



# **LESSONS LEARNT:**

**Promoting Democratic Accountability in Kano State,  
Nigeria**

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## Acronyms

ARTV	Abubakar Rimi Television
CBOs	Community-Based Organizations
CDD	Centre for Democracy and Development
CITAD	Centre for Information Technology and Development
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
FR	Freedom Radio
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IFM	Institute of Farm Mechanization
IoT	Institute of Tourism
II	Informatics Institute
IoP	Institute of Poultry
KSHA	Kano State House of Assembly
LJI	Lafiya Jari Initiative
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NYDF	Nassarawa Youth Development Forum
SAVI	State Accountability and Voice Initiative

## **Acknowledgement**

CDD acknowledges with thanks the financial support received from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) which has made it possible for us to successfully implement the first phase of this project in Nigeria. The financial commitment is indeed significant in promoting democratic governance in Kano State. We also thank the Director of CDD, Jibrin Ibrahim, Ph.D., for his leadership and exemplary role played by providing direction and support to the successful execution of the project. The guidance and supervisory role played by Mrs. Mercy Ezechi, Head of People-Centred Department of CDD, is also worthy to mention. Her regular call for swift and responsive actions to address any emerging issues during the implementation stage is in no doubt responsible for the success recorded.

We also show gratitude to the Executive Director of Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD), Mr. Yunusa Z. Yau, for the partnership and technical support rendered throughout the project implementation period. There is no doubt that the progress made is dependent on his commitment and distinguished intellectual poise demonstrated by preferring result-driven advice. The acknowledgment note is incomplete without appreciating the contributions of CITAD's staff. In fact, the weekend hustling and struggling of Mr. Kabir Dakata and Mr. Sufyan Lawal to ensure that radio and television awareness creation programs are aired and well-conducted are appreciated.

We also thank the management and staff of Freedom Fm and Abubakar Rimi Television in Kano State for their partnership and allowing us to use their media platforms to air our awareness creation programs on budget implementation process. We hope to continue our relationship with the media outfits as we progress in our engagement this year, 2013. Finally, we thank many of our audience, Community-based Organizations (CBOs) and development partners in Kano State whose instructive contributions beamed light on unnoticeable challenges and most efficient ways to deepen the culture of civic engagement in the State. This has helped in the design of our intervention in the next phase of the project.

## **Preface**

The return to democratic rule in 1999 was received with enthusiasm. Many a Nigerian are enthused with the expectation that democracy will bring forth sustainable development anchored on participation of citizens in decision-making processes. This book tells the story of the Centre for Democracy and Development's (CDD), intervention in promoting democratic accountability in Kano State. It aptly describes one of our awareness creation programmes aimed at galvanizing citizen's engagement in budget implementation processes, and the lessons learnt.

Nigeria's governance process has been burdened by unspeakable corruption, lack of transparency and accountability, abuse of oath of office, amongst others, for over a decade. All these are contributory factors to "crisis of legitimacy" that characterized the country's political landscape manifested in growing disenchantment by citizens with their representatives at the helm of state affairs. Redeeming the worrisome reality of the operations of democratic government is in fact one of the responsibilities of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Community-based Organizations (CBOs), alike, to pool resources together and forge joint collaboration so that unwholesome attitudes of political elites are remedied. In fact, it is important that any remedial approach should be well-documented and lessons learnt shared. This would open window for an improved strategy for engagement with the institution of government as a means of improving citizens involvement and participation in the process of governance.

We have earlier demonstrated that this book presents CDD's intervention in creating conditions for democratic accountability in Kano State. The book therefore is an outcome of our engagement with citizens and government in Kano State. It reflects the analysis of activities undertaken from February 2012 – January 2013 and brings to the forefront lessons learnt and salient issues that should be addressed in order to broaden our engagement with citizens and government with the hope of strengthening democratic governance in the State. In addition, it is an embodiment of varying perspectives shared by participating CSOs and CBOs at the lessons learnt meeting held on the 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2013.

It is our sincere hope that the outcomes of our engagement as represented in this book will further enrich future interventions by the civil society groups in entrenching democratic governance, not only in the focal State but also in other States of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and beyond. There is no doubt that the lessons learnt in the book

might be a useful tool for advocacy and strategy of engagement by civil society organisations and other key players.

