



2019 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION SUSTAINABILITY INDEX

For Sub-Saharan Africa: Nigeria
September 2020



Cover Photo: A group of youth gather at a free WIFI spot to access the internet in Maputo, Mozambique in March 2020. USAID is developing programs in several countries, mainly in Africa, to promote universal internet access. The program enables free access to information for young people who may not have the financial resources to access the internet otherwise, thereby helping them to participate in democratic processes, practice citizenship, and exercise their right to information.

Photo Credit: Gideon Américo Muiambo, representative of the Movement for the Prevention of Crime (MHPC)

This photo was a submission in the 2020 USAID Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance photo contest.

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For Nigeria

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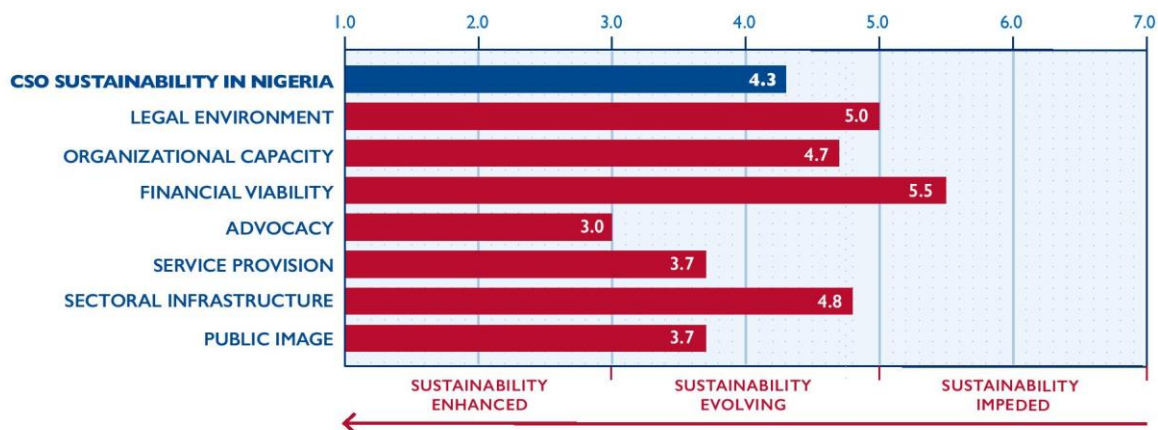
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OVERALL CSO SUSTAINABILITY: 4.3



Presidential and National Assembly elections took place in Nigeria on February 23, 2019, followed by governor and state assembly elections on March 9. President Muhammadu Buhari was re-elected for a second four-year term. Voter turnout was lower than in previous years, and voting was generally peaceful, although several incidents of violence were reported. CSOs worked with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to conduct voter education before and during the elections, and they observed the voting process.

Nigeria continued to face severe security challenges in 2019. Boko Haram and other insurgent groups killed more than 640 civilians in armed attacks and suicide bombings in the Northeast, according to the United Nations (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Kidnappings and banditry spiked throughout the North, and Boko Haram abducted six international aid workers in Borno State, five of whom were later released. In August, the military withdrew from areas of conflict into consolidated camps, leaving more than 220,000 people without protection. In this fragile security situation, OCHA reported that more than 7 million people were in urgent need of assistance, 1.8 million people were internally displaced, and 823,000 people were inaccessible to humanitarian actors. CSOs continued to distribute materials and provide services throughout the country to complement government and international relief efforts.

Nigeria’s economy improved marginally in 2019. The annual growth rate of the gross domestic product increased slightly to 2.27 percent, but inflation remained high, posting at 11 percent in the first half of the year, according to the World Bank. About one quarter of the working-age population was unemployed, and almost half of the population lived in extreme poverty. Nigeria ranked 152 out of 157 countries in the World Bank’s 2018 Human Capital Index, which measures the ability of countries to mobilize their populations’ economic and professional potential.

