

V2P VOICE TO THE PEOPLE

Making governance work for poor and marginalised people

Advocating for improved access to health services

In the remote community of Oshiri, local people have used power analysis and skills in advocacy to attain an upgrade for their primary health centre.



Oshiri's community based monitors worked with members of the community to identify their health needs and advocate for improvements.

People living in hard-to-reach, interior communities of Nigeria typically face barriers to accessing public services and are less likely to engage with government to drive improvements.

However, in Oshiri, a remote community in Onicha Local Government Area (LGA) of Ebonyi state, people were empowered to advocate for improvements at their primary health centre (PHC). Through interaction with V2P, the community gained knowledge and skills about

their rights, culminating in activities that led to successful engagement with the commissioner for health. The end result was the stationing of a doctor and other medical personnel at the PHC.

Describing the PHC prior to this intervention, Chief Elebe, the traditional Prime Minister (Onowu) of the community, said: 'We didn't have trained doctors or nurses to work there, and could not procure drugs because of finances. Women die when they go to

deliver their babies. When they have bad illnesses, they cannot be treated here, and most of them die or get very weak on the way to Abakiliki [the state's capital city].'

Ngwuta Ogbonnaya, a community based monitor (CBM), attested that the facility had not had a doctor for three years, and was staffed by two community health extension workers (CHEWs), providing basic first aid and referrals. Unable to get treatment for severe illnesses or drug prescriptions, people resorted to travelling long distances.

To address this, the community, led by their CBMs, and leaders conducted advocacy activities that culminated in a visit to the Ebonyi State Commissioner for Health. With support from V2P partner, Hope Givers Initiative (HOG-I), the community drew on their power analysis training to identify key stakeholders that could positively influence the outcome of the advocacy. Ebonyi State Commissioner for Health, Dr Daniel Umezurike, confirmed

that his engagement with community members and V2P, via HOG-I, led to the posting of a doctor to the PHC.

'When they approached me, I told them that if we could work together, we could post a corper doctor to help man that facility,' he said. 'We have done that, and the state is making effort to ensure that all the things needed to work are provided.'

He added that other communities would receive similar help, if able to demonstrate that they could 'take care of a doctor with government support'.

Power analysis is a key strategy in the V2P project and, for the Oshiri community, was instrumental in achieving a positive result. It enabled local people to tap into government plans to improve healthcare service delivery, making the work of the government easier, and strengthening the relationship between community and authorities.

Expanding geographical scope for meaningful impact in Kaduna state



More communities in Kaduna will have the opportunity to engage with their leaders for improved service delivery.



V2P geographic reach in Kaduna state

6 LGAs: Soba, Kaura, Kaduna South, Giwa, Jaba and Chikun

18 communities: Fagaci Tsohuwa, Fagaci Sabuwa, Doka, Down Quarters, Kinkinau, Television, Kumin Gwari, Mifi, Madamai, Mahuta, Madara, Yakawada, Dan Mahawayi, Juji, Kakau, Antung, Kurmin Jatau, Ungwan Barau

After testing the V2P model in six communities, across three LGAs, in Kaduna state for seven months, the project expanded its geographical scope into 18 communities across six LGAs. It now covers about a third of Kaduna's LGAs, strengthening its impact in the state. Achieving deep and big change requires a movement for change driven by a significant number of active citizens who know, and are able to claim, their rights by engaging with their leaders at local government and state level.

The expanded scope within Kaduna state is a strategy to create traction around its governance issues and to ensure that development and improved service delivery is sufficiently widespread to make a

difference across the state. The expansion of V2P into these areas will give more marginalised communities the opportunity to influence government around service delivery and policy issues, and ensure these are more transparent and accountable. The adaptive learning component of the V2P project helped ensure that the project can adapt its strategies to the context of Kaduna, based on the lessons from the first seven months of implementation in the three LGAs.

As with the others, the three new LGAs – Giwa, Jaba and Chikun – were selected based on their development indices, and in line with challenges highlighted in the State Government's plan 2014-2018.

So far, project activities in the initial V2P LGAs have enhanced the knowledge and capacities of local communities, putting people in a better position to engage in dialogue with government agencies around infrastructure, manpower deficits in areas such as health, education, and other basic amenities in their communities.

Through participatory approaches, these communities have developed demand charters, which articulate issues affecting them, in order of priority, and use these as tools for engagement with the relevant government agencies.