**Jibrin Ibrahim (Ph.D.)**

*Director, CDD.*

## Introduction

One of the significant components of a democracy is the incorporation of citizens' voices into the complex policy-making processes. This governance process is conventionally known as "Participatory Governance." In recent times, the idea of participatory governance has gained momentum in political discourse. This is because of the general perception that in order to improve quality of state performance, educate and empower citizens and make judicious use of scarce resources at the disposal of a State, citizens should participate in the deliberation over and vote in the allocation of public resources and the use of state authority. As such, participatory governance guarantees frequent engagement of citizens in the public venues by allowing them to express their differing perspectives and priorities in policy formulation, planning and implementation processes.

In an effort to redesign the institution of government and improve the quality of democracy in Kano State, the Governor of Kano State, Engr. Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, held a one-day interactive session with civil society organizations and development partners including DFID, USAID and their implementing partners. CDD participated in the event. The Governor pleaded with civil society to work with the government by creating ways of capturing peoples' needs and concerns and communicating same to his office. This was a strategy to rebuild bridges with the people immediately after his re-election in April 2011.

The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) and the Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) have the mandate to facilitate participatory governance in the State. While participation has great potential in engendering the promotion of efficiency in the business of government, it is imperative that the existing capacity gap amongst people is addressed. Ensuring meaningful participation in the process of governance thus requires certain knowledge about policy formulation and implementation processes that are somewhat absent amongst teeming population in Kano State. It is in the context of remedying this shortcoming that CDD designed a project aimed at promoting democratic accountability in Kano State. It focuses on empowering people through dissemination of information on government policy statements and pronouncements as contained in the 2012 budget. The intervention is ICT-inclined.

## Background

The project, “Promoting Democratic Accountability in Kano State,” was launched by the Centre for Democracy & Development (CDD), in partnership

Citizens, their elected officials and delegated representatives are equal agents in a democracy

with Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD), in February 2012. CDD conceived the project as a necessary intervention to promote sustainable democracy in Nigeria anchored on citizen participation and government responsiveness. Thus, the project seeks to promote democratic accountability in Kano State by increasing citizen awareness about policy pronouncement and commitment of government in the 2012 budget using Information Communication and Technology (ICT). The project is funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The pilot phase of the project was launched in Kano State, Nigeria, for two reasons; first to demonstrate civil society's willingness to assist the government in articulating citizens’ voices in policy formulation and implementation, and second, to sustain past engagements with the citizens of Kano state recorded during the project on Mandate protection in the 2011 elections, also supported by NED.

## Specific Objectives

The overall objective of the project is to promote democratic accountability and citizens’ engagement with Kano State government through the innovative use of information and communication technology (ICT). Specific objectives include:

- To raise citizens’ awareness on the policy pronouncements and commitments of the Kano State Governor in the 2013 budget speech;
- To increase and galvanize citizens’ agency and influence in engaging the state government to promote good governance in Kano state; and
- To synthesize citizens opinions and perceptions regarding the delivery of services and share with the Governor, periodically.

## Implementation Strategy

### Development of Effective Monitoring Matrix

Since the successful implementation of the project is predicated on collection of reliable data, CDD worked with two trained monitors in Kano state. The trained monitors using a monitoring template to collect data from relevant documents from the office of the state governor, key government institutions, newspapers and the internet for further dissemination and engagement. This enabled the implementing team to report on the

interventions of the government in the focal sectors as well as highlight cogent points that are helpful for deliberations and discussions on the media platforms.

### **Interrogating government expenditure**

Budget is perhaps the most important tool for realizing government's agenda to enhancing the development of a State. In a fiscal year, development aspirations and agenda of the government are set out in the Appropriation Act (budget) to promote development in socio-political and economic fronts. In 2012, the government of Kano State budgeted a total of N221, 619,331,115 to execute projects and programmes in the State. At the beginning of our intervention, we analyzed the 2012 budget and shared the outcomes with civil society groups and citizens to stimulate discussions. It became evident that although the theme of the budget might make for an interesting headline, a thorough analysis of its content by a Kano-based budget expert provided insight into the practicality of the budget and raised some posers. This was engaged throughout the lifespan of the project at different media platforms. The analysis was critical to our discussions on the radio and television programs aired by the implementing partners.