Overall CSO sustainability in Nigeria improved slightly in 2019. Four dimensions showed improvement, while one recorded a decline. CSO advocacy and service provision were moderately stronger, thanks to several important advocacy successes and the provision of a number of new services, including services related to the elections. CSOs’ organizational capacity improved slightly as the sector mobilized large numbers of temporary staff and volunteers during the elections. CSOs also enjoyed a more positive public image thanks to media coverage of their election-related activities. However, the legal environment deteriorated slightly after two state governments introduced stringent new requirements and the federal government reintroduced the CSO Regulatory Commission Bill. CSOs’ financial viability and sectoral infrastructure were unchanged.

Nigeria has a diverse CSO sector, which includes more than 500,000 organizations registered at national, state, and local levels. More than 93,000 national-level CSOs were registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) in 2019. It is difficult to ascertain the total number of CSOs registered at state and local levels, as they register with different agencies. Many organizations operate without formal registration.

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 5.0



The legal environment for CSOs deteriorated slightly in 2019 as the House of Representatives reintroduced the CSO Regulatory Commission Bill, Borno State enacted a stringent new law affecting CSOs, and Akwa Ibom State introduced new requirements for CSO registration.

The laws regulating the registration of national CSOs did not change in 2019. National CSOs are required to register with the CAC, as provided in Part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) of 1990. Most CSOs register as incorporated trustees or, less often, companies limited by guarantee. National-level CSOs continued to register easily through the CAC's online platform in 2019. Although all national CSOs must also register with the Special Control Unit Against Money Laundering, which monitors for the financing of

terrorism and money laundering, most organizations fail to do so because of poor enforcement and difficulties in dealing with the unit. In a practice that has existed for many years, CSOs must also register with certain ministries that they work with, such as those for women's affairs and the environment. In a recent trend, other federal and state ministries, such as the ministries for health and education, are also asking CSOs working with them to register for a fee in an effort to generate revenue. Foreign CSOs register with the CAC and National Planning Commission. No organization is known to have been denied registration in 2019.

The CSO Regulatory Commission Bill was reintroduced to the House of Representatives for its first reading in the last quarter of 2019. The law is ostensibly meant to ensure transparency and accountability in the CSO sector and curb the financing of terrorism. However, CSOs complained that if passed into law, the bill will stifle the operations of organizations that are critical of the government, since it provides for legislative scrutiny of CSOs' activities, establishes codes of conduct to guide CSO operations, and creates a CSO database that would require CSOs to renew their registrations and, CSOs believe, could be used to deny registration to organizations that the government does not like. The bill met with strong opposition in the House and was withdrawn in March 2020.

In November 2019, a bill prohibiting hate speech was reintroduced to the Senate after it had been withdrawn in June. The bill prohibits abusive, threatening, and insulting behaviors without clearly defining them. Most CSOs oppose the bill, arguing that if it is passed into law, it could be used to restrict critical views and satire and thereby constrain freedom of expression as guaranteed in Section 39 of the constitution. CSOs also called for the withdrawal of the so-called social media bill introduced in November, which intends to curb the spread of false news on the internet. CSOs saw the bill as an effort to suppress the right to freedom of expression. Both bills were still under consideration at the end of the year.

Most state and local CSOs continued to operate without formal registration in 2019. In December 2019, the Borno state government enacted a new law establishing the Borno State Agency for Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Response, which the state government claimed will address gaps in humanitarian response. According to CSOs, the law is meant to stifle their operations, as it requires all CSOs operating in the state to obtain letters of introduction from the Office of the National Security Adviser in Abuja, register online even if they have previously registered, and obtain clearances for all employees to work in the state. CSOs are also required to remit to the agency 1 percent of all grants received. CSOs fear that the state government intends to use the new agency not only to boost its revenues but also to control the activities of organizations perceived to be critical of the government. Although the Borno state government has yet to enforce the new law, international CSOs are not willing to remit 1 percent of their grants to the government. The EU and other development partners operating in the state sought to explain to the government that their activities benefit the state and this provision should be reconsidered. In Akwa Ibom State, the governor's special assistant on multilateral and donor agencies mandated that all CSOs operating in the state must register with the state Ministry of Economic Development and Ibom Deep Seaport. This trend is expected to continue across the country in 2020.