As a result of taking part in V2P, issues of marginalisation and gender inequality in these communities have also reduced: there has been a notable increase in the participation of women and girls in community affairs and decision making compared with previously.

The changes witnessed in LGAs to date demonstrate that if more citizens and communities begin engaging with the government, and ask the right questions, community development can be achieved, and at an accelerated pace.

Educating voters ahead of local government elections



Providing citizens with the right information to ensure more accountable and transparent governance.

In preparation for local government elections in Kaduna state later this year, V2P partner Gender Awareness Trust (GAT) and Legal Awareness for Nigerian Women (LEADS) are conducting civic/voter education training, to increase communities' knowledge of and participation in the pre-election, election and post-election process. The training is in collaboration with Kaduna State Independent Electoral Commission (KADSIECOM). Participants are also being introduced to the electronic voting machine that the state government intends to use for the elections.

Professor Andrew Nok Nkom, Commissioner of KADSIECOM, is keen to conduct the training and has expressed willingness to continue working with V2P to extend it to as many communities as possible. 'SIECOM is willing to carry out this training anytime

it is called upon,' he said. 'You can also call us to your churches and mosques.' Trained community members have so far expressed their enthusiasm for the knowledge they have gained from the training and have promised to pass it on within their communities.

Similar training is taking place in Anambra state in preparation for the November 2017 gubernatorial election. In 2014, V2P supported the election process in Anambra by conducting training that contributed to the high and peaceful turnout at the ballot box.

The V2P project will continue to equip individuals, groups, communities and civil society organisations with the right information to ensure more accountable and transparent local and state government that prioritise the sustainable delivery of public goods and services that meet citizens' needs.

News in brief

Study into V2P's efficacy in Anambra

In August, the V2P project team disseminated findings from a study entitled *Community Voices*, conducted by the Institute for Development Studies; the University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus; the University of Sussex, UK, and Christian Aid Nigeria.

Conducted over eight months, this aimed to establish the extent to which V2P strategies have increased citizen participation in governance and accountability, and different approaches to these in Anambra state. Findings will inform future projects.

Women in Governance network crossing borders

In Nawgu community, Dunukofia LGA, Anambra state, about 15 women were recently inaugurated as members of Idika-acho Women in Governance (I-WIG), with a remit to support their peers to participate in decision making at community and other levels. The I-WIG campaign has also extended its reach beyond Anambra to states in the southeast of Nigeria, supporting women in Echara and Oshiri communities in Ebonyi state.

Supporting structures for project sustainability

As V2P implementation wraps up in Anambra state, activities are focused on reinforcing the skills of community based monitors (CBM) and community empowerment networks (COMEN). CMBs, through COMEN, at state and LGA level, are putting knowledge into practice as they organise town hall meetings to continue the engagement and dialogue with government representatives to improve service delivery.

South-to-south learning: sharing best practices, challenges and successes

V2P seeks to strengthen governance processes for the benefit of the people by ensuring citizens' participation and active engagement in decision making about development and service delivery at all levels. Participatory governance can be a complex venture which various state governments are practising in different ways, some more efficiently than others. However, V2P's work in Anambra state, which has ensured a participatory budget process using the community charters, has proven to be best practice for participatory governance. Therefore, as part of mechanisms to ensure that development is sustained in the states where it works, V2P facilitated a learning visit between the Anambra state government and its

Kaduna counterparts to showcase how Anambra has taken participatory governance forward, especially using the charters.

The Kaduna state entourage comprised representatives of the Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning and the Ministry of Rural and Community Development, along with six community development officers; three from the Ministry of Rural and Community Development and three from the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy. They learned more about citizens' participation in governance and how it has worked in Anambra state.

The concept of the Charter of Demand and how the government can adopt this was a key outcome of this learning visit,



Christian Aid

CBMs and COMEN across communities sharing experience and successes of citizens' participation.

and provided a platform for learning and sharing which does not happen regularly across states.

Partner profile

Women Aid Collective (WACOL) is an independent, non-governmental, non-profit organisation founded in November 1997, with headquarters in Enugu, and branch offices in Port Harcourt and Abuja. WACOL is dedicated and committed to helping women and young people in need. Gender- and inclusion-sensitive, WACOL is working towards

achieving gender equality and human rights for all.

The V2P project has been implemented in five LGAs across Enugu, Abia and Imo states by WACOL, whose expertise is in gender equality and advocacy around the protection of human rights.

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