Final Report

Final Evaluation: Project Promoting Accountability for Ethno-Religious Violence in Plateau and Niger States

Final Evaluation Conducted by: Frances Fortune Associates

Conducted for: Search for Common Ground Nigeria

Study Dates: January 24 – February 28, 2015

Final Report Date: February 28, 2015
Executive Summary

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) - Nigeria signed a cooperative agreement with DRL in September 2012 to strengthen effective accountability processes to tackle ethno-religious violence in Plateau and Niger States. It was implemented in partnership with the Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP) in Niger State and the Center for the Advocacy of Justice and Rights (CAJR) in Plateau State.

The overall goal of the project was to strengthen effective accountability processes to tackle ethno-religious violence in Plateau and Niger States. Key accountability structures considered in the project, as identified through the baseline survey, were the Judiciary, the Police, the Military, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), and the Government as well as the media and Civil Society Organisations. Accountability was interpreted by the baseline survey respondents as “responsible leadership by government and policy makers” (70.8% Niger state and 81% Plateau state). The project aimed to strengthen the reporting of human rights violations and institutional linkages between accountability institutions supporting state/civil society engagement through investing in civil society organisations’ (CSOs) skill and capacity building.

The objectives for the evaluation were to:

1. Assess the effectiveness of the project in strengthening accountability processes to tackle ethno-religious violence in Plateau and Niger states;
2. Assess the impact of the project, particularly measuring the extent to which SFCG succeeded in reaching the 5 expected results of the project;
3. Measure the sustainability of the action;
4. Collect the end of project indicators and;
5. Draw lessons and provide recommendations for future programming.

The evaluation consisted of a desk review followed by field research which was conducted in one location in each of the two states using both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools to collect data from a diverse sample composed of project participants and community people who are both direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project action. The evaluation was also informed by discussions that took place during a presentation made to project stakeholders in Jos, Plateau State after the field research was conducted.

Achievement of project objectives is measured using five key results. The table below displays the five results and shows that the project objectives have been reached to a large extent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Result 1.1</td>
<td>Improved skills of CSOs in human rights monitoring and reporting</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result 1.2</td>
<td>Improved the capacity of target CSOs to advocate for more effective accountability</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result 1.3</td>
<td>Citizens have increased knowledge on accountability processes and the work of CSOs to promote them</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result 2.1</td>
<td>Increased collaboration between CSOs in each target State for more effective accountability action</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result 2.2</td>
<td>Increased collaboration between NHRC and civil society groups for more effective accountability action</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final Evaluation:
Promoting Accountability for Ethno-Religious Violence in Plateau and Niger States
According to NHRC, a key factor contributing to the achievement of the objectives was the collaborative approach of the project. The starting point was SFCG bringing together key stakeholders in the human rights space and working to ensure cooperation and collaboration between groups that traditionally were adversaries. The interagency approach ensured cooperation between organisations working on human rights violations and the collaboration shifted the approach away from the adversarial nature, which made some organisations defensive. This was a major factor in securing the success of the project.

According to interviews with CSO beneficiaries, the project has improved the skills of CSOs. The main skill learned is advocacy for human rights followed by monitoring of human rights and violence prevention. Several ‘Other’ skills mentioned were capacity building skills such as meeting facilitation, communication skills, problem solving with government and strategic planning.

The project has improved the capacity of CSOs to advocate for more effective accountability. This is evident through the active networks that have been established and the level of cooperation that was reported amongst accountability institutions and the CSOs. According to the KII, these networks established through a number of meetings convened by the project have been efficient at problem solving around key issues of conflict and violence in both Plateau and Niger states because it has put important stakeholders in touch with each other. The interagency nature of these networks is important and CSO activists are using their phones to contact the Police and Military or NHRC to problem solve in a way that they have never been able to do before.

To examine the knowledge on accountability processes, the community survey inquired about the roles of several accountability institutions including Security Forces, the Government, and the Judiciary or Courts and the level of satisfaction that community members have about these institutions. The results were measured at the baseline and again in the final survey to determine the change across five institutions. Trust levels in these same institutions were also compared and while satisfaction levels increased overall, trust levels decreased. What came through is that, except for the role of NGOs, citizens had a clear perception of roles of various accountability mechanisms during conflict.

The value of this project, according to the key informant interviews, is two-fold.

1. The relationships that have formed and the problem solving nature of this network in each state.
2. The rooting of a collaborative approach causing a shift to a more collaborative and constructive space rather than as it was formerly – adversarial.

This is reaping benefits for important human rights work in Niger and Plateau state generally.

The project has developed a platform for sustained collaboration between CSOs and the NHRC according to all the CSO respondents and NHRC stakeholders except for one respondent in Plateau state. This is both formal in the shape of the coalition which NHRC suggested should register with the headquarters of the Commission and also informal in the shape of personal relationships between actors in different agencies.

Creating a roadmap or strategy for the operations of the coalitions was a key part of the activities in the second year of the project. The strategy sought to lock in collaborative approaches and use the network that had been formed to strengthen human rights monitoring work in Niger and Plateau state and is a central part of the exit strategy for the project. This road map provides direction and focus to the CSOs in terms of moving forward once the project is over according to most CSO respondents.
Recommendations

1. Develop a targeted strategy to both specific ‘no-go communities’ and target groups such as veterans or political parties to reduce violence and put into place conflict mitigation mechanisms that address specific group needs (a code of conduct for peaceful elections with youth wings of parties for instance).

Political violence is created by politicians and their supporters. Inter-religious and inter-ethnic violence are considered identity conflicts. Political violence generally thrives better in divided communities especially those affected by identity issues such as religion and ethnicity. These are quantifiably different types of violence and require tailored responses that build resilience to prevent violence. A targeted strategy to reduce violence and conflict selecting specific small interest groups such as ex-servicemen (veterans), at risk youth etc. could be a valuable approach to reducing violence and human rights abuses.

2. Conduct a CSO review into the various accountability mechanisms used for conflict mitigation in Plateau state (in particular) to identify issues constraining supply of services to populations experiencing conflict.

Accountability institutions each have their government directors who are in more ways than not influencing the decision making with the institutions under their remit. While inter-religious and inter-ethnic violence are a reality in Plateau and Niger states, building tolerance and resilience is important in these communities. However, there is a need to address political violence in a direct and forthright manner as each accountability institution is constrained in its response and ability by the government. Further work to develop a responsive strategy to support building state/society relations will benefit the work of these accountability institutions.

3. Invest in community forums where accountability mechanisms are invited such as the police, the military and NHRC in specific communities experiencing violence or conflict to give a voice to people who are struggling with resolving conflict peacefully. Support follow up visits to ensure that actionable items from the community forums are addressed by relevant stakeholders. Training of action committees in action items and human rights monitoring could be part of a strategy to deploy the power of human rights more fully in communities experiencing conflict.

4. Training on human rights issues requires further investment and should adopt a ‘people-to-people’ approach and target those experiencing conflict more than others as a first step.

Further work is required in the accountability institutions to bring them fully on board to the shifting discourse around human rights and to support them to act in more positive ways to prevent violence and conflict and political conflict in particular. Human rights have a transformational capacity and more opportunity exists to secure the initial investment and bring peaceful and dynamic change in Plateau and Niger states.

5. Based on research of the accountability mechanisms and with their consent, a systematic approach with a strategic accountability programme should follow on a CSO strategy that embraces both formal linkages (i.e. structures and processes) and informal linkages (i.e. relationships and personal). This kind of strategy seeks to forward a collaborative approach shifting from the confrontational or combative –
and that can challenge existing norms and social practices. Operating in different ways in different times taking into context the prevailing political economy of the Plateau and Niger states environments can ensure that opportunities are leveraged to promote positive change. A targeted strategy supported by an understanding of the conflict, those most affected and those spoilers such as some veterans, can ensure that any investment into the human rights sector will be effective. Further investment is required to ensure the opening of political space for ordinary people in Plateau and Niger states to bring their own realities into the policy and political arena. Aligning accountability mechanisms with the interests of the wider population is an important part of the strategy.