Otherwise, CSO operations did not change significantly in 2019. Existing laws allow CSOs to operate freely, although the constitution permits the government to disallow or restrict CSOs' protests or assemblies if they are perceived to threaten public peace or order. Few incidents of state harassment of CSOs took place in 2019. In September, the federal government banned the international organizations Action Against Hunger and Mercy Corps from operating in the Northeast with allegations that they supported insurgents. The ban was subsequently lifted in October after the UN intervened to strengthen coordination and partnership between development partners in the Northeast and the Nigerian government. In the period leading up to the general elections in February, governments at both the national and state levels restricted civic space by arresting and detaining individuals, especially journalists who expressed views critical of the government. Amnesty International reported that at least nineteen journalists were harassed between January and September. In Cross Rivers State, a journalist was detained for reporting on alleged corrupt practices involving state government personnel. He was released in February 2020.

CSOs continued to enjoy exemptions from income tax except on income earned through business activities, as provided in Section 23(c) of the Company Income Tax Act of 2004. CSOs are legally able to establish social enterprises, engage in fundraising, receive grants from foreign donors, and compete for government contracts. The government contracts with CSOs largely for service provision, including research, monitoring and evaluation, and capacity building.

Legal advice for CSOs is available in major cities. Legal services sometimes entail modest fees, especially in the case of new organizations seeking help with registration. The Legal Aid Council continues to provide pro bono legal services to the sector. Other human rights CSOs providing legal services to CSOs and the public include Lawyers Alert, Human Rights Law Service, and Legal Defense and Assistance Project.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 4.7

CSOs' organizational capacity improved slightly in 2019 as organizations showed they were able to mobilize large numbers of well-qualified temporary staff and volunteers to implement election-related activities.

Nigerian CSOs typically enjoy good relationships with their constituencies, although in the Northeast, problems persisted. Many organizations, including the Policy and Legal Advocacy Center (PLAC), Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN), and CLEEN Foundation, effectively engaged their constituencies on voter education and security issues in 2019. Through the Nigeria Policing Program, PWAN facilitated the establishment of a technical working group in which CSOs cooperated with the police and other security agencies to coordinate election-related security management, thereby deepening trust between the two sides. However, in the Northeast, local communities continued to mistrust international CSOs. In December, to encourage community acceptance of international CSOs, the Borno state government enacted a law requiring international CSOs to employ natives of the state in intermediate and junior positions. Through OCHA, the humanitarian community submitted a joint statement to the state government in which they pledged to provide capacity development and other support to local staff. While claiming that 90 percent of their staff in the state in 2018 were Nigerians, international CSOs also stated that staff recruitment must be performed appropriately and with due consideration to technical capacity, safety, and other concerns.

Partly because of dwindling funding, most CSOs have tried to develop strategic plans to fulfill donors' requirements and thereby win grants. CSO observers reported an overall increase in strategic planning in 2019. However, most CSOs still do not implement their plans fully because of capacity and resource constraints.

Most CSOs continued to operate without properly constituted boards in 2019. In Borno, local CSOs often do not understand the roles of boards, and board engagement is limited as a result. A few large CSOs in major cities, such



as the Center for Democracy and Development (CDD) and Center for Research and Documentation (CRD), have active boards, with board members contributing to strategic planning and working with management to ensure that organizational activities are in line with the plans. As donors continue to demand transparency and accountability in CSO operations, some organizations have begun to activate their boards to ensure that they operate in a more transparent manner. Most CSOs comply with donors' contractual agreements, which usually oblige organizations not to use grants for purposes other than those stipulated in agreements or to use information for other projects without donor consent.

Only a few CSOs are able to maintain permanent paid staff, and most CSOs rely on temporary staff and volunteers. Staff attrition from local CSOs increased in 2019 as funding constraints prompted employees to move to international organizations or the civil service. Local CSOs that lost staff were often proud that their former staff were sufficiently skilled to represent the sector's interests in the government or with international CSOs. In the South East and South South, CSOs continued to experience difficulties engaging permanent paid staff, and some organizations had to lay off staff because of the lack of funding.

