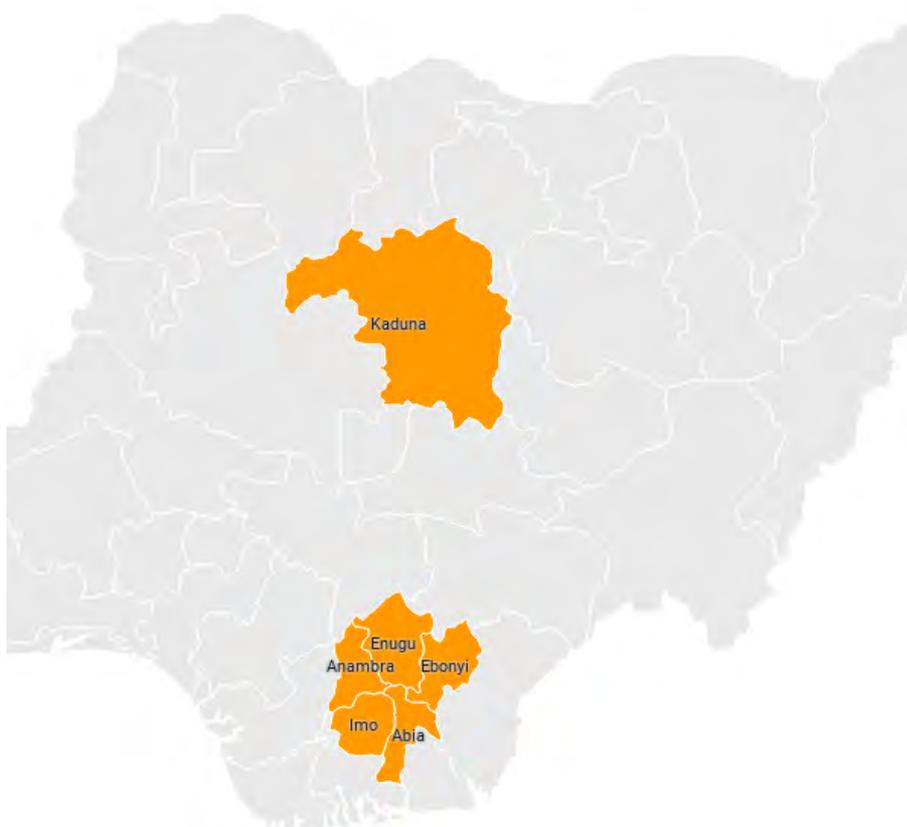


V2P VOICE TO THE PEOPLE

Making governance work for poor and marginalised people

Leaving no one behind

Extending V2P's reach into Kaduna and the Southeast region



V2P scale-up: key information

This extension draws on and scales up the learnings of the Voice to the People project in Anambra state. It builds on the successful model for community-driven voice and accountability programming.

Location: 6 communities within 3 local government areas (LGAs) in Kaduna; 18 communities within 9 LGAs in the Southeast

Duration: August 2016 - March 2018

Donor: UK Government's Department for International Development

More communities in Nigeria are being positioned for sustainable development as V2P extends into 24 communities in Kaduna and the Southeast region. The extension runs until March 2018, and will facilitate the provision of improved public services and infrastructure; a replication of the successes achieved in Anambra State.

With funding from UK aid, the initial phase of the project began in July 2013 and has shown remarkable progress in using the

rights-based approach to achieving development. Reaching 85,048 people within Anambra alone, this community-driven project supported individuals and groups to tackle high levels of poverty through demanding improved social services for poor and excluded groups.

The capacity of community members was built to influence change in local and state government practices, especially with regards to their responsiveness to citizens.

'Through the V2P project, we learnt how to demand our rights from government without fear,' explains the traditional leader of Amaetiti community. 'Since the coming of V2P, there has been a lot of improvement in our community. Our road was very bad. It is through V2P that we wrote letters and called on government, and they have awarded the contract and have already started work on the road.'

V2P aims to replicate such successes in its new target areas, and will replicate

its core approaches in Ebonyi, Imo, Abia and Enugu States to cover the Southeast region, expand its work in Anambra State, and adapt its approaches for Kaduna State. Through V2P's activities, more communities in Nigeria will be empowered to know and demand their rights from the government, demand improved services, and participate in decision making about community development issues in a bid to rise out of poverty.

Tax justice served in Mgbakwu community

Empowering community members to know their rights and demand accountability from their leaders is core to V2P.



It is back to business for the men and women of Mgbakwu community, thanks to tax justice advocacy

Most people living in rural communities in Nigeria are uninformed about their rights or are powerless to voice the issues they face. Over time, they have been deprived of basic benefits or short-changed in service delivery. Multiple and high taxation is also on the increase.

Mgbakwu community in Anambra State is no exception, but intervention from Justice Development and Peace Commission Awka through the V2P project has empowered the community members, especially youth, to engage government.

Mgbakwu community

youths led on advocating for subsidised business permits for shop owners in the community. Shop owners were previously charged as much ₦3,300 by the taskforce and had their shops closed for refusing to comply.

The advocacy was successful, and the charges were reduced to ₦1,500.

This drastic reduction has boosted economic activities in the community; shop owners who could not pay the high levies can now afford the more reasonable rates, and it has also reduced the level of unemployment as more traders are now actively engaged.

News in brief

Strengthening community engagement processes in Kaduna State

The project is being implemented in six communities across three local government areas, representing each of the senatorial districts of Kaduna State – Soba, Kaura and Kaduna South. To ensure effective programming and success in replicating the project in Kaduna despite significant differences in culture and context, Christian Aid is supporting its new partners' programmatic capacity through lessons learnt in the first stage of V2P.