6. A media strategy bringing in the various stakeholders including the radio stations, the television station and leveraging other forms of media should accompany any CSO strategy around accountability. It should be concurrent with the strategy and have the buy-in of the media stakeholders. Leveraging social media to teach blogging skills to CSO actors, rumour management to media stakeholders and other social media skills to activists could enable a shifting discourse around human rights.

Conclusion

Supporting civil society does not automatically lead to strengthening of democratic processes. Accountability programming is complex requiring action along two axes – the formal and informal spaces as well as the collaborative and combative axis. To align accountability institutions with public interest requires strong political and power shifts and requires action in both the political and the civil spaces. One cannot expect a linear relationship between the inputs and the outcomes. This project has significant outcomes compared to the smallish size of the investment. With a systemic strategy, there is much more that can be done to effect positive change around accountability in Niger and Plateau states.
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**Final Evaluation:**

Promoting Accountability for Ethno-Religious Violence in Plateau and Niger States

v
Definitions

OECD-DAC¹

Efficiency

Efficiency measures the outputs -- qualitative and quantitative -- in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term which signifies that the aid uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted.

When evaluating the efficiency of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- Were activities cost-efficient?
- Were objectives achieved on time?
- Was the programme or project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?

Impact

¹ http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm
The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. The examination should be concerned with both intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors, such as changes in terms of trade and financial conditions.

When evaluating the impact of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- What has happened as a result of the programme or project?
- What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?
- How many people have been affected?

**Sustainability**

Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable.

When evaluating the sustainability of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- To what extent did the benefits of a programme or project continue after donor funding ceased?
- What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the programme or project?

**Accountability**

The definition of accountability from survey respondents in the baseline study:

“This could also be linked with survey participants understanding of accountability interpreted and defined by them as ‘responsible leadership by government and policy makers in Niger State 70.83% and 81.48% in Plateau State’.”

**Accountability Mechanisms**

SFCG Nigeria’s theory of change in the project as defined in the baseline identifies accountability mechanisms that relate to justice and security. The baseline identified CSOs, the Media, Government/Policy Makers, Judiciary, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), and Security Agencies – both police and military as the accountability mechanisms of interest to the project.

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2 P. 12 Baseline report
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Background
Search for Common Ground (SFCG) - Nigeria signed a cooperative agreement with the US Department of State – Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) in September 2012 in order to strengthen effective accountability processes to tackle ethno-religious violence in Plateau and Niger States. It was implemented in partnership with the Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP) in Niger State and the Center for the Advocacy of Justice and Rights (CAJR) in Plateau State.

The project was supported by two specific objectives, highlighted below with their expected results:

**Objective 1**  
To increase the skills of civil society organizations in monitoring, reporting and advocacy for accountability processes.

- **Result 1.1**  
  Improved the skills of CSOs in human rights monitoring and reporting

- **Result 1.2**  
  Improved the capacity of target CSOs to advocate for more effective accountability

- **Result 1.3**  
  Citizens have increased knowledge on accountability processes and the work of CSOs to promote them

**Objective 2**  
To establish a platform between the National Human Rights Commission and civil society organizations for effective action on accountability

- **Result 2.1**  
  Increased collaboration between CSOs in each target State for more effective accountability action

- **Result 2.2**  
  Increased collaboration between NHRC and civil society groups for more effective accountability action

Frances Fortune Associates Ltd. (FFA), an independent and objective organization, conducted the final evaluation of SFCG’s two year project. The evaluation included a desk review, field research, analysis of the data generated, comparison with baseline data and report writing. This report represents the findings, conclusions and recommendations that came out of the study.

**Evaluation Objectives and Indicators**

The evaluation Terms of Reference (TORs) (See Annex 1) lists five objectives for the evaluation which were to:

1. Assess the effectiveness of the project in strengthening accountability processes to tackle ethno-religious violence in Plateau and Niger states;
2. Assess the impact of the project, particularly measuring the extent to which SFCG succeeded in reaching the 5 expected results of the project;
3. Measure the sustainability of the action;
4. Collect the end of project indicators and;
5. Draw lessons and provide recommendations for future programming.

Further, the TORs detailed fifteen questions to inform the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria of effectiveness, impact, and sustainability (see definitions at the beginning of the report). Seven indicators and two additional questions captured the results and learning from the activities undertaken over two years which were analyzed to develop lessons learned and recommendations. The Evaluation Criteria Matrix (See Annex 2) identifies the tools that were used to gather data and information for each of the evaluation criteria.
Final Report

along with the specific questions that were asked. The following report answers the fifteen evaluation questions presenting an assessment of the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project.

Methodology
The evaluation consisted of a desk review followed by field research which was conducted in one location in each of the two states using a mixed methodology. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools (see Annex 3) were used to collect data from a diverse sample composed of project participants and community people who are both direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project action. The evaluation was also informed by discussions that took place during a presentation made to project stakeholders in Jos, Plateau State after the field research was conducted.

Desk Review
The project proposal, baseline study, quarterly reports, activity reports and other relevant documentation were reviewed to provide background for the work. Monitoring data was drawn from the quarterly and activity reports. See Annex 4 for a summary list of documents. A mid line evaluation of another project called Plateau Will Arise that contained data on the radio programme was provided after the field work.

Approach
A mixed methodology to gather evidence employed quantitative and qualitative tools. The quantitative tools were two questionnaires - one administered with community members in a stratified sample from Niger State (175 surveys) and Plateau State (186 surveys) for a total of 361 surveys. The second survey polled eight (8) CSO participants identified by SFCG in each state who benefited from the project. The qualitative tools included key stakeholder interview guides and focus group discussion guides. The key informant interviews (KII) were conducted with six key stakeholders in each state. There were four focus group discussions (FGDs) held with specific demographic groups in each state including women and youth.

The research was conducted by two teams composed of three people each (one supervisor and two enumerators in each team) led by a Team Leader. The team had ethnic and gender balance to reflect the diversity in the sample. The research took place from January 26 to February 3, 2015.

The sample was designed to represent diverse points of view along various demographic characteristics including gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, education level and age. Criteria were designed to incorporate the configuration of communities and neighbourhoods in Plateau state where a decade of inter-ethnic and inter-religious violent incidents have driven people from mixed neighbourhoods to live in isolated communities. Sample selection considered:

1. Neighbourhoods where English is spoken – as the media programmes were in English;
2. Muslim neighbourhoods;
3. 50% of the communities where community forums have taken place and;
4. Equal numbers of men and women.

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4 The baseline study was conducted in February 2013 and consisted of Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussions and a Survey. The survey sample was 172 respondents, 80 from Plateau State and 92 from Niger State.
Sampling for the main survey was randomised in a stratified fashion with key criteria determining the sample contours. The size of the sample was constrained by the budget.

Communities were pre-selected based on the above criteria in consultation with SFCG staff. After the first day of random collecting in these communities, the approach was adjusted as it was apparent that older women, particularly Muslim women, were not available using a random sampling strategy. This is because they are mainly in the home compound and not accessible to the public. Thus, two female enumerators were assigned to identify older women to ensure the sample comprised the full diversity of voices.

The samples were drawn from Jos, estimated 2014 population 816,824 and Minna, estimated 2014 population 291,905. Based on the sample sizes (Jos 186) and Minna (175), there is a 95% confidence level that the results presented are accurate within a confidence interval of +/-7.2 (Plateau) and +/-7.4 (Niger).\(^5\)

For the NGO participant survey, the sampling was purposive\(^6\) directly interacting with project beneficiaries in partner CSOs identified by SFCG staff. Sampling also reflected the gender mainstreaming theme by ensuring that 50+% of the focus group discussion participants were female. The sample is not representative of the population however it is representative of diverse voices.

Enumerators were recruited, selected and trained to assist with the data gathering process. Data collection was done using handheld tablets and data entered in real time and uploaded to the database every evening. The analyst reviewed the data on a regular basis and provided instant feedback to the Team Leader to allow modifications to the approach in the field. Logistical arrangements were planned and finalized after which field work was undertaken.

