

Influencing Strategy On Shrinking And Shifting Civic Space

Oxfam in Nigeria



OXFAM



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This strategy provides an analysis of the trend of civic space and maps Oxfam Nigeria's influencing strategy towards improving and expanding civic spaces from 2020 to 2025.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

"This Civic Space Strategy was drafted by Amy Oyekunle and Iheoma Obibi ((Mylid Company Limited, Lagos, Nigeria) with support from Oxfam in Nigeria and Oxfam Novib after due consultations with key stakeholders led by Henry Ushie. Some of the findings build on outcomes of a desk review and a workshop analyzing strategic responses to shifting and shrinking civic space in Nigeria facilitated by Salima Ahmadou and some Oxfam partners. We would like to express our appreciation to all partners, interview respondents and colleagues - especially The Country Director Constant Tchona and The Head of Influencing and Public Engagement Ramatu Umar Bako and Bettina Huber - for their unflinching support, for dedicating their time and expertise, and for sharing their reflection and advice despite the difficult circumstances imposed by the COVID-crisis."

Overview

Mobilizing the power of people to overcome poverty and injustice is at the heart of Oxfam's mission and vision. To realize this vision, people need space to speak out and organize against injustice and the root causes of poverty, without fear of repercussions. Yet civic space, as the oxygen for people's voices, and vital prerequisite for a rights-based approach to development, is currently shrinking on a global scale.

People in many countries around the world face serious restrictions and repression when exercising their basic rights. This includes citizens who raise their voices against corruption and political dysfunction, organizations that save lives and provide basic services to people in need, communities that defend their sustainable livelihoods and demand a fair share of natural resources, and activists who fight for gender justice. In 109 countries, civic space is closed, repressed or obstructed and only 4% of the world's population live in countries with open civic space.

Oxfam works together with allies and partners around the world to protect and expand the space for all people, and especially for marginalised groups, to speak out, assemble and organise on issues that matter to them, without fear of repercussions. We are determined to reverse the global trend of shrinking civic space and to create new, more inclusive, spaces in which people can freely express their identities, negotiate common solutions and hold power-holders accountable for the realization of people's rights. We believe that it is the diversity and vibrancy of civil society that has the potential to create a future that benefits everybody, and not just the privileged few.



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Abbreviations

ACTS Foundation	Aspire Coronation Trust Foundation
AFDB	African Development Bank Group
AfriComm	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
AU	African Union
CAC	Corporate Affairs Commission
CAMA	Company and Allied Matters Act
CISLAC	Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre
COVIC 19	Coronavirus disease
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EFCC	Economic and Financial Crimes Commission
EU-ACT	European Union - Agents for Citizen-driven Transformation (ACT) Program
EVA	Education as a Vaccine
F.A.I.R	Fiscal Accountability For Inequality Reduction
GBV	Gender Based Violence
IFI	International Financial Institutions
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organizations
ICPC	Independent Corrupt Practices Commission
IO	Integrity Organisations – formerly called Convention for Business Integrity
LACVOW	Legislation Advocacy Coalition on Violence Against Women
LGBTQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer
MDA	Ministries Department and Agencies

NBC	Nigerian Broadcasting Cooperation
NECA	Nigeria Employers Consultative Association
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NFF	Nigerian Feminist Forum
NNNGO	Nigeria Network of NGO
NUPENG	National Union of Petroleum and Gas Workers
NURTW	National Union of Road Transport Workers
OGP	Open Government Partnership
OSIWA	Open Society Initiative for West Africa
PLAC	Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre
SCUML	Special Control Unit Against Money Laundering
TMG	Transition Monitoring Group, Nigeria
VAPP	Violence Against Person Prohibition
WRAPA	Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
WACSI	West Africa Civil Society Institute
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WIMBIZ	Women in Management and Business

1. *Context Analysis*

Background

Using a right-based approach, Oxfam Nigeria works to influence policy change in favour of the poor and most vulnerable, boost civic engagement by providing platforms for citizen engagement and ensuring policy making is more transparent and inclusive. Oxfam Nigeria also responds to humanitarian needs in the North East of Nigeria by providing critical support for programs that deliver high-quality emergency life-saving interventions, and

effective disaster management planning. Through its work in Nigeria Oxfam aims that, Women's rights are mainstreamed, socio-economic and political rights of all citizens are prioritized, interventions continuously promote transparency and accountability among partners. All of this is done through programs with civil society, international institutions, and the private sector.

Justification for the Influencing Strategy for Civic Spaces

A vibrant and active civic space is a critical component of Oxfam's work and we recognize five fundamental issues that will guide our strategy in influencing shrinking civic space. First, there is a need to understand the trends affecting civic spaces in Nigeria. Second, we are not the only players interested in protecting civic space and as such will work collaboratively with stakeholders (partners, government, donors and development partners) to achieve our goal. Third, recognizing the broad spectrum of drivers of shrinking civic space and limited expertise and resources, we will focus on strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations to improve the regulatory and legal

framework and shape the narrative and by implication improve the legitimacy of civil society organizations among its constituents. Fourth, to ensure synergy between proposed interventions and existing national and global campaigns. Finally, our strategy is to ensure government and policy makers do not enact laws that further restrict and shrink the civic space. Consequently, our activities will work towards increasing opportunities for engagement between civil society, government, partners and citizens. Our approach therefore will combine a standalone intervention/program while mainstreaming civic spaces strengthening in existing programs.

Main Civic Space Trend in Nigeria

Civic space represents a wide range of organized and organic groups including nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), trade unions, social movements, grassroots organizations, online networks and communities, and faith groups (VanDyck, 2017; WEF, 2013). Historically, the civic space in Nigeria evolved organically with citizens focusing on issues of human rights, accountability, and gender justice. There is limited understanding of what constitutes as civic space with many seeing civic space as only formal organized groups like Non-governmental organizations registered and engaged in providing services while advocating for laws and policies.

Over the years, however, civic space has evolved, with formal and informal organizations and groups applying a combination of passion-driven, technology and innovative solutions to dealing with societal needs and challenges. There are clear advantages and disadvantages to this trend. One of such advantages is the diversity we are beginning to see in the space, however, a disadvantage is the opportunity it provides for civic spaces to be infiltrated and controlled by other actors – particularly actors who are against the desired change e.g. government. The other is the likelihood of civic spaces becoming less connected to those who need it the most. Another major challenge is apathy among citizens to engage with duty-bearers and the relevant processes of government – processes such as budget, fair taxation, fiscal accountability, and social protection.

Within the context provided, civic Space in Nigeria has been categorized as repressed according to the CIVICUS 2019 Monitor.² However, the Nigerian civic space is a combination of shifting and shrinking and

usually defined by the issues involved. For example, the extractive industry where the focus is around the demand for accountability on public expenditures and resources from government, there is a major push back. The petroleum bill is one of the oldest bills in Nigeria's legislature and is yet to be passed.