Despite funding constraints, the professional quality of CSO staff is increasing thanks to the influx of university graduates as temporary staff and of volunteers with specializations that are directly relevant to the work of their organizations. In 2019, CSOs effectively mobilized large numbers of temporary staff and volunteers to conduct voter education and observe the election process. For example, Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth, and Advancement (YIAGA Africa) engaged 48 state focal persons, 774 local government supervisors, and more than 3,000 observers at polling units during the elections. The Situation Room, a platform of more than seventy CSOs led by PLAC, deployed 4,000 field observers in addition to the more than 20,000 field observers mobilized by its member and partner organizations. CDD also engaged 3,500 field observers during the elections.

The CSO sector slightly increased its use of technology in 2019. Many CSOs at the national and state levels used the internet and cell phones to observe and report activities during the elections. The use of social media such as Facebook and WhatsApp increased, especially during the elections, when CSOs used social media tools to educate voters. Connectivity challenges continued to hamper internet access by CSOs in rural areas. Large CSOs continued to have modern office equipment, such as computers, printers, and scanners, while smaller organizations were less well equipped.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 5.5



CSOs' financial viability did not change in 2019. Dwindling donor funds and the effects of a weak national economy were offset by some success with local fundraising and social enterprises.

Large CSOs have access to multiple grants, but diversification is still limited, as the sector relies largely on foreign support. Major donors to CSOs include USAID, the United Kingdom's (UK) Department for International Development (DFID), European Union (EU), MacArthur Foundation, and UN agencies such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP). Funding from USAID declined slightly in 2019. A substantial portion of U.S. support went to humanitarian response, health, population, and governance. USAID's state-to-state project, which was scheduled to start in 2019, did

not begin as planned. DFID's aid to Nigeria rose by 8 percent in 2019, although not all funded projects commenced in 2019. DFID funding went mostly to programs in health, government and civil society, and education. A few DFID-funded programs, such as the Nigeria Policing Program, will not continue after 2019.

Most foreign aid was channeled to the North, especially the Northeast, which has the highest poverty rates and lowest school enrolments in Nigeria. International CSOs continued to implement most projects in the Northeast directly, thereby restricting opportunities for local CSOs. Although international CSOs often bid for projects with local CSOs as implementing partners, local organizations are not often well compensated in these partnerships. A

few local CSOs in the Northeast obtained grants from the Emergency Food Intervention Fund for the Northeast, which provides food to internally displaced persons (IDPs). But most local CSOs were unable to tap into the fund because of its stringent funding conditions, which left OCHA implementing most of the fund's projects directly. Since it was an election year, the EU and UNDP provided short-term funding for CSO activities in voter education and elections observation.

Aid inflows to other parts of the country continued to decline in 2019. Most CSO projects in parts of the Northcentral region are self-funded because donors are absent in the region. CSO projects in some regions are funded through corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs. For example, in the South South region, multinational oil companies provide CSR funding to support community development in health, education, and infrastructure. CSOs work closely with the companies, communities, and the government to monitor the implementation of these projects. A few local foundations such as the TY Danjuma Foundation continued to support CSOs providing primary health care and education in 2019. However, more local foundations now implement their projects directly. For example, Dangote and Indimi Foundations provided direct support to IDPs in the Northeast.

CSOs are still unable to raise substantial amounts of funding locally, although they continue to try different approaches. Some organizations host talent shows or sporting events or use social media sites to appeal for funds. DJ Cuppy Foundation raised more than NGN 5 billion (nearly \$14 million) for victims of insurgencies in the Northeast through a fundraising event in Lagos. Professional associations such as the Academic Staff Union of Universities raise funds by collecting monthly dues from their members. A few CSOs use crowdfunding to raise funds. For example, in 2019, PWAN generated funds through crowdfunding to renovate classrooms in Adamawa State. Some foreign donors prevent local CSOs from using cash donations to add to foreign grants in implementing projects, which inhibits local fundraising. For example, in 2019, some individuals offered donations to PWAN for a project that it was implementing in northern Nigeria, but the main donor advised PWAN not to accept them.

CSOs continued to earn income from their products and services in 2019. For example, CLO provided mass transport services in parts of southern Nigeria, including Lagos, Port Harcourt, and Enugu. Other CSOs operated social enterprises to earn income, including the Women's Environmental Program (WEP), which has a social enterprise focused on renewable energy. CSOs such as the Peace Ambassadors Innovation Center in Borno, BudGIT in Lagos, and the Association of Women Farmers of Nigeria in Kano run businesses whose income is partly channeled to their primary activities. Some organizations offer mentoring, training, and research services for a fee. For example, PWAN earned income by training CSOs on communicating impact in 2019. However, the amounts raised through such activities are usually meagre compared to foreign grants.