One such capacity-building training event focused on effective community engagement processes to equip partners for a successful pilot phase. The aim of the training was to increase knowledge on how to effectively engage community members during community mobilisation, given that the V2P methodology had been tested in a different cultural context.

Safe spaces for women

The increased capacity and confidence of communities to demand for their rights and raise their voices in the face of injustice is playing a crucial role in their day-to-day lives.

Eucharika Akanite is a GEADOR facilitator, trained by Justice Development and Peace Commission Newi during the implementation of V2P1 in Ezinifite community of Anambra State. Through her experience, she has inspired other women to raise their voices against unfair practices. The safe space for women provided by GEADOR serves as a platform for women to share their experiences and build confidence through the experiences of others.

Gertrude Umeonyili, a recently trained community volunteer, attests that through the experience sharing and capacity building, the women have realised how much power they collectively hold.

GEADOR enables women to come together in a safe space to share issues that directly or indirectly affect them and jointly come up with solutions.

'Traders no longer opened their shops due to fear of the taskforce, but since the intervention of V2P, all the shop owners that closed their shops have re-opened,' said Anthony, secretary of the Mgbakwu youths.

The V2P project has successfully built the capacity of Mgbakwu

community members and equipped them in advocating and engaging with government to demand their rights.

The citizens are now aware that they have the power and a voice to speak up against practices that have a negative effect on the community.

Using radio to amplify the voices of the people

V2P has facilitated engagement of civil society organisations with public officials. One example of this is the inclusion of V2P partner Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) Onitsha as part of the Anambra State Health Ministry monitoring team. This team will work directly with the government ministry to ensure efficiency in service delivery.



Christian Aid/Tom Saater/Demofix

V2P's radio programme, anchored by partner JDPC Onitsha in the local language, has provided a platform for citizen–state engagement

An effective platform for citizen-state engagement has been radio. As one of the most accessible platforms for exchange of information, V2P has capitalised on its strength and reach in its target communities - through a weekly radio programme led by JDPC Onitsha - as it facilitates an improvement in service delivery.

The condition of health facilities in Anambra state

and the need for state monitoring of these facilities was raised as a concern by citizens during a visit to the radio programme by the Commissioner for Health in the state, Dr. Joe Akabuike.

A commitment was made to constitute a monitoring team which would include JDPC Onitsha as civil society representative for periodic monitoring exercises.

JDPC Onitsha's consistent

follow-up on this commitment has formed a major part of its advocacy for efficient and transparent monitoring of service delivery.

'JDPC is helping to keep us on our toes, to do what we are supposed to do. I urge them not to relent, but to continue being the voice to awaken us to our responsibility,' said Dr Joe.

The monitoring exercise will be carried out in all parts

of state. It will check the activities of illegal hospital operators and ensure compliance to healthcare service delivery standards. The exercise began in October 2016, and has so far sealed four illegal health facilities operated by quacks in most unwholesome environments. This work will result in standardising health facilities and improved healthcare for the citizens of Anambra State.

Breaking out of the gender box – redefining perceptions

It takes courage to challenge expectations and social norms, writes Kenny Oleru

‘Should men cry?’

My first response to this question asked at the V2P gender training was an emphatic ‘Yes’ – I mean why not? I still remember crying on my mother’s shoulders as an adult male. Oh, how relieved and consoled I felt. Except in the moments after, I was not so sure how I felt listening to other men in the room vehemently describe crying as a feminine trait.

The word ‘deviant’ was thrown around which made me feel like hiding instantly. I must be a weakling; not only did I cry, oh I cried on the shoulders of a woman. I am supposed to be the strong one, the source of inspiration, the pillar of the home. You can picture me hiding my face in

shame and deflation now. Something must be wrong with me!

And in a flash I was jolted back to reality by the voice of reasoning. My life, my rules! Societal influence and conventional gender roles play strategic roles in shaping the outlook, choices and perceptions of individuals. They determine what is acceptable and who they can become. Life-changing decisions have been made based on perceptions and what society has described as norms, regardless of inherent talents, weaknesses, capacities and preferences of individuals.

Many people find themselves in this gender box, but do not have the courage to break away. I long to see

a society of men who are not afraid of walking the gender lines – to change expectations, share responsibilities and challenge gender norms – and a society of women who will not be judged for realising their great potential and living in ways that satisfy their needs.

As civil society actors and rights activists, it is incumbent on us to continue to challenge structures of power in society and challenge the systems and processes that foster inequality and exclusion. Gender-based discrimination is not an issue of victory for the sexes – it is an issue of exclusion and marginalisation of one over another and must be rooted out of our society.

Partner profile

Hope Givers Initiative

Hope Givers Initiative (HOG-I) is an NGO based in Enugu, with offices in Ebonyi and Anambra States. The organisation’s vision is to see a society where children, women and youths are treated

equally, with access to all life’s basic necessities, regardless of status or social background. Its thematic areas are: gender; human rights and governance; peer education programmes in schools and communities; family life and HIV education; HIV prevention; and care

and support for orphans, vulnerable children and people living with or affected by HIV. HOG-I is implementing V2P project in Enugu and Ebonyi States, bringing its expertise in gender and governance to support successful implementation of the project.

Contact us

Christian Aid
Plot 802,
Ebitu Ekiwe Street,
Jabi, Abuja
Nigeria
E: info-nigeria@christian-aid.org
W: www.voicetothepeople.org



Follow us on Twitter
[@V2Pnaija](https://twitter.com/V2Pnaija)