**Personnel**

The evaluation was led by Frances Fortune who supervised the work and was responsible for all deliverables. Katherine Hoomlong and Timothy Obaje were subcontracted by FFA to conduct the field work. Katherine and Timothy recruited two enumerators each, trained the enumerators, pre tested the evaluation tools, and coordinated the data collection in collaboration with SFCG - Nigeria and project partners.

Susan Barclay supported this final evaluation by managing the technical functions, conducting the data analysis and supporting the report writing and project administration. Frances traveled to Nigeria to lead the team in country and Susan supported remotely. See Annex 5 for brief bios of the evaluation team.

**Sample**

The study incorporated the thoughts and opinions of the population, CSO representatives and opinion leaders involved in accountability in Niger and Plateau states. In this section the population survey sample will be presented along with insight into the subset of the sample that has recent experience with conflict.

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\(^6\) Purposive – Criteria identified for selected sites which were not random.
Plateau Survey Population
The Plateau sample is 186 survey respondents of which just over half (51%) are female and just under half (49%) are male. Respondents are adults above 18 years of age and are predominantly Christian (64%) with the balance Muslim (35%) and one respondent who said they have no religion.

The sample is educated with almost half having some or completed tertiary education (49%) and most (92%) having above a primary education. Seventeen (17) ethnic groups are represented with Hausa (25%) and Berom (19%) most common. The respondents have lived in Plateau for an average of 27 years with the shortest time being 1 year and the longest 63 years.

Plateau Conflict Sample
Of the population, over half (54%) said they had experience with conflict within the past two years which is much lower than the baseline when over three quarters (89%) of respondents said they had experienced violence or conflict. The profile of those who experienced conflict is summarized in the table below. As the table shows, men were more likely than women to experience conflicts (57% of men vs 51% of women), older respondents (36+) were more likely than their younger counterparts (56% vs 51%) and Muslims were much more likely than Christians (71% vs 45%) to have experienced conflict. In terms of education level, those with tertiary education were more likely to experience conflict than any other education level (60%). Hausas (74%) were most likely to have experienced conflict followed by Mangu (70%). Those who lived in the state longer were more likely to have had a conflict.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2 Plateau Profile of Sample Who Experience Conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who said yes to conflict</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koranic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hausa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Igbo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Years in Plateau State</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Niger Survey Population**

The Niger sample is 175 survey respondents of which over half (56%) are male and less than half (44%) are female. Respondents are adults above 18 years of age and are predominantly Muslim (71%) with the balance Christian (29%).

The sample is educated with one third having some or completed tertiary education (34%) and most (83%) having above a primary education. Nine (9) ethnic groups are represented with Hausa (26%) and Gbagyi (26%) being equally represented followed by Nupe (18%) and Yoruba (14%). The respondents have lived in Niger for an average of 23.1 years with the shortest being 1 year and the longest 63 years.

**Niger Conflict Sample**

Of the sample population, over half (57%) said they had experience with conflict within the past two years which is lower than the baseline when over three quarters (79%) of respondents said they had experienced violence or conflict. The profile of those who experienced conflict is summarized in the table below. As the table shows, men were more likely than women to experience conflicts (61% of men vs 51% of women), younger respondents (19-35) were more likely than their older (36+) counterparts (64% vs 48%) and Muslims and Christians were almost equally likely (57% vs 55%) to have experienced conflict. In terms of education level, those with tertiary education were more likely to have experienced conflict than any other education level (67%) followed closely by those with primary education (65%). Nupe (67%) were most likely to have experienced conflict followed by Gbagyi (54%), Hausa (53%) and Yoruba (52%). Those who lived in the state longer are more likely to have experienced a conflict.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3 Niger Sample Distribution</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19-35 Muslim</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36+ Muslim</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-35 Christian</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36+ Christian</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>56%</strong></td>
<td><strong>44%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4 Niger Profile of Sample Who Experienced Conflict</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who said yes to conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>Younger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Older</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
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<td>Primary</td>
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<td>Tertiary</td>
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<td>Koranic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nupe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gbagyi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hausa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yoruba</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Average Years in Niger State</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Limitations
There were several limitations to the research which are noted below.

- Data collection took place in the middle of a very divisive election campaign. This may have influenced availability of participants and the way questions were answered.
- In the baseline the military and police were combined as ‘Security Forces’ but it was evident in the activity reports that the military and police were quite different in their interactions, and by how they were perceived by the public, by CSOs and even by other institutions. Because of this perceived difference, the endline study differentiated between the two, separating police and military, as different data points. The military was not available to be interviewed during the endline study.
- The configuration of communities in Plateau state made random sampling difficult. The intercommunal conflict over the past decade has driven communities to live with the group they feel safe with -- particularly along the lines of religion. Christians live in one community and Muslims in another. These religious lines map over ethnicity as well. This meant that to obtain a representative sample, communities had to be carefully selected in Plateau state.

It is not a limitation but should be noted in the interests of full disclosure that Frances Fortune, who led the evaluation team, was an SFCG signing authority when the project proposal was written but did not participate in project design or proposal writing. The design and proposal writing were done by the SFCG Nigeria Country Director in Coordination with SFCG Africa Desk in Washington.

Findings

Conflict Assessment
In the Middle Belt states of Nigeria which includes both Plateau and Niger state, the relations between settler and indigene groups are historically “complex, vexed and tense” (ICG, 2012). Conflict in Plateau and Niger state has been fueled by a binary narrative which pitches one group against another whether it is religious in nature setting Christians against Muslims or vice versa, indigene against settlers or farmers against herders. Often the religion maps over the ethnicity as well and thus various ethnic groups become adversaries.

The experience of conflict is felt differently in the two states in the sample. In Plateau state, men, Muslims and the older generation are the demographic groups that experienced more conflict while in Niger state, men and the younger respondents experienced more conflict. This lends insight into the context of conflict in the two states.

In Niger state, the level of violence decreased over the two year period as some of the core issues around intercommunal conflict have been resolved. However, the fuel subsidy protests in December 2011 and January 2012 saw violent riots in Minna, Niger state in which political offices were targeted, buildings set on fire and property destroyed. A state of emergency was imposed in December 2011.

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Over the past decade, violent conflict has been occurring in Plateau state. In 2011 many lives were lost in Plateau state in reprisal attacks between Fulani/Hausa people and indigenes (Segun & Jegede, 2013). International Crisis Group (ICG) reported that the upsurge in violence during 2011 was also accompanied with “silent killings” (ICG, 2012). Three suicide bombings between December 2011 and March 2012 targeted Christian churches and claimed about fifty lives (ICG, 2012). This episodic violence has become characteristic of Jos city, which is the state capital. The city is inhabited by predominantly Christian tribes and by the Muslim Hausa-Fulani where they live in their own communities. This has created ‘no-go areas’ for one group or another depending on the neighbourhood. While both communities claim to be the original inhabitants of the region, the status of ‘indigenship’, which entitles people to ownership of land and priority over government jobs allocation, health-care and scholarships, has been granted only to Christians. This has caused deep anger within the Hausa-Fulani who feel like second class citizens (Segun & Jegede, 2013).