Similarly, the gender and equal opportunities bill looking at addressing issues of gender justice³, power dynamics and accountability of one gender to the other while providing a space for the law to critically reform institutional structures and sexism is suffering the same fate. It should be noted however, that within various issues there are varying degrees of openness and engagement. For example, in the issue of women's rights, women's economic empowerment, access to governance and leadership are open spaces where government openly engages in however, government pays more of lip service when it comes to issues of sexual and reproductive rights and sexuality. It can be argued that restrictive practices and attacks on freedom of information expression, freedom of assembly and to some extent, freedom of association continue to run rife in the Nigerian civic space. In addition to regulatory maneuvers, activists, civil society members and journalists are consistently at a risk of increased surveillance because of their overt criticism of government and/or activities particularly on issues of elections, accountability, and good governance. For instance, Amnesty's 2019 report showed how journalists indiscriminately abducted for questioning, face illegal arrests and detention by state security agencies, are intimidated into recalling or retracting stories, forced to offer apologies to state actors using a very public medium.

Oftentimes, journalist's spouse or family members

2. <https://monitor.civicus.org/Africa.PeoplePowerUnderAttack.2019/>

3. Gender justice is the full equality and equity between women and men in all spheres of life, resulting in women jointly, and on an equal basis with men, defining and shaping the policies, structures and decisions that affect their lives and society as a whole. <https://www.oxfam.org/en/what-we-do/issues/gender-justice-and-womens-rights#:~:text=Oxfam%20understands%20gender%20justice%20as,and%20society%20as%20a%20whole.>

The use of restrictive legislation to curtail activities of civil society is another way government tries to shrink civic space. Under the present laws, non-government organizations can register and operate under the *Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) with the Cooperate Affairs Commission (CAC) or at their state ministry level.*

are threatened or arrested in the stead of the journalist, media houses have been closed on several occasions, journalists have lost their jobs and in some cases their lives. Intimidation and threats extend to online bloggers and activists as well as mainstream journalists⁴. Aside from arrests often on trumped up charges, activists and civil society members are often labelled in a way that increases public ridicule, scrutiny, isolation, and stigma. Two of such examples are the labelling of the “Bring Back Our Girls Movement as a socio-advocacy terrorism” and the Indigenous group of Biafra (IPOB) as a terrorist organization”⁵.

The use of restrictive legislation to curtail activities of civil society is another way government tries to shrink civic space. Under the present laws, non-government organizations can register and operate under the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) with the Cooperate Affairs Commission (CAC) or at their state ministry level. There are certain mandatory obligations to be fulfilled by NGOs, however, in the last few years, the government has tried to introduce restrictive policies which proposes the “establishment of a regulatory body and confers regulatory powers including registering or deregistering organizations if activities are deemed unsatisfactory”⁶. What is most worrisome is the different strategies used by the state to restrict civic space. For instance, the new Company and Allied

Matters Act (CAMA) which was signed into law⁷ on August 7th has a variety of stringent and harmful implications for NGOs and religious organizations. “Under section 839(1) of CAMA 2020, the commission may by order suspend the trustee of an organization and appoint an interim manager or managers to manage the affairs of an association where it reasonably believes that there has been a misconduct or mismanagement of the association are being run fraudulently or where it is necessary or desirable for the purpose of public interest”⁸.

Another clear cause for concern is “Section 842(2) which gives the commission the power to direct transfer of credits in dormant accounts of NGOs. The banks are to inform the commission of dormant accounts of NGOs in its custody and if after 15 days there is no 'satisfactory' response from the association of evidence of its activities, the commission may (without any judicial proceedings) dissolve an association and direct a bank to transfer monies from the association's dormant account to another account (without a court order). Even EFCC requires a court order to forfeit accounts this is the height of dictatorship in a country where the biggest crimes are committed by public officials.”⁹

However, it should be noted that in spite of the continuous strategizing on the Federal Government to restrict civic spaces through restrictive policies

4. Endangered Voices: Attack on Freedom of Expression in Nigeria, Amnesty International 2019

5. Confronting Closing Civic Spaces in Nigeria. Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri; SUR 26 – v.14n.26, Pg.129 – 140, 2017 <https://sur.conectas.org/en/confronting-closing-civic-spaces-in-nigeria/>

6. Confronting Closing Civic Spaces in Nigeria. Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri; SUR 26 - v.14 n.26, Pg. 129 – 140, 2017

7. President Muhammadu Buhari signed into law the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) on August 7, 2020. The new CAMA is Nigeria's most significant business legislation in three decades and it introduces new provisions that promote ease of doing business and reduces regulatory hurdles. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/features-and-interviews/407400-cama-2020-15-business-friendly-provisions-in-nigerias-new-companies-and-allied-matters-act.html>

8. <https://everyday.ng/exposed-how-ngos-religious-organisations-will-now-be-strictly-regulated-by-govt-under-new-cama-law/>

9. Ibid.

such as the Protection from Internet Falsehood and Manipulation Bill 2019 popularly called the “Social Media Bill”, Prohibition of Hate Speeches Bill popularly known as the “Hate Speech Bill”, civil society have been able to critically engage with government on those bills and more recently, in the era of COVID19 on and “Control of Infectious Diseases Bill 2020”. The swift and often intense method of engagement of civil society through multiple channels such as social media, traditional media and advocacy with law makers yields has yielded positive results with many of those bills set aside,

In principle, civil society organizations enjoy some relative freedom to converge for meetings, workshops and conferences. However, not all organizations can claim to enjoy that freedom. For instance, the country does not recognize LGBTQ rights¹⁰ and as such, organizations working on such issues do it under a guise and are not able to openly advocate or speak about their issues. Also, issues deemed contentious to government such as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) are heavily restricted in their activities.

What are the key drivers of the overall trend?

Impact of COVID19:

Since the first recorded case in China late last year, the coronavirus has rapidly spread across the world with almost nine million confirmed cases and over 467,135 deaths¹¹. As a way of curbing the spread and dealing with economic fallouts likely to arise for citizens, many countries including Nigeria instituted lockdowns and palliative distributions. However, the approach of reaching such these decisions and its delivery only exacerbates existing tensions and shows how government and other state actors use the pandemic as an excuse to instill draconian measures and further restrict civil freedoms. For instance, a number of those restrictions imposed i.e. restrictions on movement, assembly and expression go against citizen's fundamental human rights¹². Similarly, the

deliberate exclusion of civil society organizations from actively participating in the development, planning, monitoring and evaluation of the COVID19 funds response¹³ is just another way of curbing the civic space. All of which are a source for concern considering government's decision to raise \$6.9 billion from multilateral lenders to help fund efforts to stop the spread of the coronavirus despite the fact that it uses about a quarter of its budget to pay for debt, compared with 5% for health-care spending¹⁴. In addition, research has shown that women and girls were adversely affected by during the COVID19 pandemic. Some of the ways are recorded in the spike of reported cases of GBV across the country, denial of sexual and reproductive services for women and girls, refusal of government to list SGBV as an

10. LGBT people are criminalised under both the Criminal Code Act and the Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act 2013.

11. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/21/coronavirus-world-map-which-countries-have-the-most-covid-19-cases-and-deaths>

12. Records of excessive use of force by security actors to enforce compliance with lockdowns which resulted in tortures, assaults, shootings and even death of citizens. Also alarming is the use of legal and regulatory tools to legitimize official restrictions on human rights like the attempt to pass the “Control of Infectious Disease Bill 2020” designed to increase governmental powers to prevent and manage the outbreak of infectious diseases such as COVID19. The challenge with the bill was some of its draconian provisions like (a) granted overreaching powers to law enforcement officers or the police to apprehend persons suffering from infectious diseases; (b) breached individual privacy, confidentiality agreements, and doctor-patient data privacy; (3) empowered State agents to arbitrarily restrict freedom of association, gatherings, public entertainments; and (4) required State health officials and law enforcement officers to subjectively arrest without warrant, confiscate and demolish properties, and obtain information from any person or organization without any restraint. <https://www.justsecurity.org/70226/covid-19-and-the-shrinking-civic-space-in-nigeria/>

13. COVID 19, HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIC SPACE IN NIGERIA, Policy Briefing Paper 011, MARCH 27, 2020; www.spacesforchange.org

14. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-04-06/nigeria-to-borrow-6-9-billion-to-offset-virus-impact-on-economy>

essential service under the COVID19 presidential and state response.

Poverty and Inequality:

Despite being the largest economy in Africa with a huge human capital, economic inequality has reached exponential proportions in Nigeria. As at May 2020, 40.1% of Nigerians were living below the poverty line and Nigeria ranked last out of 157 countries on the overall inequality index¹⁵. Additionally, inequality among regions is high and translates to different rates of poverty among states. For instance, according to the NBS report¹⁶, 14 out of 15 states below the national poverty headcount average were states in the North, while Ebonyi state was the only state in the South. Varying degrees of inequalities exist between states, urban-rural divide, sectors and among men and women. However, the population mostly affected by poverty in Nigeria was those working exclusively in the agricultural sector. Male households were much more impacted than those with a female head. For instance, about 58 percent of people belonging to households with a male head working in agriculture was living below the poverty line¹⁷.

Despite the prevailing statistics, it is important to note that the gendered nature of inequalities is high with women less likely than men to own land, more likely than men to be employed in low paying and informal jobs, less likely to attend schools and get an education. In the recent NBS unemployment data report, Nigeria's unemployment rate as at the second quarter of 2020 is 27.1% indicating that 21.7 million Nigerians remain unemployed. Out of which the youth remain the hardest hit with over 13.9 million

people aged between 15 and 34 years unemployed¹⁸. With a possible recession looming as a result of the COVID19 pandemic the number of people living below the poverty line is likely to increase significantly.

Changing Nature of Insecurity:

Prior to COVID19, the combined effects of violent extremism, insurgency and counter insurgency, militancy including conflict arising from limited resources, communal and communal matters has led to an almost narrow-minded focus on security matters. Indeed, many of the restrictive legislation cited "national security" as the reason for the proposed policies in the first instance. This in turn has led to restrictive policies set on civil society organizations particularly, non-government organizations to comply with. An example of such is the registration on NGO's with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Special Control Unit on Money Laundering (SCUML). Many organizations have stressed the difficulty to register and its consequent implications to open and transact with financial institutions based on laid down directives from the EFCC in addition to those difficulties, organizations are required to submit monthly reports and other reports for transactions over \$1000¹⁹.

Also, the high rate of insecurity currently affecting Nigeria is a challenge for civil society as organizations and its staff become target for extremists groups, an example is the case of the four humanitarian workers kidnapped and killed in the town of Damasak in Borno State²⁰. Human rights violations by state actors like the police and military against civil society

15. Oxfam: THE COMMITMENT TO REDUCING INEQUALITY INDEX 2018 index, Policy paper, <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/commitment-reducing-inequality-index-2018>; p. 53.. For regional ranking, see also: <https://nigeria.oxfam.org/latest/policy-paper/west-africa-inequality-crisis-crii-report>

16. National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) A Survey Report by the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (in collaboration with the World Bank) NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS Report Date: July 2020 <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary?page=2&offset=10> downloaded August 10, 2020

17. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1121432/poverty-headcount-rate-in-nigeria-by-activity-and-gender/>

18. [https://nairametrics.com/2020/08/14/breaking-nigeria-unemployment-rate-jumps-to-27-1/#:~:text=Nigeria%27s%20unemployment%20rate%20as%20at,%25\)%20is%20a%20combined%2055.7%25.](https://nairametrics.com/2020/08/14/breaking-nigeria-unemployment-rate-jumps-to-27-1/#:~:text=Nigeria%27s%20unemployment%20rate%20as%20at,%25)%20is%20a%20combined%2055.7%25.)

19. <https://www.scuml.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/AML-CFT-COMPLIANCE-GUIDELINES-FOR-DNFIS-1.pdf>

members rising from often unsubstantiated conspiracy theories and allegations of assisting insurgents continue to disrupt organization's work. This often leads to a process of censoring and self-censoring of organizations in the type of programs, services and beneficiaries to be engaged in.

Legitimacy and Accountability of Civil Society:

Nigeria's history is one of civic movements that evolved organically to push for and advocate for specific issues on rights. However, over time, civic spaces have morphed into several categories, they include service-based and influencing -focused organizations. In some cases, one organization can perform dual roles. Governments are more inclined to allow groups to be engaged in service roles where there can be close monitoring of funds and activities.

Many NGOs were set up by politicians, state actors and private sector to perform that very function, which is not necessary a problem. However, the challenge arises when CSOs try to engage with government to challenge political processes particularly around elections, demand for rule of law, accountability, and transparency. Civil society is also struggling within the movement. People come into the movement because of their own agenda and there is a plethora of agendas within the space. The perception is that the easiest way to get into politics is to get into civic space and make the switch when you have enough political clout to do so. Consequently, many within the movement think that "civil society has lost its legitimacy of the society that

we claim to represent. We are not connected to citizens as properly as we should – we have activists that don't have skills but have passion on one hand while It's a paid job for many" - anonymous, civil society activist.

Limited technical capacity coupled with weak accountability and governance structures are some of the factors limiting credibility and legitimacy of civil society organizations in Nigeria. To some extent, civil society recognizes the lack of capacity, robust governance, monitoring and evaluation systems as a huge handicap to engage with government and donors alike.

Influence of Technology:

In Nigeria, the depth of information shared and received through technology shows how citizens creatively use online platforms to push boundaries on issues considered sensitive or contentious. For instance, campaigns on the "Infectious Disease Bill", Social Media Bill and the ongoing #StateofEmergencyGBV campaigns show how even in periods of COVID19 lockdowns such platforms are critical spaces for civic movement. Technology in many ways enables a wider reach and inclusion of young people and women. Yet, the space is also quite limiting as governments monitor, track and even attack citizens via such platforms.

Governments' recent attempts to pass the Protection from Internet Falsehood and Manipulation Bill 2019 popularly called the "Social Media Bill" was specifically to curtail activist's freedom of expression through social media platforms.

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20. <https://www.dw.com/en/terror-group-kills-4-hostages-in-nigeria-french-ngo/a-51665877>

Who is Affected by Shrinking Civic Spaces?

Shrinking civic spaces affects everyone however, marginalized and vulnerable groups are more likely to be affected by this phenomenon. Civil society is affected by shrinking and civic spaces in diverse ways, which include:

Censorship:

Many activists have reportedly begun to self-censor both their voices and programs because of the restrictions and threats. Currently, media in Nigeria cannot be termed as independent because majority of the media houses are either owned by politicians or funded by the government. A clamp down on freedom of expression does not only affect investigative journalism but also affects those who would like to share information with journalists.

