on social media? Yes, paste link to re-share
- There should be a VOICE NAIJA social media profile.
- Capacity building sessions on how to make and share better content/posts should be considered, e.g how to create simpler content, how to create catchy headings.
- Will grantees whose grant cycles have finished still be able to access the site? Yes.
- Uploading content on the platform should be improved with a view to making it easier to navigate, edit posts and upload.
- A participant complained that there was no more space for pictures.
- Content filters and approval – the ability to make comments should be accessible to all.
- Social media sharing features should be considered as an upgrade to the site (e.g. send post to facebook).

Facilitated Discussion on Political Education and Electoral Campaigns

A session to reflect on political education, voter engagement and electoral campaigns, was anchored by Ijeoma (Oxfam) and Sani (Yiaga). The session aimed to tease out ideas and concepts with potential to be supported by Voice, to support a smooth transition of government come 2023. After a talk by Ijeoma and a presentation by Yiaga, the floor was opened for contributions and many views were shared. Some key contributions were:

- How can the integrity and accountability of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) be challenged? This may present an opportunity for intervention.
- Concerning budgeting to carry out the general elections, the projections are usually done per voter multiplied by the population. Over time, the turnout of voters is much lower than the projection so what happens to the excess which is not utilized? How can INEC be held to account for unspent funds to enhance transparency (INEC Audit).
- It may be helpful to track the performance of youth legislators in order to use that as a selling point for why young people should be entrusted with power. It would also help to build the capacity of youth in active politics so they are able to withstand the wiles of the older 'veteran' politicians.
- The two major political parties are notorious for flaunting provisions of the electoral act with no repercussions. What can be done about this?
- Why is INEC a part of the presidency? Currently, this means that their mandate comes directly from the office of the President. This should be changed so that they are fully independent and autonomous enough to carry out their functions without interference.
- It has been observed that political parties deploy party agents who have no knowledge of the provisions of the electoral act or even the electoral process to polling units. More work needs to be done in this regard.
- On the issue of youth candidacy and participation, how can the results of young people be demonstrated so as to open up more opportunities for them? Can young people be profiled positively? What accountability mechanism can be put in place for young political office holders and candidates?
- In terms of vote buying and electoral violence, what can be done? This usually discourages the voting public from coming out to participate so they are not caught in the crossfire of election day violence.
- Election violence and political oppression exists because young people are willing tools in the hands of mischievous politicians. How can young people who have a huge population be supported to recognize their place and take over power?
- Creating structures and systems for the emergence of good candidates among young people is a key area that should be looked into.
- Proposed key message for young people for this season: "Election is just for one day, Accountability is forever"
- It is vital to carry out massive awareness creation in rural communities so they understand the issues and desist from selling their votes to the highest bidder.
- The role of the judiciary in overturning electoral mandates play a huge role in election malpractice.

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There is a need for civil society to engage with the judiciary particularly on how their role in election tribunals affects political outcomes.

In terms of the linking and learning component, the following were suggested:

- Document project processes, consultations and learnings and publish.
- Prepare towards 2027 by using 2023 as a mock exam: What assumptions are being made? How will it play out in 2023? What are the findings? How can we be strategic for 2027?
- Seven election cycles have been wasted since 1993 which were adjudged free and fair. What are the emerging challenges? What are the opportunities? What trends exist?
- Deepen civic education with emphasis on constitutional amendments for a more just society.
- As we think ahead, what can we do to address ballot snatching, vote buying and electoral rigging?

Concrete things to do beyond elections that still affect the elections:

- How can we promote issues-based politicking?
- Can we organize better debates for candidates vying for electoral offices? The outcome can be used to engage the electorate and hold the candidates accountable
- How can we ensure that beyond PVC collection, youth actually turn out to vote?
- How can people be encouraged not to give up even after election results have been announced? (Malawi 2020 polls is a case in point)
- Civil society can engage candidates based on thematic areas they hold dear and use it to hold them accountable.
- There is a need to test-run the electoral act, and to intensify voter education.
- VOICE needs to start engaging with political parties directly.
- Election Monitoring: Can VOICE be part of electoral monitoring processes? This might not be possible because INEC has to certify, although VOICE can leverage on YIAGA Africa because they have this approval from INEC already.
- Invest in teenagers by carrying out specialized civic education in formats they respond to like graphics, animations, comics etc in order to catch them young. Create tool kits for ages 13 -17 years. Civic Education should be broken down to terms understandable by different age groups and demography. Messages drafted will make that target population think well about their political choices.
- Youths make up the predominant age demographic in Nigeria and so youth-focused programs need to be a priority to enable youths make the right decisions. For instance, to get the attention of the youths in thinking rightly about their political choices, the use of music, arts, and popular Nigerian slangs are essential e.g. the current trend of 'émilokan'.
- Creation of new habits to replace the old e.g. there should be a replacement of "use of money to buy the hearts of youths".
- Rants about constitutional gaps on social media using guerrilla or ambush marketing tactics.

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Closing

The two day Linking and Learning workshop came to an end after an exhilarating and mind opening time of sharing, learning, networking and brainstorming for impact. Participants left the workshop venue to the hotel where the final close out activities of the event would take place.

4. Unwinding with a 90's themed party

As a way to unwind and shake off the tension of work, a 90's themed party was organized for participants. Everyone came in looking like they stepped out of a time machine adorned in 'old-school' attire and accessories while matching 90's music was the sound of the evening.

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