Intercommunal conflicts creating violence is thought to have been caused by a confluence of factors; political, social, economic and historical. Differing opinions as to the nature of conflict exist among various interests groups reflecting conflict over resources and political representation however, it is agreed that:

“The heterogeneous nature of Jos and Plateau State in general has been identified as a key factor to the conflicts in the area. Aside this, lines of ethnic identity quite frequently do coincide with religious affiliation. While the indigenes are mostly Christians, the Hausa/Fulani are predominantly Moslems. Which is why conflict between the two groups is often seen as religious.” (Segun & Jegede, p 39, 2013)

Boko Haram, the militant Islamist group active in the north east of the country, claimed responsibility for the suicide bombings in 2012, and a 2014 car bombing in Jos which killed 118 people⁸, intensifying the existing inter-religious divide in Plateau state.⁹

⁹ http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2013/01/06/is_nigeria_on_the_brink_of_a_religious_civil_war.html
Comparison between the baseline and endline surveys illustrates the changing perception of the respondents about conflict in Niger and Plateau state. Political violence is a common theme in both states, with politicians and their supporters ranking high as perpetrators (see Table). Examining respondents’ perception of the identity of perpetrators and causes of violence reveals that, in Niger state, the nature of dominant conflict shifted from intercommunal political conflict to more youth-related conflict, whereas in Plateau state, the nature of conflict effectively remained the same over the course of the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5 Conflict – Causes and Perpetrators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Niger State</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baseline 2013</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causes of Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics 66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty 28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various youth issues 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrators of Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremists 43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicians 37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government 17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlers 3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Indicators**

Project indicators capture the data on key results as described in the results framework of the project. The indicators are summarized here and are supported with examples and baseline results later in the report under Effectiveness, Impact and Sustainability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6 Indicators and Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong># Indicator</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 Indicators and Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Endline Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>% target CSOs who report better relations with other rights and advocacy CSOs at the end of the project than before the project</td>
<td>88% of CSO respondents reported better relations with other CSOs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>% increase in allegations of human rights abuses pursued by the NHRC in target States in the last three months of the project, compared to the first three months of the project</td>
<td>This indicator is neither managed nor directed by SFCG so unable to measure this. However in the KIs, NHRC did state that there has been an increase in reporting of human rights violations. It is unknown whether this is due to increased awareness because of the training or because there has been an increase in violent incidents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>% target CSOs who report better relations with the NHRC at the end of the project than before the project</td>
<td>76% of CSO respondents reported better relations with the NHRC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td># of initiatives co-created by the NHRC and CSOs</td>
<td>CSO respondents mentioned an average of 2.8 initiatives per organization that are coalition(^\text{11}) activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings of the evaluation incorporate the indicators and relate to the 15 questions presented in the TORs for the evaluation. They are subdivided into three evaluation categories namely Effectiveness, Impact and Sustainability.

**Effectiveness**

**To what extent have the project’s objectives been reached?**

The overall goal of the project was to strengthen effective accountability processes to tackle ethno-religious violence in Plateau and Niger States. Key accountability structures considered in the project, as identified through the baseline survey, were the Judiciary, the Police, the Military, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), and the Government as well as the media and Civil Society Organisations. Accountability was interpreted by the baseline survey respondents as “responsible leadership by government and policy makers” (70.8% Niger state and 81% Plateau state). The project aimed to strengthen the reporting of human rights violations and institutional linkages between accountability institutions supporting state/civil society engagement through investing in civil society organisations’ (CSOs) skill and capacity building.

Achievement of project objectives (see text box), which mainly focus on strengthening skills and capacities of CSOs to report and monitor human rights violations in Niger and Plateau state, was measured using five key results.

The table below displays the five results and shows that the project objectives have been achieved to a large extent. The specific results are reported through the indicators in the section above.

---

\(^{11}\) The coalitions which are the mechanism for collaboration with NHRC are called COHURANS in Niger state and COHRAP in Plateau state.
Overall the CSO respondents felt that their skills and organizational capacity have been strengthened to improve their human rights reporting activities. They indicated that they are now doing activities such as community forums and advocacy work as a direct result of this project that they were not doing two years ago. They reported that collaboration has improved between the CSOs involved in accountability work and with the institutions such as the Police, the NHRC and the Military.

To determine if accountability mechanisms have been strengthened, a survey was conducted to understand community perception of accountability mechanisms and change in this perception over the duration of the project. Conducted in the two states, the survey asked questions to determine if people understood the roles of these core accountability institutions in conflict mitigation and sought to measure their level of confidence (trust and satisfaction) in these accountability mechanisms. The comparison between the baseline and end line surveys illustrates the changing context of accountability in relation to violence and violent conflict or ethno-religious violence in Plateau and Niger states. This changing context is illustrated using survey data and KII and FGD information in the sections that follow.

The comparison between the baseline and endline shows that, overall, while people understand the roles of these institutions, the accountability processes continue to be weak, citizen perception about key accountability institutions has not changed, and in some cases has further deteriorated (see Impact section below). For the most part, the respondents understood the role of the Police, the Military, the Judiciary, the Government, the media and to some extent the NHRC play in mitigating conflict.

Many CSO respondents said they ‘do not know’ what the role of NGOs is. Respondents in Niger state said they did not know more than those in Plateau state. Those who did know the role of NGOs in mitigating conflict mentioned advocacy, relief support and dialogue most often.

Community respondents said that the role of CSOs is more about advocacy than it is about human rights monitoring. FGD participants understood the change that human rights organisations had brought to their communities particularly on social issues such as early marriage, rape, domestic abuse, and inheritance rights.

The project established institutional linkages that created a ‘platform’ for collaboration between NHRC and the CSOs. This platform, in the form of coalition structures - COHRAP for Plateau state and COHURANS for...
Niger state - is more active in its relationship and networking functions than other structural undertakings such as meetings or planning. The platform operationalizes collaboration, establishes an interagency forum and secures cooperation between various groups. CSO actors and NHRC indicated that collaboration has been inculcated into the approach to human rights reporting. This is transformational because, as the NHRC stakeholder indicated, in the past the human rights approach was a highly adversarial one and a singular and monumental work. She contended that, now that cooperation and collaboration in place, further advances can be made on this front. This is one of the major outcomes of the project and secures the project’s effectiveness.

What major factors have contributed to achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?

According to NHRC, a key factor contributing to the achievement of the objectives was the collaborative approach of the project. The starting point was SFCG bringing together key stakeholders in the human rights space and working to ensure cooperation and collaboration between groups that traditionally were adversaries. The interagency approach ensured cooperation between organisations working on human rights violations and the collaboration shifted the approach away from the adversarial nature, which made some organisations defensive. This was a major factor in securing the success of the project.

The theory of change utilised by SFCG in the project focuses on demand side of accountability, strengthening the skills and capability of CSO action to undertake human rights monitoring and reporting in Plateau and Niger states.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9 Number of CSOs That Filed Human Rights Reports with NHRC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of reports filed by CSOs in the past 2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 10 reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 5 reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the CSO survey, CSOs are filing human rights reports to NHRC with more reports filed in Plateau state than in Niger state. In terms of numbers (see Table), one CSO in Niger and four CSOs in Plateau said they filed 5 to 10 Human Rights Reports with the NHRC in the past two years. Three CSOs in

SFCG's theories of change are that: if we mobilize grassroots and national level stakeholders to advocate for transformative action, then key decision-makers will be more likely to undertake such action; and that if such transformative action is taken such that security and justice institutions protect everyone and enforce laws equitably and protected all human rights, then the extent of core grievances will decline. Core grievances with the lack of accountability have led to reprisal attacks; therefore a more effective justice system can act as a greater deterrent against future crime. Baseline Report July 2014, pp 7.

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Niger and four in Plateau said they had filed less than five reports and four CSOs in Niger and one in Plateau said they had not filed any Human Rights Reports in the past two years.\footnote{There is no baseline data to measure whether this has changed over the past two years.}

NHRC also reported that as a result of the project, a few communities had approached NHRC to report human rights violations that are happening in their locales.

However, affecting the overall achievement of the goal to promote accountability, the project insufficiently responds to supply-side limitations imposed by the environment. As the community survey indicates, ‘Godfatherism’ and lack of political will block the implementation of key accountability processes. The KII showed that this is partially instrumentalized through inadequate budgetary allocations and interference in decision-making. This means that key institutions such as the Police, the NHRC and the Judiciary are insufficiently prepared for an increase in demand around strengthened reporting of human rights violations. Thus, the level of frustration can rise in a community as the demand side is strengthened without adequate attention paid to the supply side.

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
Factors Contributing to Achievement of Objectives & Factors Contributing to Non-achievement of Objectives \\
\hline
CSO skills have been strengthened and human rights monitoring is strongly linked to the conflict situation & Supply side of human rights monitoring is inadequate to respond to a stronger demand \\
Demand side of human rights monitoring is strengthened & Lack of confidence by populace in accountability institutions \\
Interagency cooperation & Changing nature of conflict \\
Collaborative approach & Human rights sector is under resourced \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

In the survey, for respondents who experienced conflict in the past two years, it was evident that the conflicts were different in the two states. While the conflicts in Plateau state did not change, with respondents reporting political and religious identity conflicts in both the baseline and final surveys, the nature of conflict did change in Niger state showing signs of an increasing diversity of ‘youth crises’ types of violence away from the religious and overtly political violence reported in the baseline. Certain parts of the population in Plateau state are feeling conflict differently from others namely men, the older generation and Muslims whereas in Niger state, the men and younger generation are experiencing conflict more than others.