Gendered Implications:

The gendered implications on the other hand means that women, young women, LGBTQI, youth groups, grassroot groups, labor unions, farmers groups, groups focused on gender issues such as sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), women's rights are often adversely disproportionately affected. Activists and organizations have noted an increasing backlash against the feminist's movement, many have been engaged in addressing the fundamentally difficult issues on women's bodily autonomy. Ironically, this backlash often includes efforts to reverse progress made on women's rights provisions in policy and law. For instance, attitudes of the Nigerian police to intimidate survivors of sexual and gender-based violence for women and girls undermines the recent gains made through the justice campaigns on SGBV as a result of the high rate of cases during the

COVID19 pandemic. Furthermore, while organizations supporting gender work do not provide a critical feminist analysis around power structures that give rise to these problems in the first place. For example, in speaking with Oxfam Nigeria's staff on this strategy, the researchers noticed the lack of linkage to feminist principles and analysis on their work in agriculture and other issues. Consequently, interventions on inequality will be incomplete without addressing fundamental drivers of inequality.

Impact on Sectors:

A shrinking civic space has serious consequences on funding of programs, activities and sectors. Government's insistence on regulating and scrutinizing funds and programs of NGOs has led to some organizations hitherto actively engaged in rights based and service delivery interventions to either downgrade or shut down completely. For instance, Borno state government recently passed the Agency for Coordination of Development and Humanitarian Response bill into law to regulate the activities of Non-Governmental Organisations as well as development partners in the state²¹. The law which is considered quite restrictive and conflicting to civil society's humanitarian work is currently being considered for replication by governors in other states. The impact of such restrictive regulations will be quite devastating for several reasons. First, the law will mean that registration of NGO's will be subjected to arbitrary interpretations and decisions at the discretion of those in authority therefore rendering organizations unwilling to comply illegal and open to expulsion from the state. Second, it means that groups will need permissions to raise funds, carry out

21. <http://saharareporters.com/2019/12/12/orno-governor-zulum-assents-bill-regulate-ngos-activities-state>

activities, select beneficiaries and meet while citizens will lose their voices to pressure and demand accountability, transparency, and good governance from government. Third, such laws breach the constitutional right to assembly freely and associate with others.

Government's zeal to direct the narrative around their actions or inactions means they go to extra lengths to create and drive the narrative to delegitimize organizations 'speaking truth to power'. According to Spaces for Change, an organization working on curating incidents of shrinking civic space revealed that those targeted with excessive governmental power are usually vocal critics of the government,

political opponents, leaders of religious and indigenous movements, and private actors actively using social media to expose corruption or challenge gaps in governance²². A case in point is the protest of pro-government groups allegedly supported by government to converge at Amnesty International's Nigeria office demanding for their expulsion from Nigeria. The group reason centered on Amnesty International's support for calls for a Nationwide protest against the Buhari-led administration²³. Another example is the stiff attack leveled at Oxfam Nigeria after the national launch of its inequality report where it presented an alarming picture of extreme poverty in Nigeria²⁴.

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22. Confronting Closing Civic Spaces in Nigeria. Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri; SUR 26 – v.14n.26, Pg.129 – 140, 2017 <https://sur.conectas.org/en/confronting-closing-civic-spaces-in-nigeria/>

23. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/344440-just-in-protesters-besiege-amnesty-international-office-demand-rights-group-leave-nigeria.html>

24. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/05/fg-oxfam-collision-course-inequality-poverty-nigeria/>

2. Actor And Power Analysis

Key Actors Engaged in Civic Space

Actors in Nigeria's civic space cuts across formal and informal civil society organizations, associations and community groups, national institutions, global and regional donors and organizations, international and national media. Identified actors include:

- CSO – NGOs, CBOs, Faith-based groups, Farmers Cooperatives, Women's groups
- Coalitions –
 - * Coalition on Elections, good governance, early warning and early response (TMG, Civil Society Situation Room – managed by PLAC,
 - * Coalitions on budget, COVID19 and good governance – Connected Development, Budgit, Enough is Enough, YAIGA Africa
 - * Nigerian Women Platform for Peaceful Elections (Women Situation Room) – Managed by WILPF,
 - * Early Warning & Early Response Situation Room - managed by WANEP,
 - * LACVAW – managed by WRAPA,
 - * Nigerian Feminist Forum – managed by Alliances for Africa)
 - * Bodies like North Normal & ArewaMeToo – working with young boys & girls offline and online on changing harmful norms and behaviours.
- Professional Associations – Nigerian Bar Association, Markets Associations, Nigerian Dental and Medical Association, Nigerian Teachers' Association, Nigerian Nurses and Midwives Association, Women in Management and Business (WIMBIZ), Nigeria Employers Consultative Association,
- Judiciary – courts
- Unions – Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), ASUU, National Union of Journalists, Traders' Union, NUPENG, NURTW, Manufacturers Association of Nigeria,
- Academia – Researchers, Universities
- Government institutions – MDA's, Police, EFCC/SCUML, ICPC, National Planning Commission, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), Ministry of Justice (under Open Government Partnership), Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (NBC)
- Government – Public Civil Servants: Legislators/Policy makers
- International Public servants – Diplomats
- International community – EU, UN Agencies (UNHCR, UN Women, UNFPA), CIDA, Embassies/High Commission, JICA, International donors and Implementing partners
- Regional and Sub-regional Bodies – African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, African Union, ECOWAS
- Private Sector – Oil companies, Telecommunication companies (MTN, Glo, Etisalat, Airtel),
- African Development Bank, World Bank, IFI
- Nigerian-owned Foundations: TY Danjuma Foundation, Tony Elumelu Foundation, Dangote Foundation, ACTS Foundation
- Media: International Media, Local Media (traditional and social media)

25. <https://tmgnigeria.wordpress.com/contact-us/>

26. https://www.placng.org/situation_room/sr/

27. <https://www.peacewomen.org/e-news/article/wilpf-nigeria-monitors-nigerian-elections-through-womens-situation-room>

28. <https://www.peacedirect.org/civil-society-and-inclusive-peace-case-study-nigeria/>