The government does not offer grants to CSOs. A few government agencies award CSOs with contracts to provide services. For example, the Office of the National Security Adviser contracted with PWAN to train security operatives in the Northeast, Northcentral, and Northwest in 2019.

CSOs' financial management systems improved slightly in 2019, thanks to donors' ongoing insistence on transparency and accountability. CSOs increasingly rely on finance professionals, such as accountants, to manage donor funds and ensure adherence to donors' transparency and accountability standards. However, most state- and local-level CSOs do not access professional services because of the cost. Leading CSOs in major cities prepare annual reports, but the inclusion of financial statements in annual reports is not widespread.

ADVOCACY: 3.0

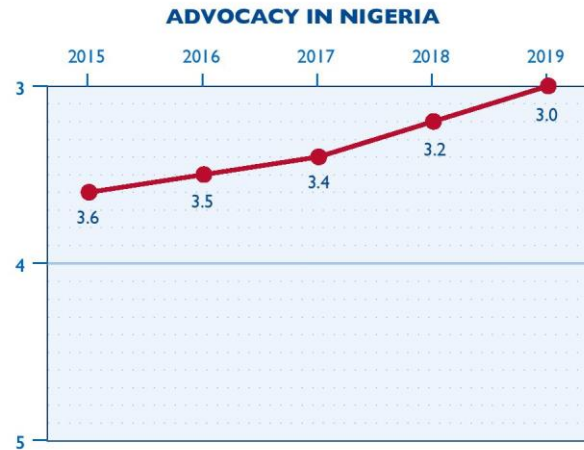
Advocacy improved moderately in 2019 as CSOs achieved several notable successes at the federal and state levels.

The 2019 general elections provided an opportunity for CSOs to collaborate effectively with the government at all levels. INEC worked closely with CSOs such as YIAGA Africa and CDD on voter education and election planning. The Center for Citizens with Disabilities, Inclusive Friends Association, and other CSOs persuaded INEC to make arrangements so that persons with disabilities could vote, and INEC provided braille ballot guides and posters for voters with visual or hearing impairments.

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) allowed CSOs to participate actively in the government budgeting process, including in Kaduna State, where CSOs participated in budget hearings for the first time. CSOs continued to take part in the DFID-supported Monitoring Recovered Assets in Nigeria through Transparency and

Accountability project, to ensure that recovered funds were used for development purposes. In Jigawa State, the Network of NGOs monitored cash disbursements to poor and vulnerable people, as provided in the state's social protection policy.

CSOs achieved several important advocacy successes in 2019. At the national level, the Nigeria Labor Congress influenced the government's decision to increase the national monthly minimum wage from NGN 18,000 (approximately \$50) to NGN 30,000 (\$84). As a result of advocacy by the Center for Citizens with Disabilities and the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities, the president assented to the Discrimination Against People with Disabilities Bill, which bars any form of discrimination against persons with disabilities by, for example, requiring all public buildings to be made easily accessible to the disabled.



Organizations such as League of Democratic Women (LEADS) in Kaduna were actively involved in the state and local fiscal transparency accountability and sustainability programs, which aim to strengthen transparency and accountability in state and local governments and ensure efficient service delivery. Women's rights CSOs in Ogun State prompted the government to appoint six women to state cabinet positions. After WEP pushed for the inclusion of more women in Benue State political offices, nine women were elected chairs of local governments and eleven others were appointed local government secretaries. CSO advocacy on security issues, especially kidnapping and banditry in Kaduna and Zamfara states, made the government pay more attention to these concerns.

CSOs effectively used the internet in their advocacy in 2019. CLEEN Foundation adopted software to monitor court proceedings on corruption cases and expose corrupt practices in the public sector. PWAN introduced the Court Observer app to report on court proceedings involving implementation of the Criminal Justice Act at the federal level and in Lagos and Ondo states. The Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation also sponsored an online anti-corruption platform. CSOs were able to use social media to allay public concerns during the elections, especially after the elections were postponed for a week because of logistical problems.