**Do stakeholders involved in the project have a significant role on the conflict being addressed?**

CSOs have a key role to play in the peaceful mitigation of conflict in Plateau and Niger states. The project focuses on demand side of accountability, strengthening the skills and capability of CSOs to undertake human rights monitoring in Plateau and Niger states. A vibrant CSO community was eager to learn new skills, strengthen existing ones and to collaborate with each other. To gather information about the

\begin{quote}
“The coming of the NGOs gives the rights to talk a lot even in building trust within ourselves with the neighboring communities. And even friendship. Before then, if you see your neighbor, you trust him you will think that he is a Muslim he can just kill you at any time. But now, to change it, their intervention came in and they took off and removed the inconsistency. I can fight with it you can fight but tomorrow things will change. So they came with reconciliation between us and further relationships between us and the neighboring communities; which are very good and I’m even grateful for it. “

~ Older woman, FGD, Niger State
\end{quote}
stakeholders, and their role in the project, SFCG selected seventeen organisations for KII.

Of the 17 people interviewed nine were men and eight were women and 15 of the interviewees consider themselves decision makers in their organisations. The interviewees have worked an average of 9.5 years in NGOs and lived in the state for an average of 25.5 years. The Plateau state organisations have on average been in existence for 15 years while the Niger state NGOs are younger, having been in existence for nine years.

While the 17 organisations surveyed indicated that their core work is human rights related and they are all members of the Human Rights Advocacy Coalitions - COHURANS in Niger and COHRAP in Plateau - the table illustrates the diversity of the initiatives in which these CSOs are involved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 11 Initiatives Undertaken as Part of the Coalition</th>
<th>No. of CSOs Reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work on Human Rights Case</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Forums</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace building</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training or Workshops</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Involvement</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants in the FGDs and KII emphasised the importance of the community forums. Communities rarely have a chance to air their ‘burning issues’ with key institutions available to hear. It was during these forums that issues were identified that were creating conflict in communities. The forums began a problem solving process and linked the problems back to organisations or services that could help.

While the community conflict issues might not be identified as egregious human rights violations (such as torture or extrajudicial killings) nevertheless there are issues taking place at community level that are being aggravated, at times causing violence, and communities are looking for support on finding peaceful solutions. Rape, domestic violence and ‘youth restlessness’ were the common issues raised at community level. Accountability mechanisms at the community level are important to reinforce and support and, according to the project activity reports, the community forums were effective in linking these solutions back into CSO organisations and other services.

Impact

Has the project improved the skills of CSOs in human rights monitoring and reporting?

According to interviews with CSO beneficiaries, the project has improved the skills of CSOs as illustrated in the table. The main skill learned is advocacy for human rights followed by monitoring of human rights and violence prevention. Several ‘Other’ skills mentioned were capacity building skills such as meeting facilitation, communication skills, problem solving with government and strategic planning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 12 CSO Beneficiary Skills Acquired or Strengthened</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills Identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy for human rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring of human rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict mitigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Issues generated at community forums in Niger state were attended to by the Governor although he did not affiliate himself with the project. However he or his office responded to issues that his office needed to attend to.”

~ KII, Niger State

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In the KII, respondents indicated that they were now filing human rights violation reports as a direct response to the skill building training. They had not done this before.

The NHRC stated that the number of human rights violation reports in Plateau state has increased significantly and they do not have the means to document or track them all. More reports are coming from CSOs in Plateau state and even some directly from communities.

According to one of the NHRC stakeholders interviewed, messaging about the role of NHRC was effective in helping people to understand where to channel their grievances. In fact, the NHRC interlocutor said that, due to NHRC's lack of capacity, they had turned some of the violation reports back to CSOs for them to address the issues.

**Has the project improved the capacity of CSOs to advocate for more effective accountability?**

The project has improved the capacity of CSOs to advocate for more effective accountability. This is evident through the active networks that have been established and the level of cooperation that was reported amongst accountability institutions and the CSOs. According to the KII, these networks established through a number of meetings convened by the project have been efficient at problem solving around key issues of conflict and violence in both Plateau and Niger states because it has put important stakeholders in touch with each other. The interagency nature of these networks is important and CSO activists are using their phones to contact the Police and Military or NHRC to problem solve in a way that they have never been able to do before.

According to the CSO respondents, they felt that the organisation had benefited from the project in a number of ways, which enhanced their ability to promote accountability institutions. The capacity building element was mentioned most frequently followed by new ideas. The Other category included new approaches, collaboration skills, and enhancing the credibility of individual NGOs.

**Table 13 Project Benefits**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits from project</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capacity building</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New ideas</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater exposure</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**“The skills were in line with our needs because Plateau state has suffered a lot of crisis. We have poor reporting methods even with human rights violations and as to the use of force by the military on civilians, we can hardly report. There were reports but not properly documented so you can hardly have a document to put your hand on. And then you have sexual abuses sexual offences by armed men that were there prior to reporting violence within the community and then there was poor monitoring and reporting and no documentation even where agencies or CSOs were working on it but then the documentation was not in full. So the training really helped in doing this. It has followed a trend on human rights violation looked for policy for change and it is on the decrease in Plateau state. It is not like before the intervention of this project.”**

~ KII Plateau State

**“I think as (a CBO) we are better equipped because I am now in working relationship with other NGOs, like in the case of a girl that came from Kaduna and was stranded. She ran away from her parents because of early marriage. They wanted to marry her. When I got the news, I immediately call the chairman for child protection network. He is a member of COHURANS. He referred me to Women Affairs. I would like to tell you that the girl spent three month here with them in Niger State but now they have been able to take her back to her people and advise them. They have promised they won't marry her out again, she would have to make her own choice and they will marry her. To that extent, I think I have a kind of way, I have people to call on and if there are problems that have to do with police, I think I have people I can call in civil defense.”**

~ KII, Niger State

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Has the project increased citizens’ knowledge on accountability processes and the work of CSOs to promote them?

As previously discussed, citizens demonstrated an understanding of roles of accountability mechanisms during conflict except the role of the NGOs where do not know was the most frequent answer. To further examine the knowledge on accountability processes, the community survey inquired about the level of satisfaction that community members have about various accountability institutions. The level of satisfaction of Police, Security Forces and the Judiciary or Courts was measured at the baseline and again in the final survey to determine the change across five institutions. This is different than level of trust in that satisfaction speaks to the specific roles and responsibilities of accountability institutions and if the public is satisfied with their work. Contingent on this is trust so one would expect if trust levels are rising then satisfaction levels will rise.

Trust levels remained much the same for all in Niger with Security Forces declining marginally (-4%) and trust in Police increasing a small amount (2%). The trust in Judiciary saw a decline of just under one tenth (-8%) but, perhaps more interesting, is that over one fifth of Niger respondents (21%) said they do not know whether they trust the Judiciary or not. In Plateau state the level of trust of Police declined significantly with just under one quarter (-24%) fewer respondents saying they trust the police while the trust in Security Forces decreased slightly at just under one tenth (-7%) of respondents. In Plateau state the trust of the Judiciary went up slightly (5%).

The level of satisfaction with various institutions was measured at the baseline and again in the final survey to assess the change. Satisfaction levels with all institutions improved in Plateau with NHRC seeing the biggest improvement (34%). Respondents in both Plateau and Niger reported similar decreases in satisfaction with the government (Plateau -13%, Niger -14%) from the baseline. In Niger the level of satisfaction with Security Forces decreased slightly (-4%). In Niger satisfaction with the media did not change.
People have a better understanding of the roles of the accountability mechanisms which is reflected in higher satisfaction levels because they are more aware of the service delivery of these institutions. Trust is a separate measure, a more general concept than satisfaction and is not related to satisfaction. Trust is about the quality of leadership and policy.