29. <https://www.nigerianfeministforum.org/>

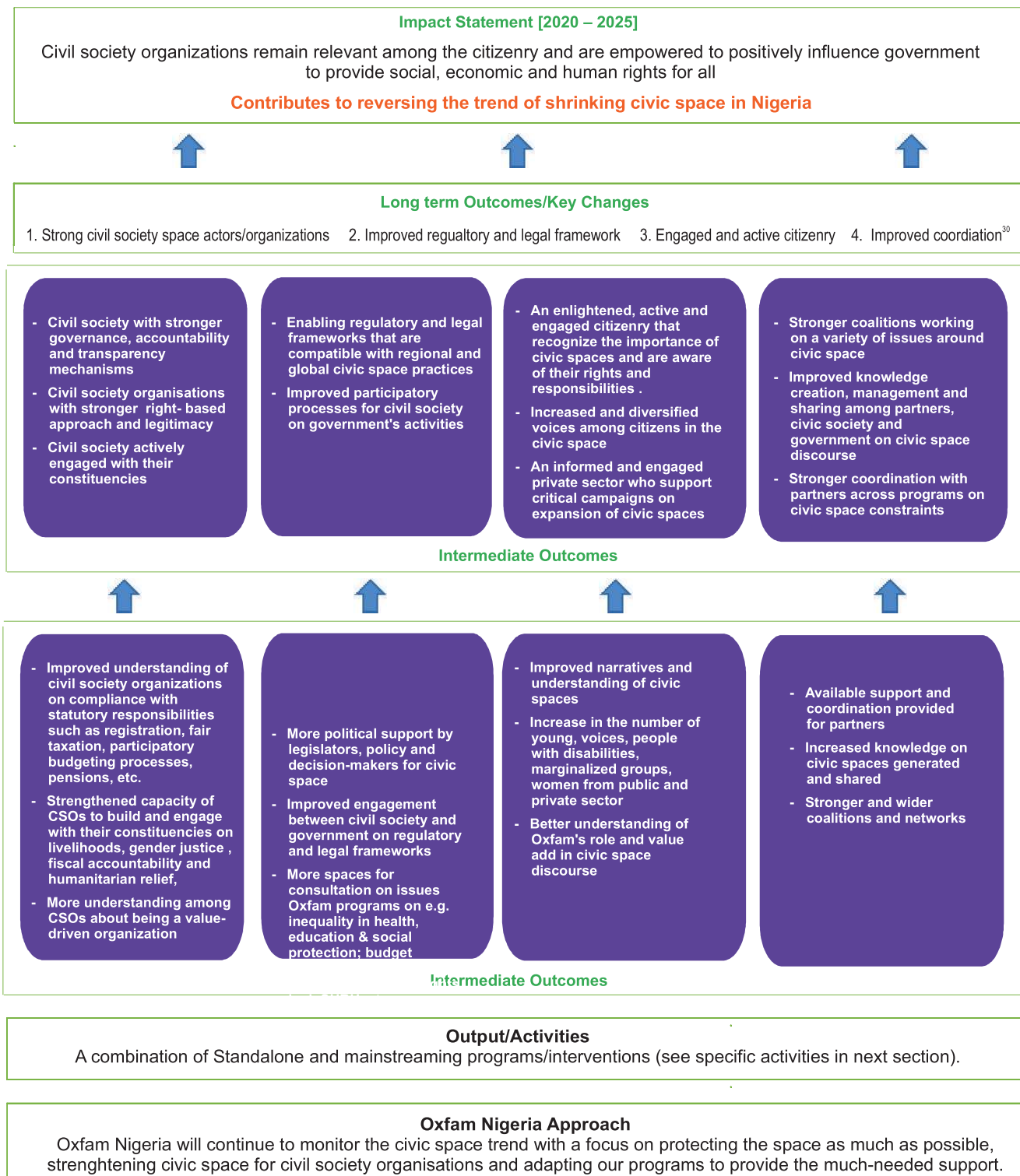
Power Analysis

The table below provides a power analysis of existing stakeholders within the current context.

<p>Actors with much power to influence the desired change</p>	<p>Parliamentarians Private Sector</p> <p>Blockers</p> <p>Judiciary Nigerian Police EFCC/SCUML ICPC</p> <p>Oil companies</p>	<p>Unions – NUPENG, ASUU, MAN, NECA, NLC</p>	<p>Champions</p> <p>CSOs - Faith-Based Organizations (May be blockers depending on the issues – e.g sexual rights and abortion)</p> <p>Accountability Lab Parliamentarians Coalitions NHRC International communities (UN, EU, Embassies/High Commissions, Implementing partners (INGO), WASCI ECOWAS, AU, African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights African Development Bank, World Bank Media – International & Local Media; Social Media</p>
<p>Actors with medium power to influence the desired change</p>	<p>MDA’s Public Servants (majority are blockers)</p>	<p>Undecided</p> <p>Public Servants –</p> <p>Philanthropic Organizations (ACTS foundation, TY Danjuma Foundation, Dangote Foundation, Tony Elumelu Foundation) focused on providing grants (and building capacity) to CSOs and individuals, not necessary changing the narrative Telecomms (MTN etc)</p>	<p>Changemakers</p> <p>CSOs (some are listed in the recommendation section)</p> <p>Legislators (capacity to pass legislation – but they also can be blockers) Ministry of Justice (Open Governance Partnership) NHRC Academia</p>
<p>Actors with little power to influence the desired change</p>		<p>Professional Associations NURTW National Planning Commission NBC CAC,</p>	<p>Changemakers</p> <p>Members of the public</p>
	<p>Actors opposing desired change</p>	<p>Actors with medium interest in or no position about desired change</p>	<p>Actors in favour for the desired change</p>

3. Theory Of Change

The theory of change diagram below provides an overview of the impact the strategy will contribute towards from 2020 to 2025.



30. among sub-national, national, regional, sub-regional partners working on shrinking civic space

5. Avenues For Actions

Key Opportunities for Influencing

The influencing strategy recognizes three key opportunities for influencing civic space in Nigeria.

Post COVID19 strategy and method of engagement: the impact of the COVID19 pandemic is already showing in all aspects – from overcrowded hospitals and poorly equipped health care workers to the high cost of food and basic needs to the heightened insecurity and increased rate of sexual and gender-based violence across the country. Civil society organizations are also reeling from the effects as many are still providing critical support, services and programs despite the pandemic. Those organizations would need operation and programmatic support post-COVID19. In addition, support to civil society should include technical and strategic engagement to groups in asking critical questions around accountability on funds for COVID19 response and pro-poor policies. For example, the #FollowCOVID19Money campaign initiated by Connected Development in tracking funds allocated for the COVID19 response. Others include strengthening civil society to engage with citizens and marginalized groups.

Oxfam's Value Add as convener and connector in local civic space: Oxfam's value add is as an organization with extensive experience of influencing

and convening partners at the international, regional, and local levels on critical issues exemplified by the various campaigns. Similarly, current global campaigns like F.A.I.R – Even it Up; GROW and ENOUGH Campaign can be brought into civic spaces in Nigeria and open space for these issues locally. Also, worthy to mention is its valuable experience and reputation as a feminist organization (see internal recommendation below). Oxfam Nigeria's approach of working needs to be empowering, inclusive and not close space for others and their partners.

Upcoming Elections: The next major elections in Nigeria is in 2023. The preparations for elections usually happen earlier and is characterized with additional attempts by government and political stalwarts to shrink existing civic space further. We recognize the need for concerted efforts among partners, INGOs to ensure this does not happen. Civil society's capacity needs to be strengthened to effectively engage with political parties/politicians, government institutions (like INEC), citizens and groups and the media to influence political parties to include commitments on changing restrictive legislations and ensuring citizens are engaged with the democratic processes.

34. Geared towards advocating for transparency and accountability, Follow The Money; Africa's leading social accountability initiative, has launched a Pan-African Campaign called the COVID19 Transparency and Accountability Project (CTAP) to effectively track spending of all COVID-19 Donations in 7 African Countries.

Internal Steps

This section focuses on issues of governance and political engagement on civic spaces by Oxfam in Nigeria.