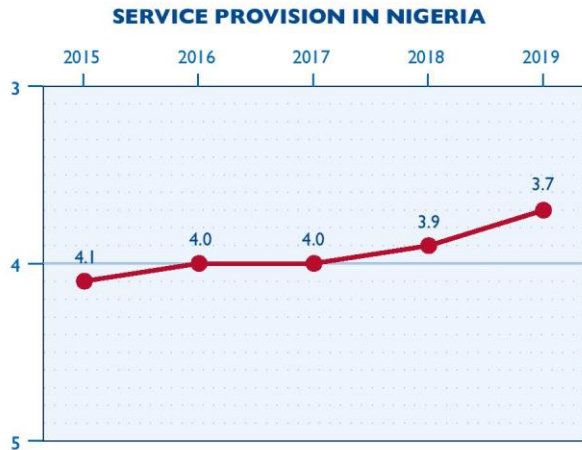
CSOs had several lobbying successes in 2019, especially at the state level. Thanks to CSO advocacy in Jigawa State, the state government signed onto the OGP and approved a social protection policy for poor and vulnerable populations. CSOs influenced the adoption of the federal disability law by Jigawa, Kaduna, and Kano states and the signing into law of the Yobe State Road Transport Agency Bill.

The CSO sector was not comfortable with legal reforms initiated by the government in 2019, including the CSO Regulatory Commission Bill. CSO groups and human right advocates such as Enough is Enough and Nigeria Union of Journalists openly criticized the bills and new requirements and lobbied against their adoption, accusing the government of trying to restrict their activities.

SERVICE PROVISION: 3.7

CSO service provision improved moderately in 2019. CSOs provided many services related to the 2019 elections, introduced several new services, and engaged actively in social service provision for IDPs in camps across the North. CSOs continued to fill the gap in social service provision caused by ongoing shortfalls in the national budget.

CSOs provided a wide range of services in 2019. For example, the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations of Nigeria provided services in early childhood educational development; the Civil Liberty Organization (CLO) provided transportation services to the mass transport service; WEP was active in renewable energy; and several CSOs in the Northeast provided humanitarian services to victims of the insurgency. CSO service provision expanded into a new area in 2019 as several organizations organized talent shows and boot camps for various causes. For example, the Grassroots Project for Good Governance organized a boot camp for good governance in



Advocacy Center, and Good Governance Team, organized election-related events. During the elections, most CSOs used social media and other apps to educate the public about the electoral process and observe the elections.

CSOs continued to provide services in response to the needs of their communities in 2019. Some CSOs, especially larger organizations, conducted baseline assessments to understand community needs. Local CSOs in the Northeast are beginning to negotiate with donors and international CSOs working in the region to ensure that their activities reflect the needs of target beneficiaries. However, Northeast communities often view international CSOs as agents of imperialism or business and believe that the missions of these organizations are at variance with their needs. CSO also tracked budget implementation and monitored projects to ensure that they were in line with the needs of beneficiaries. In Jigawa, a network of CSOs conducted townhall meetings to assess community needs and ensure that they were reflected in the state government's budgetary allocations for 2020.

In the Northeast, local CSOs partnered with international CSOs and the federal and state emergency management agencies to distribute relief materials to IDPs. In response to acute malnutrition among children in the region, local CSOs came up with locally made, ready-to-use therapeutic food. However, international CSOs were reluctant to adopt their products to replace similar products provided by the UN Children's Fund. WEP continued to provide solar dryers to fishers in Benue State.

In general, CSO services are not restricted to their members. Professional organizations such as the Nigeria Medical Association and Nigeria Bar Association continued to provide services to the public at large. The Academic Staff Union of Universities provided relief materials to IDPs in the Northeast. Most CSO publications are distributed to the public free of charge since they are donor funded. However, a few CSOs sell public documents online. CSOs at all levels in Nigeria provide services in a non-discriminatory manner.

CSOs sometimes recover the costs of services by charging fees, especially for services provided through their business entities. Otherwise, CSO services are usually donor funded and provided to beneficiaries at no cost.