*Although Kano state requires N3.6b monthly to pay its workers, the state IGR is less than N1.5 billion per month!*

### **Media campaign**

To reach out to a wide range of audience, the project utilized multiple media platforms such as web portal, Facebook, Twitter, radio, television and SMS to communicate and disseminate information about budget matters to the people. In order to ensure that knowledge about budgeting is improved amongst the people, information and emerging issues around the implementation of the 2012 Kano State budget were frequently posted on the dedicated web portal and Facebook. This aimed at generating discussions and comments from the citizens on the government's budgetary allocation to sectors that deliver on services that enhance human development in Kano State.

This enabled citizens to voice their concerns and priorities on some of the government businesses in terms of budgetary allocation to focal sectors. As a way of encouraging buy-in into the project by local populace, we created Hausa page on the Facebook, in addition to English page. Including a



*Guest Speaker and ARTV presenter discussing budget implementation processes in Kano State*

website that has Hausa version of the 2012 budget and some other useful documents that could facilitate an improved knowledge amongst citizens on budget matters. The information was also shared through tweeter handle (@knbudget). Beside these media platforms, we disseminated information in apt and concise way to the people of Kano State through bulk SMS.

Key elements of the state budget were presented to citizens through a radio program (A Kasa A FaiFai) on Freedom Radio (99.5 Fm) on every Sunday from 11am-12noon. Also, there was a television program (Mu Gani a Kasa) on Abubakar Rimi Television on Sundays from 8pm – 8.30pm. The radio phone-in and television programs have proven very successful in reaching out to a wide range of audience. CDD and CITAD engaged commentators with a wealth of experience in the areas covered to critically interrogate specific provisions in the 2012 budget. The radio phone-in program was particularly useful in allowing citizens to voice their opinions about the effectiveness or failure of government policies and programmes. In all, the project has helped/is helping to alert publicly elected leaders to community needs and their rights to participate.

### **The Governor's letter**

This was introduced in the project to connect the people with the Governor. Although the Kano state governor makes extra efforts to communicate his projects using various platforms, it was important to advocate on issues bothering on social services; especially

as they affect the poor. Letters to the Governor presented citizen's concerns and demands, albeit insufficient to address all the issues that were raised by the citizens. In addition, the outcome of our impact assessment study on youth empowerment initiatives was communicated to the Governor. Letters were sent to the Governor identifying key issues relating to the state of affair in the State.

### **Sustaining the momentum**

As the project drew to a close it became essential for CDD to explore other areas and seek additional support. An online project should not have a "life span" it should be timeless but the reality is that funds are needed to run an online program and to this end various initiatives were put in place. The NED 2013 funding window was explored by CDD to seek an extension of the project that had achieved commendable results. This enabled the organization to continue the project this year, 2013. The media houses, especially the Freedom Fm Radio and Abubakar Rimi television hosted some of the our programs at a subsidized rate.

### **Engaging other stakeholders**

CDD is expanding the project and sharing information with a variety of stakeholders in Kano and beyond. This is important to sustain the gains made and also get buy-in from other organizations. As our experience has shown, sharing information and building capacity of citizens to engage are not sufficient to address the factors that underlie poverty and corruption, however there is a need for synergy amongst existing civil society groups and development partners. By so doing, civil society groups and development partners can focus on specific areas of achievable interventions that could affect social change in a society thus facilitating and hastening the process of engendering participatory governance.

## **Lessons Learnt**

### **Value of the Exercise**

The project was a strong motivation for the inhabitants of Kano State. It marked a shift from the hitherto people's lack of knowledge about budget matters to an increased desire to participate in the budget implementation process. With the commencement of the project, more citizens became aware of the content and feasibility of the 2012 Kano State budget thus improving their political consciousness to partake in budgeting and other government activities. There was no doubt that the analysis of the 2012 Kano State

budget provided citizens with graspable knowledge of what the budget entails. It provided an insight into the feasibility of the budget in enhancing infrastructural development, human development and the development of the real sector. This was, indeed, useful in teasing out sensitive and debatable issues to trigger online discussion as well as on other media.