**Has the project increased collaboration among CSO’s in each target state?**

The findings of the baseline revealed the poor networking relationship between organisations and agencies in peace work. This situation suggested that while groups might be working very hard to resolve injustices in nonviolent ways, they may be dissipating energy and weakening their impact. Eight coalition-building workshops and two CSO strategy workshops were held during the life of the project. See table for a summary of activities completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 14 Project Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Activities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Workshops to increase CSO skills in monitoring, reporting and advocacy for accountability processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Meetings between CSOs and local law and security agents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Project themed radio programming to promote public engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Community forums to tackle accountability issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 CSO joint strategy development workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 CSO coalition-building meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 CSO and NHRC joint strategy development workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 CSO and NHRC follow-up strategy meetings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This collaborative approach brought both coordination for a more significant impact with the same amount of effort and collaboration which ensures efficiencies and lack of duplication.

In both Plateau and Niger states, the respondents recognised that the investment by the project had increased collaboration between CSOs involved in accountability. Only one respondent in each of the states said they do not know whether collaboration had increased.

**Has the project increased collaboration between the NHRC and CSOs?**

In both Plateau and Niger states, the respondents agreed that the project had developed a platform for collaboration between the NHRC and CSOs working on human rights issues. In Plateau state only one respondent disagreed.

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14 Baseline Report, pp. 22.
In terms of relationships, in the baseline FGDs, relationships between ‘agencies’ were identified by two groups as Cordial and by 3 groups as Not Cordial. Two of the groups did not know about the relationships. (It is not clear from the data which agencies are being referred to.) In the baseline KII, 57% of interviewees who answered the question about relationships said relations are Cordial, 4% said they are Very Cordial and 39% said they are Not Cordial. (Who the participants are in the relationships is not clear.)

The final evaluation results in Plateau state and Niger state differ slightly showing a more active relationship in Plateau state which seems to have been sustained over a longer period of time. In Niger the most frequent response showed that during the project this important relationship was formed between NHRC and CSOs.

The amount of collaboration between CSOs and NHRC has risen in both Plateau state and Niger state although to a lesser extent in Niger state. Key informants said the regular coalition meetings convened through the project permitted participants to build relationships that did not exist in the past between each other and between organizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 15 Relationship between CSOs and NHRC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of interaction between CSOs and NHRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the relationship began</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 5 years ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 2 and 5 years ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within the past 2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe relationship with NHRC compared to 2 years ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not as good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“We did not even report to them (NHRC), we did not even know they were there [before the project]. It is when this project started that we knew about NHRC. We didn’t have any relationship before the project started.”

~ KII, Niger State

**Are there any unexpected negative or positive effects of the project?**

In terms of positive effects, the most valuable outcomes of the project show that collaboration among CSOs and between CSOs and accountability institutions has reaped benefits for those who are working on human rights work. The NHRC reported that the project had enabled a shift from an adversarial approach around human rights violations where finger pointing and blame was an alienating influence promoting a perpetrator/victim approach and creating obstacles to resolution and prevention of violence. The shift has meant that NHRC is taking a more collaborative and constructive approach around human rights, which enabled more effective work to be done. The interagency forums and committee enabled collaboration across sectors and is being used for problem solving around community conflict issues.

Some extracts from the quantitative research follow:

“To mitigate the challenges of human rights abuses there is a need to be more proactive, to get individuals within our communities to own the process, to monitor and report human rights abuses. At our own level, we should be meeting up and documenting such violations within the communities. Get the community to own the process. Like directing them and teaching them what to do. It will be much better.”

~ CSO stakeholder KII

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“Apart from the forum with the CSOs there was a forum Search created with the Commission talking to the people in the Judiciary. I was really surprised at the extent of the gaps between the Commission and the Judiciary so it was a really good forum, a platform for us to see how we could work together.”

~ KII Plateau

“There is what we call peace building from below. That is the kind of approach. Not just addressing people on the radio or talking to one big man here. You go down to the grass root and interact with the victims, the youth who are doing it there with these meetings. Market women, what they suffered what they know. That approach has really helped the situation.”

~ KII with Police, Plateau state

The NHRC stated that this project had a positive impact for the Commission in forming relationships and publicising their mandate which they had not had the resources to undertake systematically. This impact worked both and importantly to other accountability mechanisms and to the population.

Sustainability

Do the coalitions have the capacity to continue to operate as a coalition beyond the life of the project?

The CSOs have the capacity to operate as a coalition beyond the life of the project. The focus was on the ‘platform’ which is a structural response with requisite meetings informed by the strategy or roadmap developed by the group. However, the structure or formal aspects is not where the power is in this project. The power is in the relationships and in the interagency network – the informal -- that has been developed. The CSOs involved in human rights work are busy individuals and they are not interested in participating in meetings for initiatives that lack clear strategic objectives, that do not have any real immediate outcomes or that might not be funded. These types of initiatives are not necessarily the best use of their time or meagre resources.

The value of this project, according to the KIIs, is two-fold.

1. The relationships that have formed and the problem solving nature of this network in each state.
2. The rooting of a collaborative approach causing a shift to a more collaborative and constructive space rather than as it was formerly – adversarial.

This is reaping benefits for important human rights work in Niger and Plateau state generally.

What is in place to ensure that your own human rights monitoring will continue?

The CSO stakeholders were asked about what is in place to ensure that their own human rights monitoring will continue. They mentioned relationships, new skills (advocacy for human rights, media, monitoring of human rights and violence prevention) and the Human Rights Monitoring Manual most frequently. When asked specifically about how useful they expect the Manual to be for their work, most (13 out of 17) said it will be very useful for their work one said it would be useful and three did not know if it would be useful.

From the KIIs it was apparent that the response of NHRC will also be important to their continuation of rights reporting. The fact that the NHRC recognises the coalition’s value and will take it seriously is extremely important and some level of follow up on some aspects of the CSO’s reports will ensure continuing interest.

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Has the project developed a platform for sustained collaboration between CSOs and the NHRC?

Yes, the project has developed a platform for sustained collaboration between CSOs and the NHRC according to all the CSO respondents and NHRC stakeholders except for one respondent in Plateau state. This is both formal and informal. Formally, the coalition allows for structured interaction and planning between members. The NHRC suggested that the coalitions should register with the headquarters of the Commission to be formally recognised. Informally, in the shape of personal relationships between actors in different agencies, this has enabled problem solving and increased response to human rights violations as each successful intervention has motivated CSOs to continue.

Has a meaningful “handing over” or exit strategy been developed that enable the project’s partners to build or continue their own peacebuilding initiatives?

Creating a roadmap or strategy for the operations of the coalitions was a key part of the activities in the second year of the project. The strategy sought to lock in collaborative approaches and use the network that had been formed to strengthen human rights monitoring work in Niger and Plateau state and is a central part of the exit strategy for the project.

This road map provides direction and focus to the CSOs in terms of moving forward once the project is over according to almost three quarters of respondents (12 out of 17) from the CSOs. Other benefits of the road map recognised by the respondents include:

- improved scope of view of human rights violations
- getting information promptly
- helped in partnering better with security agencies
- helped in monitoring, reporting and documentation
- strengthened organization’s capacity
- helped in building synergy between sister NGOs
- helped in mainstreaming human rights into other thematic areas of focus in one organization, and has enhanced their planning skills
- provided focus and direction for organisations and enhanced internal accountability

About one third (5 out of 17) of CSO respondents were skeptical in terms of how the roadmap exercise contributes to the organization’s ongoing involvement in human rights monitoring. This relates mainly to the lack of financial resources to invest for the facilitation of meetings, transport and other necessary costs.