Federal and state governments increasingly recognized CSOs in 2019, largely because they needed CSOs' support in the elections. At the national level, INEC recognized the value of CSOs in the electoral process and collaborated with them in election-related activities. In Kano, the anti-corruption programs of the Center for Democratic Studies were publicly praised by representatives of two federal agencies, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission, and the center was invited to take part in the anti-corruption efforts of the two agencies. In Abia State, the state government invited CSOs to contribute to budgetary process during public hearings, indicating its recognition of the value CSOs can add to the process.

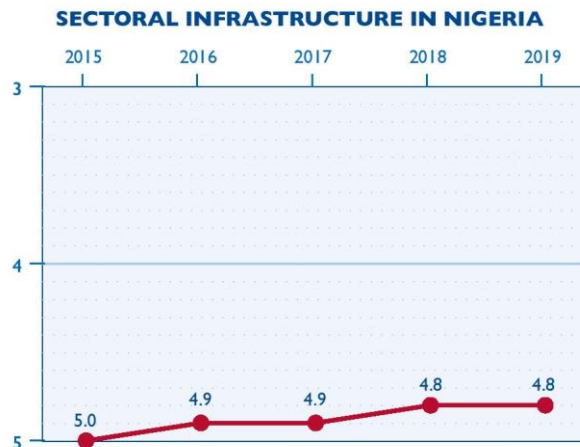
which participants received intensive coaching in a camp-like setting. In Enugu State, the Parent-Child Intervention Center provided psychosocial support to the public and safe spaces for the elderly. In collaboration with the Nigerian Correctional Services, PWAN provided services related to prison decongestion.

Many CSOs provided bespoke services to ensure a credible and transparent electoral process in 2019. In Kano, the Center for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) and Democratic Action Group organized voter education activities for youth, women, and the unemployed. YIAGA Africa organized several sensitization programs on the electoral process and observed voting on election days. Other organizations, including CDD, CLEEN Foundation, Policy and Legal

SECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE: 4.8

The infrastructure supporting CSOs in Nigeria was stable in 2019. CSOs continued to enjoy ample training opportunities and collaborated well within the sector.

CITAD, the Center for Leadership, Strategy and Development (Center–LSD), and the British Council continued to operate resource centers in 2019 that provided training in strategic planning, computer skills, and project management. Intermediary support organizations such as CDD, CLEEN Foundation, Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Center, and Center for Democratic Studies continued to provide CSOs with information and training. For example, the Center for Democratic Studies offered training to CSOs on budget tracking. ISOs and resource centers usually charge fees for their services to recover some of their operating costs. Their services generally meet the training needs of local CSOs, especially in fundraising and strategic planning.



Local grant making in the CSO sector did not change in 2019. Large CSOs, such as WEP, CLEEN Foundation, and CDD, continued to sub-grant to smaller CSOs, especially in communities in which they implemented projects. TY Danjuma Foundation continued to provide grants to local CSOs for projects in specific thematic areas such as health. Most local foundations implement their projects directly.

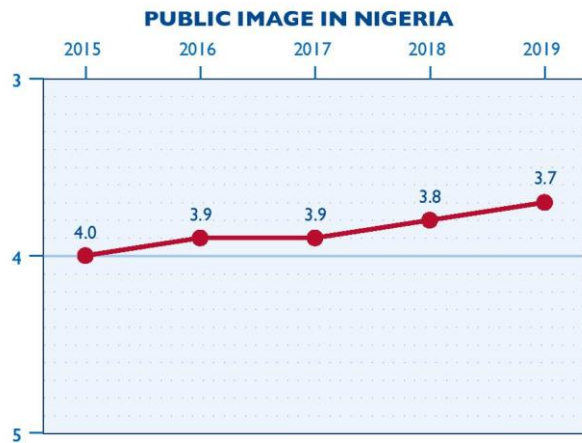
CSO coalitions such as the Situation Room, Nigeria Network of NGOs, and Kano Civil Society Forum continued to operate in 2019. At the national level, the Nigeria Network of NGOs facilitated information sharing among its members, and CSO networks in most states did the same. The Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All has a well-established governance structure at the national level and across the six geo-political zones, which facilitates synergy and contact among its more than 600 members working on educational issues. The Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development has more than 2,000 registered members working in areas such as empowerment, human rights protection, development, and peace in Nigeria.