**Unique Character of the Project**

One of the outcomes of the lessons learnt meeting held on January 31 2013 in Kano State was that the project had three singular characteristics: first, it targets budgetary allocation to sectors that deliver on services that promote human development. Hence, it could be conceived as an intervention that focused on government plans for the less privileged population; especially women and youth in the State. Second, the use of multiple media platforms to disseminate information to the citizens was indeed a unique character of the project. As a representative of State Accountability and Voice Initiative (SAVI), Hafsat Mustapha, noted at the meeting “the multiplicity of media platform has provided holistic attempt to reach-out to a wide range of audience”. Third, the analysis of the 2012 Kano State budget lay bare obscurity surrounding budget matters thus making it easy for citizens to comprehend what the government was likely to offer them.



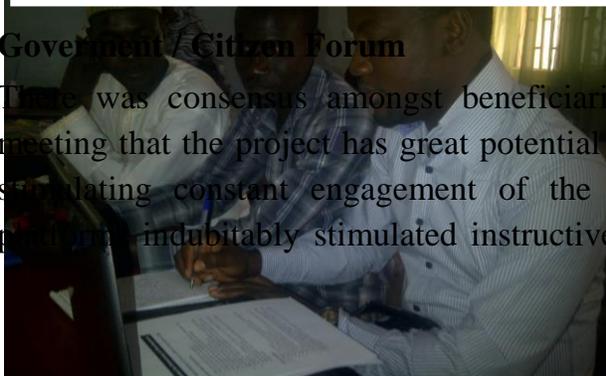
*Cross-section of participants at the Lessons Learnt meeting*



*Mr. YZ Yau of CITAD and participants at the Lessons Learnt meeting*

**Government / Citizen Forum**

There was consensus amongst beneficiaries who were present at the lessons learnt meeting that the project has great potential in creating awareness on budget matters and stimulating constant engagement of the citizens with government. The interactive platform indubitably stimulated instructive discussions and feedbacks from concerned



citizens. The television and radio phone-in programs opened indispensable window of engagement to the citizens which considerably accounted for the success achieved.

In terms of increased political consciousness and possibility of the citizens and civil society groups to engage in dialogue on budget matters with the government, people in Kano State are now monitoring ongoing projects of the state government, and some Community Based Organizations (CBOs) have started submitting memoranda indicating their priorities to the Kano State House of Assembly (KSHA) that is meant to feed into 2013 year budget. CITAD has had several meetings and training workshops with CBOs in the State.

A youth-led organization, Nassarawa Youth Development Forum (NYDF), for example, has started mobilizing its members across the state to submit their demands to their respective state representatives. Amongst demands of the movement are: a) member of state house of assembly should hold at least one meeting at each Ward for deciding what to include in the budget, b) S/he should update the constituents on which demand is included in the budget after it has been passed, and c) a committee to be chaired by the elected state assembly member should be set-up, charged with the responsibility of monitoring approved projects and update the general public as at when due. CDD/CITAD is providing on-going support to this group to enable them carry out their activities.

### **Stakeholder Participation and Synergy**

To further facilitate a process whereby democratic accountability and active involvement of citizens in the policy-making process in Kano State are ensured, a synergy should be forged amongst existing civil society groups and development partners in the State. It was evident that there is no way an organization can holistically address lingering challenges in the polity against an effective participation of citizens in the generic in terms of approach and focus that would be desirable if civil society organizations address specific problem in the State. As su



*Female participants at the Lessons Learnt meeting*



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citizens on budgeting and other areas of engagement should be undertaken by other organizations. This has the tendency of encouraging a robust engagement with the government by the groups thus strengthening the governance process in Kano State.



*Male participants at the Lessons Learnt meeting*



*Yusuf Shamsudeen of CDD making presentation of the project to participants*



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ight responsibility of the citizens and civil strengthening good governance. Adequate the active participation of citizens in budget re, there should be a shift in the focus of the budget planning and formulation processes Assembly. This to a large extent can build a ship of the budget thus increase peoples' n.

and some challenges that confronted the success as it reasonably reawakened political government in budget implementation process. Kano State Youth Stakeholder's Forum, and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) in the State the gains of the project.