“[FGD participant gave an instance of a situation she had come across last month] A young woman had been forced into early marriage by her parents to a young man, they had a child and the marriage broke down. The woman in question loves her daughter and did not want to give the child back to her in laws, she ran away with the daughter but the father in law was able to track her down and retrieve the child, the woman is heartbroken and this participant feels she cannot help her because the woman in question is not her relative. The participant was of the opinion that only families can step into such issues of violations and see it through, so we had to disabuse her mind to that notion, all she needs to do is to get the COHURANS involved and she does not need to be visible in the matter, as a concerned neighbour, all she needs to do is to report, the coalition will take it from there.”

~ Young Woman, FGD, Niger State
for some of the activity sets that the CSOs had agreed on. The KII respondents indicated that a level of financing was important to keep activities going as the poverty stricken environment was an obstacle for many things. In a community forum, if transport isn’t paid to community member, it is unlikely that they would show up because of the need to find their living for the day.

The human rights community has suffered from under resourcing and a lack of coordination and collaboration in the past. Thus many individual organisations have been working on the monumental issues of rights violations in Plateau and Niger states without making significant progress. The human rights organisations see that it is possible to work effectively (with less resources) now that they have the contacts in place for problem solving through the network that has been created and direct contacts into NHRC.

The NHRC thought that this project was an excellent starting point and that it has helped set the NHRC on track to begin achieving its mandate in a way that it had not been previously.

**Analysis**

**Effectiveness**

The project was largely effective in the objectives that it set out. The CSOs are in a much stronger position to strengthen their human rights violation reporting in Plateau and Niger states and strong institutional and relational linkages exist into some of the accountability institutions. A special collaborative approach has been fostered with NHRC and this will ensure benefits are reaped for some time to come.

While peacebuilding projects have aspirational goals, examining some of the assumptions underpinning the design and the theories of change for the project raises a few questions. The focus of the objectives is on the demand side of accountability – strengthening human rights violation reporting. However the goal speaks to both the demand and supply side of the accountability equation. That is to say the assumption underpinning this model is that supporting the demand side of accountability will generate a response on the supply side of accountability namely to those institutions tasked by the state with providing justice, law enforcement, and monitoring of human rights.

The evidence of the community perception of the change in the level of trust over the two years of the project suggests a number of lines of enquiry. The level of conflict in the state is relevant as the trust measures the perception of the response of the core institutions to the violence. Thus, for Plateau state, the level of trust decreased substantially for the police and some for the security, while it increased for the judiciary. This could reflect a number of factors including more public activity (due to higher levels of violence/conflict) on the part of these institutions. It could also reflect more realistic expectations of the role of these institutions through increased knowledge that the respondents gained during the project action.

For Niger state, the level of trust for the police increased while trust in the security forces and the judiciary decreased over the project period. This could reflect the nature of the conflict or violence issue, which in Niger state related to youth issues. Drugs and criminality related to drugs and ‘youth restlessness’ and to idleness are on the rise in Niger state and the level of trust by the community could reflect the public’s support for a law enforcement response by police to this situation. For the military and the judiciary it could reflect the increasing levels of knowledge of their role by the community but because of the
constraints on the institutions they do not have the ability to respond differently, thus a level of frustration in the performance increases. A nuanced examination of these particular institutions will clarify the changes that might be possible from generating more of a demand in the community for their services.

It was recognised that changes in policing rules, such as new rules around bail, had made a significant impact in the community. Seeing and hearing this information in the community forums ensured that the community trusted the information that the police had been sharing through posters in their police stations. CSO actors suggested that the constant changes in military leadership in their communities made it difficult to regularly engage with that institution. Nevertheless, FGD participants suggested the human rights approach was effective in constraining bad behaviour of military people. Community members understood how to report military people who misbehaved in their communities and the community was experiencing a change. Interviews with the NHRC and the Police suggested that the constraints on their institutions by government impacts on their ability to respond to the increased demand that this project created. The NHRC spoke about budget constraints limiting their ability to respond and the Police spoke about interference in decision making from the political level.

The effectiveness of the project is evident at the objective level. At the goal level, while only aspirational, the increasing demand reported by NHRC is limited at the very least by the constraints of the accountability institutions from their government supervisors.

Impact
The impact of the project is measured by the change in the knowledge and attitude or behavior of the targeted population brought about by the project. This can be viewed through the evidence collected about the changing perceptions of satisfaction by the community respondents of the seven accountability institutions identified in the baseline namely the media, civil society, government, the NHRC, the military, the police and the judiciary.

Across both Plateau and Niger states, the change over the course of the project as reflected in the difference between the baseline and the end line survey results, shows that levels of satisfaction are changing positively very significantly across most of the accountability institutions targeted by the project. This is particularly positive for NHRC, the judiciary, the police, the media and the CSOs. Plateau state, where the SFCG office and the project implementing partner Centre for Advocacy on Justice and Rights (CAJR) is located, has a higher rate of positive change, while Niger state where Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP) was the project implementer, seems to reflect a lesser, albeit still positive, change. A number of areas of consideration could reflect this achievement such as the level of engagement and leadership of the project implementer, the impact of the radio programmes and / or the ongoing work and leadership of the particular coalition structures that were put in place. A more nuanced look into the reasons could have strengthened project action. The change in satisfaction levels with government in both Niger and Plateau states is significantly negative as is, to a lesser degree, satisfaction with the military in Niger state. In so far as the project action is considered, this suggests the impact of the project has been very positive overall, and the investment of this project has contributed to this significant positive change.

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15 The radio programmes were tailored specifically for individual states and the contract for airing was done bilaterally. Niger state had some issues with the consistency of airing of the programmes.
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The evidence also suggests that more work is required with state/civil society relations across different levels of government including the state and the local government areas. The public suggests that impunity of perpetrators of conflict is related to the protection of perpetrators by political operatives.

The most significant impact of the project with regards to the goal is to improve the profile of the NHRC with the population and other accountability mechanisms as well as to strengthen the reporting of human rights violations through enhanced NHCR and CSO collaboration. The knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of accountability mechanisms is in place. NHRC said that one of the project impacts was the shift in approach to human rights reporting from adversarial to collaborative. This supports the mandate of the NHRC and will reap benefits in the future. The NHRC has established desk officers in each state, however, it is hamstrung by an inadequate budget and a shortage of human resources to respond sufficiently to the increasing number of reports they are receiving. In the validation meeting, NHRC indicated they sent some of the violation incidents to the NGOs/CSOs to be addressed directly.

**Sustainability**

Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. In this instance, the benefits realized namely the skill sets and capabilities of the CSOs to engage in human rights monitoring will exist after the project is finished. The CSOs in the project all stated that reporting human rights is their core work and that the project opened their eyes to better and more effective monitoring and reporting and wider skills sets. On average they have been working for over 15 years in Plateau state and 9 years in Niger state thus the assumption that this will improve their work over the coming years is likely to hold true.

At the goal level, the sustainability of the project will be impacted by a number of factors including the levels of conflict in the society. With a divisive election approaching and Boko Haram expanding, it can be assumed that the level of violence will increase and this could impact on the sustainability at the goal level. In terms of impact, the project has made some serious inroads into strategic areas of change. Developing the institutional linkages and relationships with the accountability institutions has, according to the NHRC, changed their approach and understanding of human rights violation reporting. They suggested that this project has shifted their thinking and approach to their work in Plateau and Niger states from an adversarial approach framed by victim and perpetrator to more collaborative approaches. This impact will continue to have resonance in the work of the NHRC and enhances the sustainability of the investment in this project. This is likely a stronger impact in Plateau state than in Niger state, but could easily be increased through replicating and strengthening project actions in Niger state.

With the police, the process of change has begun with the approach the institution is taking to their work. Human rights education is an integral part of the training now and working with the community to secure the community is a different approach called community policing. Forging strong links to CSOs working on human rights in the community has valuable outcomes for the police to generate networks that can support them in their community policing approach. Thus the objectives and impact of this project support the type of approach

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“We will meet from time to time. There are other fora where we meet. Since the idea (of interagency collaboration) has been introduced and even at our own various levels, we now believe in sort of interactive relationships with people. Because that is one thing with interagency; just even with civilians now. You know what happened during the Salah festival that created tension in the community. In the past we would have just said we issued order on so so day this so so time but now we work with other organisations and community leaders to reduce tensions.”