- Hold a session with Oxfam Nigeria, regional and global teams to share the strategy
- Integrate the influencing strategy into the overall Oxfam Nigeria Country Strategy and where possible discuss and refine concrete activities and next steps
- A strong recommendation is to hire a dedicated staff whose Job description is specifically working on civic space program within Oxfam. The person would have civic space and advocacy experience and knowledge. The hire should be as soon as possible to enable the candidate to understand the context of the influencing strategy and Oxfam Country Strategy. Where this is not possible, it is necessary for the country office to have a session for ALL staff particularly team leads to understand the strategy as a cross-cutting strategy and how it applies to their programs.
- Training for Oxfam team on civic space issues –including Feminism and intersectionality perspective critical to civic spaces engagement in line with the consultants findings that Oxfam Nigeria needs to invest in this area.
- Equip department with adequate resources including developing internal communications (pulling from Oxfam resources on civic spaces) and civic space guidance
- Identify resources (funding, technical expertise) for supporting programs on shrinking and shifting civic spaces.

A strong recommendation is to hire a dedicated staff whose Job description is specifically working on civic space program within Oxfam. The person would have civic space and advocacy experience and knowledge. The hire should be as soon as possible to enable the candidate to understand the context of the influencing strategy and Oxfam Country Strategy.

35. African Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists <https://awdf.org/wp-content/uploads/AFF-Feminist-Charter-Digital-%C3%A2%C2%80%C2%93-English.pdf>

Mainstreaming civic space into existing programs

- a) **Strengthen civil society actors / Oxfam partners' accountability and legitimacy:** findings from the survey showed that over 41.4% believed that civil society were not open, accountable, transparent and engaged with their constituencies. This lack of accountability leaves CSOs open to intimidation from government agencies. Findings from discussions also showed a limited understanding of power imbalances and analysis that cause inequality. Where there is the understanding, there is a disconnect on relating it to the work done. Activities will focus on strengthening the capacity of CSOs and groups on:
- aligning with legal regulations e.g. with trainings on accountability and registration information to partners and/or creating platforms for partners to learn.
 - understanding feminist and intersectionality principles, gender-responsive budgeting, For example, working with the NFF and other feminist women's rights organisations to identify and train partners in gender justice, climate change, extractive industry, public accountability, and corruption – areas where we find predominantly male voices.
 - strengthening partnerships and civil society networks, and building stronger leadership skills among women and young people,
 - strengthening value driven legitimacy and links to citizens, as well as promoting values and achievements with a positive civil society narrative
- b) **Strengthen civil society actors / Oxfam partners' resilience:** ensure partners are adequately equipped to assess risks relating to influencing work as well as manage concrete risks, e.g. those related to defamation and the digital sphere.
- c) **Strengthen coalitions and alliance building at national, regional, and sub-regional levels:** Collaboratively working with other organizations and partners working on expanding civic spaces on issues Oxfam works on in Nigeria, West Africa, and Africa, for example:
- Stronger exchange and learning between partners from all programs on shared civic space challenges and response strategies, incl. on civic space discourse
 - Better understandings Oxfam's role and value-add in civic space discourse: (EU-ACT, OSIWA, Amnesty International, MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, Yar'Adua Foundation) and allies (government officials), embassies working on civic spaces to understand the context. Oxfam Nigeria should get information on, and join the Development Partners Coordination Platform where many of these issues around civic spaces are discussed. NOTE: It is important that Oxfam Nigeria works to its strength and this most likely will be working in those areas where there are GAPS that other partners are not working on; such as bringing in the voices of grassroots organisations working on gender justice, humanitarian and agriculture.
 - Connect through coalitions at the regional and sub-regional level to generate and share knowledge. As example for the inequality program, establish Budget

Tracking/Monitoring Groups at subnational levels.

- In addition, Oxfam's strength in bringing different actors to work together on civic space can come to the fore with organizations like WACSI, ECOWAS, African Union, African Commission on Human and People's Rights, and AFDB.

d) **Collaborate on global, regional and national campaigns:** seek alternative ways to influence. This can be in the form of building concrete relationships with local and national partners who have rounded international campaigns. For example, campaigns that address thematic issues which can leverage on intersectionality of purpose such as gendered impact of climate change on farming practices, civic spaces and human rights – e.g. Global Rights.

e) **Strengthen and expand strategic partnerships with media to promote and create space for issues Oxfam works on**

- Provide digital training for organizations working as frontline defenders
- Support effective media strategies (includes traditional and social media) by partners.
- Training of Investigative Journalists, e.g. On the need to follow up corrupt rooted procurement related cases and develop content for writing their stories.

- Design a media strategy on the civic space coverage.
- Media Engagement e.g. around GBV – with a focus on Enough Campaign
- Conduct social media advocacy on budget monitoring and tracking outcomes for improved public awareness and increased political will.

f) **Building an active citizenry engaged in civic space through online and offline platforms**

- Increasing Citizens' engagement with government through offline and digital platforms (e.g Community Development Platform)
- Initiate and Strengthen non-violent interaction between citizens and government in closed spaces and sectors (Example inequality program: citizens' scorecards to evaluate the performance of government through evidence on ground; townhall meetings to discuss issues around local extractives and remediation mechanism with corporations and communities).
- Increase in the number of young, voices, people with disabilities, marginalized groups, women from public and private sector

Collaborate on global, regional and national campaigns: seek alternative ways to influence. This can be in the form of building concrete relationships with local and national partners who have rounded international campaigns. For example, campaigns that address thematic issues which can leverage on intersectionality of purpose such as gendered impact of climate change on farming practices, civic spaces and human rights – e.g. Global Rights.

ANNEX 1:

List Of Respondents For Phone Interviews

	Name	Organisation & Role	Contact Details
	OXFAM		
1.	Constant Tchona	Country Director, Oxfam Nigeria	Constant.Tchona@oxfam.org 07084270529
2.	Ramatu Umar Bako	Head of Influencing and Public Engagement, Oxfam	ramatu.bako@oxfam.org 08173112803
3.	Suzan Agada	Gender Coordinator, Oxfam	suzan.agada@oxfam.org 08077037991; Skype: susan.agada
4.	Imma Demiguel	Regional Office, Oxfam, Niger	imma.demiguel@oxfam.org +34)646379085; Skype ID: idemiguel
5.	Bettina Huber	Policy Advisor CSO Space, Oxfam, The Hague	Bettina.Huber@oxfamnovib.nl (0031) 0703421995 bettinahuber_oxfamnovib
6.	Henry Ushie	Public Private Sector Transparency and Accountability Officer/Tax, Budget & Extractives	Henry.ushie@oxfam.org
	Civil Society		
1.	Prof. Chidi Anselm Odinkalu	Senior Program Officer, Africa Open Society Justice Initiative	chidi.odinkalu@opensocietyfoundation.org chidio@hotmail.com 08034190668
2.	Osai Ojigbo	Country Director, Amnesty International	osai.ojigbo@amnesty.org.ng
3.	Oluseyi Olubisi (NNGO)	Executive Director, NNGO	seyi@nnngo.com 08028367748; oyebisius

