

REPORT OF EBONYI STATE OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP (OGP) ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES FROM FEBRUARY 21ST – 23RD FEBRUARY 2018, AT ABAKALIKI

REPORT PREPARED BY DEVELOPMENT & INTEGRITY INTERVENTION GOAL FOUNDATION



Venue: Akanu Ibiam International Conference Centre Abakaliki, Ebonyi State

Introduction: The government of Ebonyi State organized a 3-day training on Open Government Partnership (OGP) for Public sector officials and Civil Society Organizations in Ebonyi State as part of the conditions for joining the OGP. Development & Integrity Intervention Goal Foundation was responsible for the mobilization of CSOs and was among the Civil Society Organizations that participated in the events. The event was well attended by over 60 Civil Society actors operating in the state. The disaggregation may not be possible because we were not in charge of the secretariat however the turn up was excellent despite short notice.

Day 1, February 21, 2018: Inception Meeting

The first day of the activity was a preliminary meeting with MDAs and CSOs, regarded as inception meeting to welcome the guest from Abuja OGP Secretariat and to prepare leaders for the task ahead. There were welcome remarks by public officials and CSOs representatives, brief on principle and objectives of OGP by the OGP sub-national Advisor Dr. Haruna Abdullahi, followed by importance of CSOs in OGP frame work presented by Civil Society Advisor Stanley Achonu, thereafter, Mr Jideani Chukwuemeka took us on the necessity of harmonizing the interest of public sector and CSOs. The inception meeting was declared open by the Secretary to the State Government Dr Bernard Odo. It was a joint meeting for both the Public sector and Civil Society. The 2nd day was for public sector only while the 3rd day was for Civil Society. The



activities featured participants from public sectors, Civil Society; Faith based organizations, academia, and professional bodies. It was aimed at educating the Public sector and Civil Society on what OGP is all about, formation of steering committee and craft commitments for State Action Plan as the State has signed unto OGP. Ebonyi OGP focal person Mrs. Ugo Nnachi announced that Ebonyi state government has signed unto OGP and that Ebonyi State is the 2nd in the Southern part of Nigeria to sign unto OGP after Anambra.

Day 2 February 22, 2018: Sensitization and Priority Setting Training on OGP for Public Sector Officials in Ebonyi State: This was specifically targeted at Public Officials, so we don't have the full report, thus is not captured.

DAY 3 February 23, 2018: Sensitization and Priority Setting Training on OGP for Civil Society Organizations in Ebonyi State

The activity started with opening prayers said at 10:12am. Some participants were called to the high table to declare the function open. After which the high table was dissolved and activity for the day started in earnest. Dr. Haruna Abdullahi sub-national Adviser on OGP and Mrs. Ugo Nnachi Ebonyi OGP focal person and also SSA to the governor on donor agencies gave address of welcome.

First Session: Introduction to Open Government Partnership (OGP) by Stanley Achonu, Civil Society Adviser OGP National Secretariat

He defined OGP as a global coalition of reformers from government and civil society, working to make government transparent, participatory and accountable, to truly serve and empower citizens. It is a platform for governments, civil society actors, and other stakeholders interested in working together to make government more open and accountable. It is a voluntary and domestically driven initiative. By that it means that countries/states are evaluated on progress against goals they set for themselves (while adopting international standards of good practice is encouraged, it's not a mandatory part of the initiative.)

OGP is a community of people who identify local problems, proffer local solution, collaboratively implement the solution to meet international standards and then evaluate progress made.

Brief history of OGP: OGP is celebrating its 7th anniversary this year (2018). It was founded in 2011 by 8 countries. Today 76 countries with 11 African countries signing unto it namely: Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Kenya, Malawi, Tunisia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, **Nigeria** and Burkina Faso. It has 2000+ Civil Society Members, 7 Multilateral/Development/Donor Partners and 2500+ Commitments.

Eligibility Criteria: For a government to join OGP, it must exhibit a demonstrated commitment to open government in four key areas:



1. Fiscal transparency,
2. Access to information,
3. Public Disclosure of Assets
4. Citizen engagement

Nigeria OGP history

- Nigeria became Eligible in 2014
- At the Anti-Corruption Summit hosted by the British Prime Minister at Marlborough house in the UK on 11th May, 2016, President Muhammadu Buhari announced that Nigeria will be joining the OGP.
- On the 22nd of June 2016, the Honorable Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami (SAN) sent Nigeria's letter of intent to the Global Secretariat.
- On 27th July, 2016, Nigeria was confirmed as a participating country by the OGP Secretariat.
- In October 2016, Nigeria held a retreat on OGP in Kaduna and started the process of drafting a National Action Plan (NAP).

Nigeria established a 42 member National Steering Committee made up of 21 members from Government and 21 from Civil Society and the Private Sector

- Nigeria NAP was approved at OGP Summit in Paris in December, 2016.
- Implementation of Nigeria NAP started in January, 2017.
- Many States are in the process of joining the OGP-Kaduna, Kano and Anambra

The Four Principles of OGP

- Transparency
- Accountability
- Citizen Engagement
- Technology and Innovation

OGP Process

- Preparation of National/State Action Plan through a multi-stakeholder process, with active engagement of citizens and the civil society
- National/State Action Plans are at the very heart of OGP.
- The NAP/SAP should be ambitious, effective and relevant to open government.
- All governments who subscribe to Open Government Partnership are expected to prepare an annual self-assessment report every year.
- OGP is overseen by an international steering committee of nine governments and nine leading civil society representatives.