~ KII, with Police, Plateau state
the police have adopted securing sustainability for this project action. The police interlocutors referred to this as a ‘peacebuilding from below approach’ which has had a significant impact on their work around violence and conflict in Plateau state.

Lessons Learned

Unintended Outcomes

It was reported that the project had the effect of shifting the discourse about human rights in Plateau state. This shift in discourse, wherein human rights was far more centrally located on the agenda of the media, then had a knock-on effect on behaviour and even affected meetings of some of the accountability institutions (particularly the security forces). The amount of abuses by state security forces seemed to reduce and the media seemed to take up the issues more fully. Some CSOs involved in human rights work saw an increase in demand to come to certain venues to inform and educate about human rights. The security forces reported that the discussion had entered into their management meetings as feedback from the coalition/interagency meetings, and overall this was seen as a very significant unintended outcome of the project.

Operational Issues

Finding the right balance between high level meetings and community forums is important. Bringing issues of ordinary people into the political space is key to ensure a credible process. The project stakeholders understood that making connections, building informal relationships between accountability institutions actors and key actors was a significant moment and enabled a whole series of actions. However, it was mentioned that at times the key decision makers were unavailable and junior people were sent to the meetings and it seemed some fatigue set in. The real gains of combining both formal action and informal action need to be linked to real issues from the community. All the project stakeholders insisted that this project should be continued and deserved more investment in terms of funds from donors.

Media Work

NHRC appreciated the media programming as did the CSOs. NHRC thought the media programming had contributed to a broader sensitisation around the role and responsibilities of NHRC and to increasing the amount of air time dedicated to human rights issues. This put human rights on to the media agenda and CSOs and NHRC saw increased demand for their representation at various fora. Despite an initial investment during the baseline to identify specific radio stations people listen to, the radio programmes were not listened to widely. They were centrally produced by SFCG and delivered to radio stations. However, listenership indicates that people are busy and many of the FGDs suggested they do not have time to listen to radio and would prefer other media channels, such as television.

Niger state had issues with continuity of the radio programmes and, while Plateau state played the radio programme, it was indistinguishable from other radio programmes people listen to. The media aspect of this project, while valuable in its impact, could have been leveraged for more impact if there was a level of ownership to support state level project outcomes. Ownership could provide some momentum and drive to the project if modalities are put into place to develop a supporting media strategy based on state level project stakeholders.
Community Forums
According to project stakeholders and community respondents, the community forums were considered to be a very valuable part of the project investment. Three reasons were evident in the data about the value of these forums. Firstly, on a cost/benefit analysis perspective they reaped great benefits for the project. For a relatively small investment (compared to high level meetings with project stakeholders), a huge amount of problem solving was undertaken that can effectively reduce levels of conflict and violence at local level. The police referred to this as peace building from below and, integral to this, is the notion of human rights. The involvement of police in community forums was hugely helpful to policing generally in these communities, some of which are ‘no-go’ communities where one ‘people group’ cannot visit another ‘people group’.

Secondly, the community forums gave communities a voice for their own burning issues that accountability institutions did not have direct access to. It also helped to recognise that rape and domestic violence, for instance, are social norms that are changing and to make these sorts of behaviours more and more unacceptable in the eyes of the community and not just in law.

Thirdly, according to the young people, they need more education on human rights. NHRC indicated they are promoting five fundamental freedoms but other constitutional rights available to Nigerians such as rights to education or health care are dependent on budgetary allocations so they are not promoting those rights. The FGD respondents suggested the best way to share information about human rights is through community forums in a people to people approach which then can be reinforced by the media.

Human Rights
Human rights are transformational around the social conflicts in Plateau and Niger states. The project was a small investment into a very large field and is a positive step. The level of knowledge about human rights is low. The NHRC said they educate people only on the five freedoms as the other rights are not guaranteed by the constitution. There is a lot of work to be done on human rights as FGD participants stated which has the ability to shift the discourse in Nigeria. The police spoke about it as integral to their approach and suggested that dignity and respect which are elements of human rights are a powerful concept in conflict mitigation in Nigeria. Many young people suggested that they need further education about human rights and to understand how to operationalise this education in their environment.

Recommendations
1. Develop a targeted strategy to both specific ‘no-go communities’ and target groups such as veterans or political parties to reduce violence and put into place conflict mitigation mechanisms that address specific group needs (a code of conduct for peaceful elections with youth wings of parties for instance).

   Political violence is created by politicians and their supporters. Inter-religious and inter-ethnic violence are considered identity conflicts. Political violence generally thrives better in divided communities especially those affected by identity issues such as religion and ethnicity. These are quantifiably

"With all that happened I will say we need more training on human rights because I think many people in the community do not know their rights. Let us not just sit down here and pretend as if we know our right, we do not so we need more training on human right because we are like Oliver Twist, we need more. Give us more training."

~Young man, FGD, Plateau state
different types of violence and require tailored responses that build resilience to prevent violence. A targeted strategy to reduce violence and conflict selecting specific small interest groups such as ex-servicemen (veterans), at risk youth etc. could be a valuable approach to reducing violence and human rights abuses.

2. Conduct a CSO review into the various accountability mechanisms used for conflict mitigation in Plateau state (in particular) to identify issues constraining supply of services to populations experiencing conflict.

Accountability institutions each have their government directors who are in more ways than not influencing the decision making with the institutions under their remit. While inter-religious and inter-ethnic violence are a reality in Plateau and Niger states, building tolerance and resilience is important in these communities. However, there is a need to address political violence in a direct and forthright manner as each accountability institution is constrained in its response and ability by the government. Further work to develop a responsive strategy to support building state/society relations will benefit the work of these accountability institutions.

3. Invest in community forums where accountability mechanisms are invited such as the police, the military and NHRC in specific communities experiencing violence or conflict to give a voice to people who are struggling with resolving conflict peacefully. Support follow up visits to ensure that actionable items from the community forums are addressed by relevant stakeholders. Training of action committees in action items and human rights monitoring could be part of a strategy to deploy the power of human rights more fully in communities experiencing conflict.

4. Training on human rights issues requires further investment and should adopt a ‘people-to-people’ approach and target those experiencing conflict more than others as a first step.

Further work is required in the accountability institutions to bring them fully on board to the shifting discourse around human rights and to support them to act in more positive ways to prevent violence and conflict and political conflict in particular. Human rights have a transformational capacity and more opportunity exists to secure the initial investment and bring peaceful and dynamic change in Plateau and Niger states.

5. Based on research of the accountability mechanisms and with their consent, a systematic approach with a strategic accountability programme should follow on a CSO strategy that embraces both formal linkages (i.e. structures and processes) and informal linkages (i.e. relationships and personal). This kind of strategy seeks to forward a collaborative approach shifting from the confrontational or combative – and that can challenge existing norms and social practices. Operating in different ways in different times taking into context the prevailing political economy of the Plateau and Niger states environments can ensure that opportunities are leveraged to promote positive change. A targeted strategy supported by an understanding of the conflict, those most affected and those spoilers such as some veterans, can ensure that any investment into the human rights sector will be effective. Further investment is required to ensure the opening of political space for ordinary people in Plateau and Niger states to bring their own realities into the policy and political arena. Aligning accountability mechanisms with the interests of the wider population is an important part of the strategy.

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6. A media strategy bringing in the various stakeholders including the radio stations, the television station and leveraging other forms of media should accompany any CSO strategy around accountability. It should be concurrent with the strategy and have the buy-in of the media stakeholders. Leveraging social media to teach blogging skills to CSO actors, rumour management to media stakeholders and other social media skills to activists could enable a shifting discourse around human rights.

**Conclusion**

Supporting civil society does not automatically lead to strengthening of democratic processes. Accountability programming is complex requiring action along two axes – the formal and informal spaces as well as the collaborative and combative axis. To align accountability institutions with public interest requires strong political and power shifts and requires action in both the political and the civil spaces. One cannot expect a linear relationship between the inputs and the outcomes. This project has significant outcomes compared to the smallish size of the investment. With a systemic strategy, there is much more that can be done to effect positive change around accountability in Niger and Plateau states.