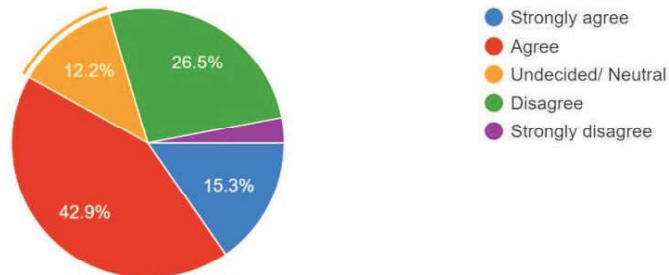
4.	Yemi Adamolekun	Executive Director, Enough is Enough	yemi@eienigeria.org 08037183144; 08082192510
5.	Victoria Ibezim	Executive Director, Spaces for Change	Victoria@spacesforchange.org
6.	Farkiyyah Hashim	North Normal & ArewaMeToo	+234 701 111 1327 fakhrriyyah.h@gmail.com
7.	Bukky Williams	Executive Director, EVA	bukyw@evanigeria.org 08126521196
8.	Abiodun Baiyewu	Executive Director, Global Rights	Abiodunb@globalrights.org Abiodun.Baiyewu.
9.	Dr Abiola Akiyode	Executive Director, WARDC	0805 595 1858 0817 014 1401 abiolaak2@gmail.com
10.	Maxwell Kadiri	Senior Program Officer, Freedom of Information Open Society Justice Initiative	0803 304 0558 kadiri.maxwell3@googlemail.com
11.	Gbenga Sesan	Paradigm Initiative	Gbenga.sesan@paradigmhq.org @gbengasesan
12.	Amara Nwankpa	Director, Public Policy Initiative, Shehu Musa Yaradua Foundation	amara@yaraduafoundation.org 08077610747
13.	Kolawole Olatosimi	Senior Program Officer, Child and Youth Protection Foundation	Member, Coalition of Civil Society to End Child Marriage in Nigeria. www.cypfnigeria.org , 09069181765, 09075058399
14.	Omolara Balogun	Head of Advocacy, WACSI	obalogun@wacsi.org
15.	Damilare Babalola	British Council Program Manager, EU-ACT Program	Damilare.Babalola@ng.britishcouncil.org
16.	Chinoso Okechukwu	Secretariat, Nigerian Feminist Forum	nff@nigerianfeministforum.org
17.	Clement Boutellier Esme Stuart John Onyeukwu	Clement.Boutillier@eeas.europa.eu Esme.Stuart@eeas.europa.eu John-aqwara.onyeukwu@eeas.europa.eu	Democracy, Governance and Migration Section Delegation of the European Union to Nigeria and ECOWAS

ANNEX 2:

Analysis Of Online Survey

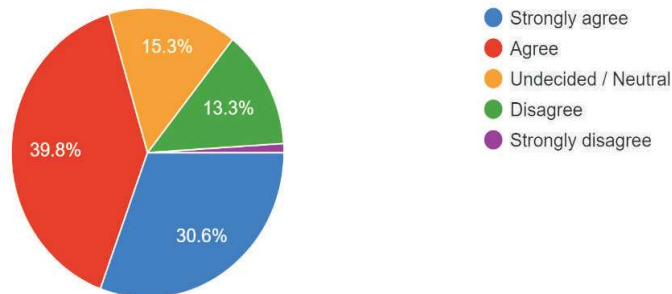
Laws and regulations guiding operations of civil society in Nigeria are very restrictive.

98 responses



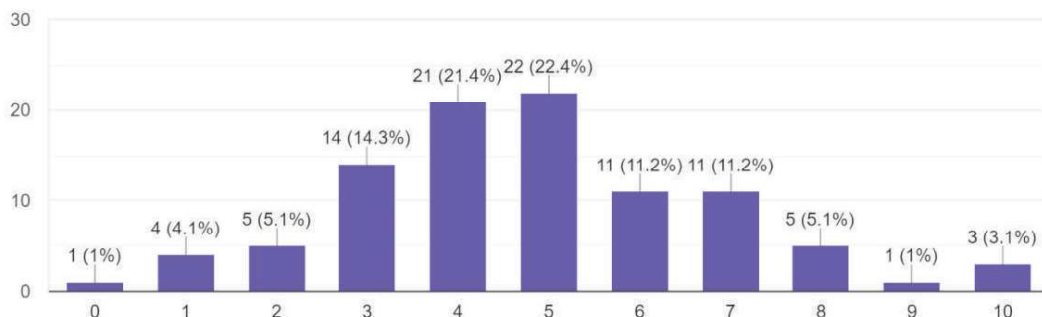
Current laws and regulations disproportionately affect women's groups, indigenous or minority populations, LGBTI, and youth groups

98 responses



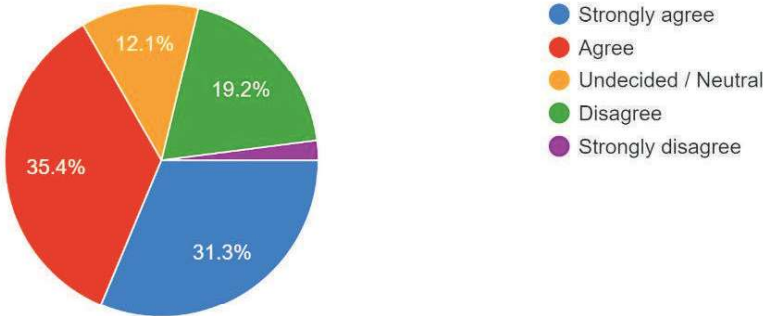
Overall how would you rate the general legal framework that regulates civil society in terms of its support to the open and effective operation of civic space.

98 responses



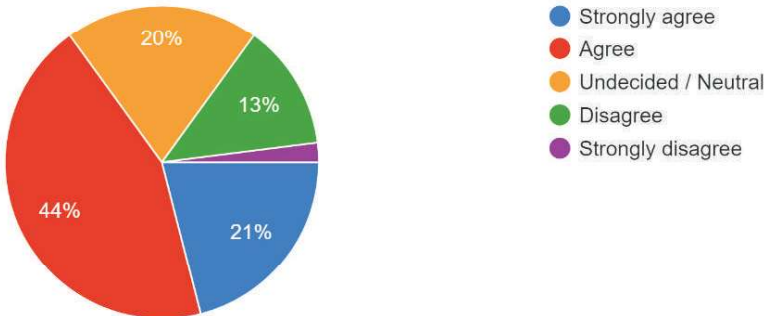
Major barriers exist for civil society to accessing and utilizing domestic and foreign funds

99 responses



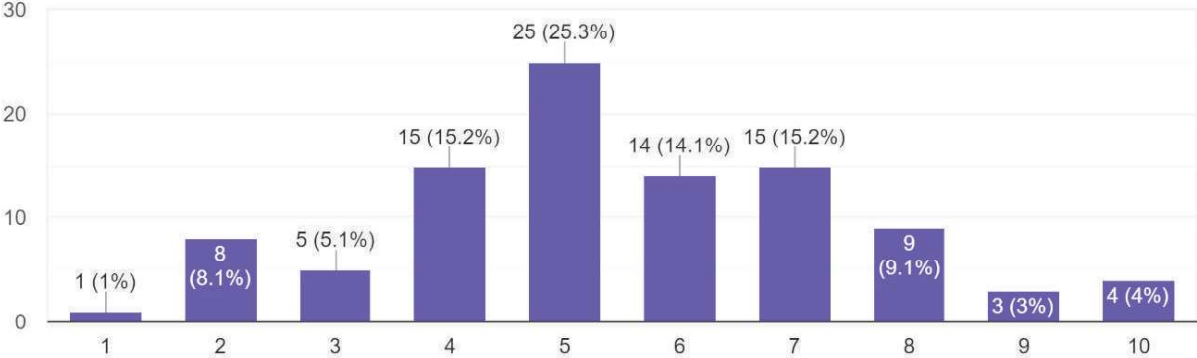
To a large extent these mechanisms or practices discriminate against organisations working on advocacy, accountability, sexual and reproductive rights