- OGP is overseen by National/State Steering Committee at National/State Level

2nd Session: The Role of Civil Society in the Open Government Partnership (OGP) by Abayomi Akinbo, Coordinator, Open Alliance

Abayomi Akinbo said that the purpose of the civil society in the OGP is summarily for CO-CREATION (*speaking with one voice*). Open Alliance is a coalition of CSO and at the time of reporting 100 CSOs have registered with them.

The civil society is a key stakeholder in the OGP framework and provides insights, balance and implementation support for the realization of commitments. Considering that this is a co-creation, it is not a place for confrontational approach. Engagement must be hinged on co-creation and implementation of the State Action Plan. The Civil Society performs a supporting role for the government in the OGP process. Support on the basis that government and Civil Society have equal partnership.

State Action Plan Development

- The Civil Society comes together with the government to create the State Action Plan (SAP)
- The Civil Society stance must be such that government does NOT impose on the civil society.
- Civil society understands gaps needed to be filled and the OGP is an opportunity for CSOs to communicate those gaps to government for the good of the people

Implementation

- Following the creation and submission of the SAP, CSOs must work with government to implement the commitments as contained.
- **Tracking** – Engagement with government to track the implementation of the commitments, note the loopholes for improvements and keep government side on its toes.

Working Groups

- **Working groups** are formed in partnership with the government. CSOs identify the working group they would like to be part of but must form the working groups with the government MDAs.
- **The function** of the working group is to have non state and state actors i.e. CSOs and government work on commitments of their focus areas e.g. Fiscal Transparency Working Group (FTWG)

Reporting

- Reporting an **objective** assessment of the implementation of commitments. It is important that it is as objective as possible



- **Tracking** – CSOs track the implementation progress of the commitments, note the loopholes for improvements and keep government side on its toes. Remember it is a civil society-government effort.

Development Partners

- Civil Society partners with development partners to carry out activities and for other support.
- Support in terms of funding and International peer- learning and review opportunities for government and civil society. Development Partners are also crucial to resolving conflicts that can emanate across partners

Independent Reporting Mechanism

- Each year, the government is expected to carry out a self-assessment and release a report
- The Civil society reviews the self-assessment report and provides feedback through a shadow report. Remember the **reporting stage**
- The Independent Reviewer collates information from the civil society and government to have a concrete and final document on implementation progress

Creating Awareness

- Awareness of citizens is crucial and CSOs along with the media play a major role in the OGP framework. Media plays a central role in amplifying efforts and continuous engagement in the OGP Process. CSOs can work with the media to educate people on OGP and what it seeks to achieve
- Town hall meetings. Articles. Radio sessions. Social Media. TV sessions etc.

Funding: CSOs can also provide funding for implementation of activities. CSOs can fund working group meetings where possible. Remember OGP is a co-creation process

Open Alliance: Open Alliance can provide support in engagement on OGP, tracking commitments and guiding CSO working groups. According to the facilitator, Development & Integrity Intervention Goal Foundation is already member of the Open Alliance and has been following the OGP Process

OGP Secretariat

To provide support and monitoring of the implementation of the commitments through the Independent Reporting Mechanism

Development Partners

- Civil Society partners with development partners to carry out activities and for other support. Support in terms of funding and International peer- learning and review



opportunities for government and civil society. Development Partners are also crucial to resolving conflicts that can emanate across partners.

Private Sector

- To provide funding and application of technology for multi-stakeholder coordination and tracking of OGP commitments
- The private sector is part of the non-state actor. They must be involved in the OGP process of the state.

Break-Out Session: The participants were grouped into 4 session to craft commitments which was done and presented to the house

Setting up of Steering Committee: The state government chose 30 Member steering committees, 15 from the State actors and 15 from Non state actors, however as at the time of this report, the Government Members are yet unknown and we hope to get that later. Non-state actors' steering Committee was formed through rigorous nomination process by the CSOs themselves.

At the end of excise, the following Organizations below emerged as members of the steering Committees.

S/N	ORGANIZATION
1	Development & Integrity Intervention Goal Foundation
2	Safe Motherhood Association
3	Agape Foundation
4	Methodist Care Ministry
5	(SUCDEV) Catholic Diocese of Abakaliki
6	Initiative for Social Change in Africa
7	Transparency and Economic Development initiative
8	Neighborhood Initiative for Women Advancement
9	Participatory Development Alternatives
10	Nigeria Union of Journalist
11	ASSU/ACADEMICS
12	Human Right and Conflict Resolution Centre
13	Nigeria Bar Association
14	Health for the Society
15	Family Reformation & Community Development

Conclusion

OGP benefits both the state actors and non-state actors. State government that signed unto OGP gains from the global World. One of the gains is that the World Banks gives sum of \$21million to any state that signed unto it. Developmental partners also like to do business with such states



because they are seen as State that is implementing the best practices. There is nothing in this world compared to citizen involvement in Governance, and OGP assures that. We hope Ebonyi State would move on to next stage/level.