As in 2018, training opportunities continued to be offered in major cities. For example, the Lagos Business School and Center–LSD provided training on strategic management and fundraising. The Center for Democratic Studies provided training on budget tracking. YIAGA Africa and many other large CSOs offered training on election observation. PWAN continued to provide capacity building to local CSOs working to curb corruption and also offered training on needs assessment. Trainings were usually tailored to CSOs' needs and were mostly available in major cities. Training materials were offered in English.

There was a slight improvement in the collaboration of CSOs with other sectors in 2019. Both the government and media recognized that partnerships with CSOs increase the effectiveness of activities to raise public awareness about issues such as the electoral process. At the federal level, many local CSOs worked with INEC to implement election-related activities, including voter education. Local CSOs in the Northeast provided hands-on support to the government in the distribution of relief materials in IDP camps. Jigawa and other states signed onto the OGP, which entailed working closely with CSOs in the budgeting process. PWAN partnered with the Nigeria Correctional Services on prison decongestion and with the Office of the National Security Adviser on capacity building for security personnel.

Local CSOs increasingly collaborated with the media in 2019. For example, YIAGA Africa formed a partnership with Channels TV on voter education; the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) cooperated with Africa Independent Television on election matters; and the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Center collaborated with journalists to report on corruption in Nigeria. CSOs continued to work with businesses to address community challenges in 2019. For example, First Bank Nigeria PLC worked with the International Women's Society and Vision Spring to provide 500 eyeglasses to widows on global Giving Tuesday. Through its Enabling NGOs for Success program, Union Bank provided support to thirty-seven CSOs across the country for community development projects.

PUBLIC IMAGE: 3.7



CSOs had a slightly more positive public image in 2019. Large CSOs such as WEP, YIAGA Africa, OSIWA, and PLAC enjoyed considerable media coverage in 2019. Although CSOs usually pay for media coverage, most media organizations, especially private outlets, covered CSOs' activities during the elections at little or no charge. Channels TV publicized WEP's solar dryers for free, and Freedom Radio in Kano and Solace Base, a YouTube channel, reported on the launch event for the *2018 CSO Sustainability Index* report for Nigeria at no charge. CSO practitioners also served as election analysts for many government and private media organizations. At the state level, government-owned television channels rarely reported on CSO activities for free. In Benue, the Nigerian Television Authority charged NGN 50,000 (approximately \$140) and NGN 100,000

(\$280) to cover CSO activities at the state and national levels, respectively. In Kano, CSOs enjoyed positive media coverage from nearly twenty media organizations, most of them private.

While CSOs are applauded in communities across most regions of Nigeria, in the Northeast, international CSOs are seen as agents of international imperialism or business rather than humanitarian service providers. Local CSOs have a good reputation in the Northeast and are trusted above the government because of their accessibility and prompt response to disasters.

The government and business sector regard CSOs largely as a source of expertise. Government agencies such as INEC and the Nigeria Correctional Services have positive perceptions of CSOs. However, the relationship between the Nigerian Army and international CSOs such as Mercy Corps and Action Against Hunger was still strained after the government accused the CSOs of being agents of instability and barred them from working in the Northeast. The government does not usually have a positive view of CSOs that are critical of its policies.

CSOs continued to raise awareness of their activities using various media in 2019. YIAGA Africa, CDD, PLAC, and other organizations relied on both mainstream and social media to educate voters about the electoral process. CSOs also used social media to build their image. Journalists continued to be involved in CSO activities in 2019. In most cases, they are members of CSO coalitions such as the Voice and Accountability Platform in Kano, which makes it easy for them to understand and cover CSOs' activities.

Nigerian CSOs have yet to institute a sector-wide code of ethics, even as they continue to resist government attempts to introduce new regulations and laws to govern the sector. Leading CSOs in major cities and some loose coalitions such as the Situation Room usually operate transparently and advocate for transparency among their members. Larger CSOs publish annual reports, but it is not a common practice among smaller CSOs at the state and local levels.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed herein are those of the panelists and other project researchers and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or FHI 360.

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