The engagement demands a dedicated collaboration between change actors especially the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to mobilize resources together in a strategic and well coordinated manner as well as rooted in grassroot consciousness in order to

engender a participatory governance. It is against this backdrop that we commend the movement towards joint collaboration between development partners and non-government organization. This is one of the important outputs of our lessons learned meeting. We have a strong conviction that the effort to cascade intervention to unbridle longstanding gaps in governance process is potentially result driven. In fact, it is a welcome development.

As we progress to the next phase of the project, it is our sincere hope that the much needed collaboration is forged amongst change actors in Kano State.

## ABOUT CENTRE FOR DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT (CDD)

The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) was registered with the Nigeria Corporate Affairs Commission in 1999. CDD is an independent, not-for-profit, research, training, advocacy and capacity building organization. The Centre was established to mobilize global opinion and resources for democratic development and provide an independent space to reflect critically on the challenges posed to the democratization and development processes in West Africa and also provide alternatives and best practices to the sustenance of democracy and development in the region.

### **Vision**

A West Africa that is democratically governed, economically integrated - promoting human security and people centred development.

### **Mission**

To facilitate sustainable democracy and development in West Africa through strategic analysis, capacity building and advocacy.

CDD programmes are conceptualized to develop the organisation's regional vocation and are centred on the following themes and sub-themes:

### **A) Democratic Governance:**

- i. Gender and Political Rights: The commitment is to ensure systematic integration of women in the region' democratic space.
- ii. Local government: Our engagement aims at strengthening decentralization of powers and promote autonomous administrative space for a local government authority to deliver on its promises to local people.
- iii. Political Parties: To integrate regional norms and standard, cross border cooperation and network in the body of the regions political party system.
- iv. Constitutional and Legal Reform: to work through the CFR and other initiatives to articulate and harmonize stakeholder views on thorny issues in the Nigerian

- Constitution and aggressively build consensus around them with the legislature and all stakeholders towards further amendments
- v. Peace and Conflict: To address the intractable violent conflict in the region by mobilizing resources and forge partnership with ECOWAS and other relevant organizations.
  - vi. Election: To deepen citizen participation and promote electoral justice in an electoral system.
  - vii. Parliamentary Strengthening: To ensure that legislators are built with requisite skills and capacity to effectively function as partners in the democratic enterprise

Transparency, Accountability and Anti-Corruption Strategies at the local, national, regional and international levels and raising capacity for budget performance and promoting transparency and accountability in the budget process.

- ii) MDGs and Socio-Economic Rights: Advancing people-centred development through raising capacity for MDGs attainment. Supporting, monitoring and promoting local initiatives on Development Goals.

- iii) Urbanization and Migration: CDD's urbanization and the poor initiative focus on the lack of access to sanitation and housing, access to education and health, water, employment and residential status, especially within the confines of poverty in the cities.

- iv) Environment and Climate Change: Enhancing civic participation and legislative oversight on emerging trends in

**B) People Centred Development:**

- i) Budget Monitoring: Improving resource governance through advancing capacity to promote

the extractive industry, supporting institutions to reduce and mitigate the effects of climate change on local communities.

v) Accountability

Mechanism: Ensures transparency and accountability, and good governance in the region.

**CDD International Governing Council (IGC)**

Chair: Dr Kole Shettima is a Nigerian philanthropist and Africa Director, MacArthur Foundation, Abuja

Deputy Chair: Dr Dzodzi Tsikata is a leading Ghanaian feminist and lecturer in Sociology, University of Ghana

Treasurer: Dr Otive Igbuzor is a Nigerian political scientist and International Advocacy Director, Action Aid International

Chair of Personnel Sub-Committee: Dr Paul Okojie, Faculty of Law, Manchester Metropolitan University, United Kingdom.

Dr Thomas Jaye a Liberian scholar-activist is a Senior Research Fellow, Kofi Anan Centre for Conflict Resolution, Accra

Dr Musah Abdel-Fatau is a Ghanain activist-scholar and is presently Director, Peace and Conflict

Division at the West African Economic Community, (ECOWAS), Abuja.

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