100 responses



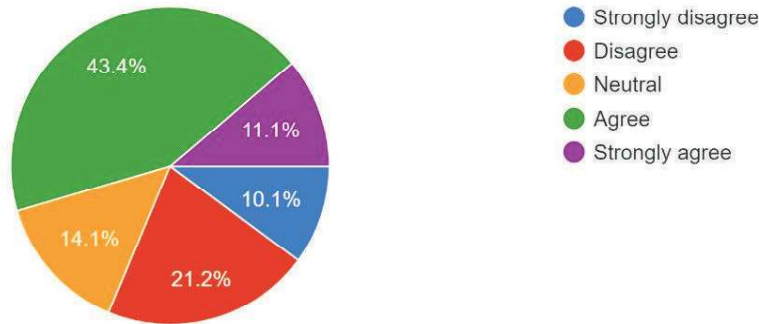
Overall how would you rate the freedom of civil society to mobilise domestic and/ or foreign resources

99 responses



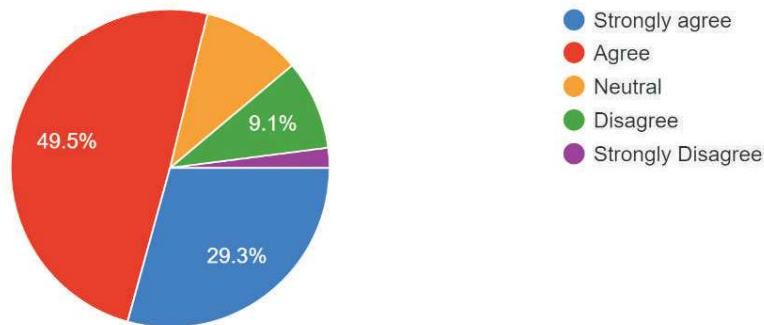
Administrative practices and procedures have hindered CSOs in the operation of their work?

99 responses



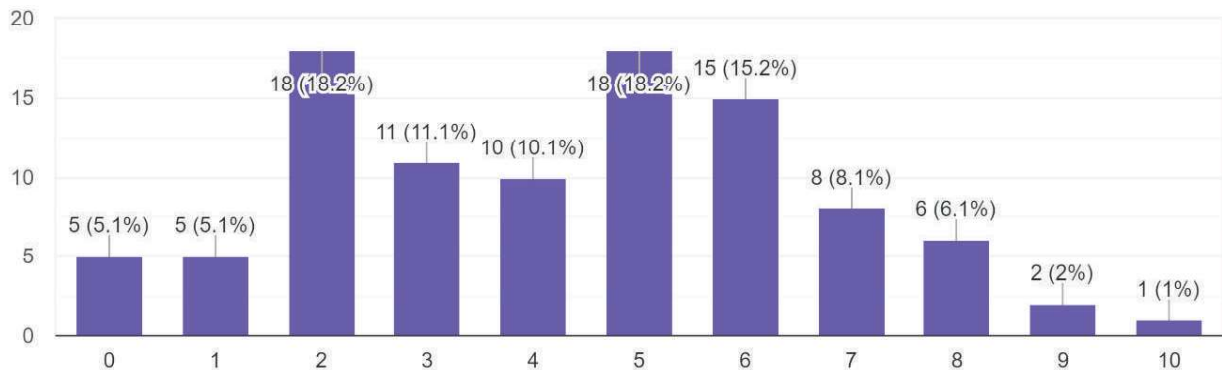
Activities (focused on advocacy, public gatherings, topics (e.g sexual and reproductive rights, LGBTI, extractives) or groups (e.g religious minorit...ected by bureaucratic restrictions or obstruction?

99 responses



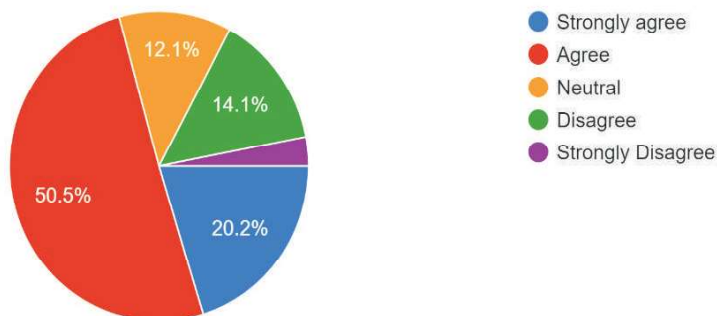
Overall how would you rate the safety and well-being of activists, staff and leaders of civil society

99 responses



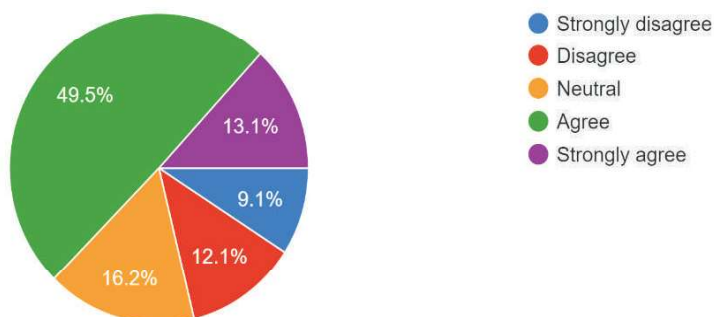
Civil society have access to media have the ability to raise their voice and share their views with the general public?

99 responses



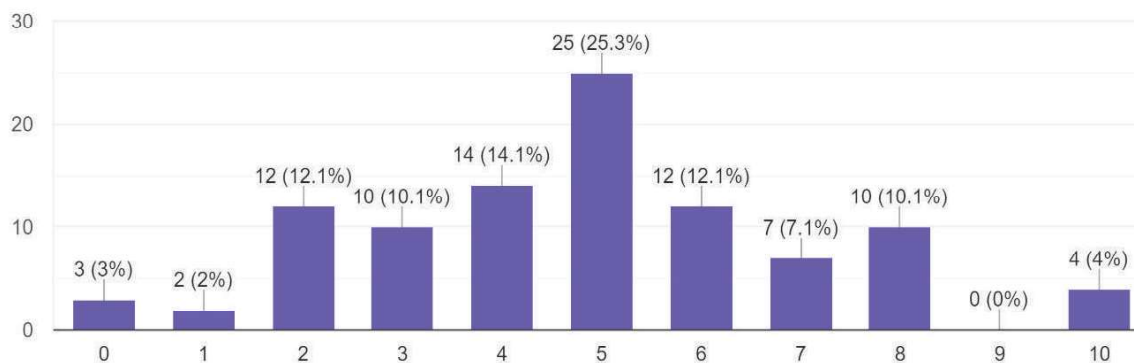
Public reputation of independent media and CSOs is often adversely affected by public statements of governments and conservative/state owned media actors?

99 responses



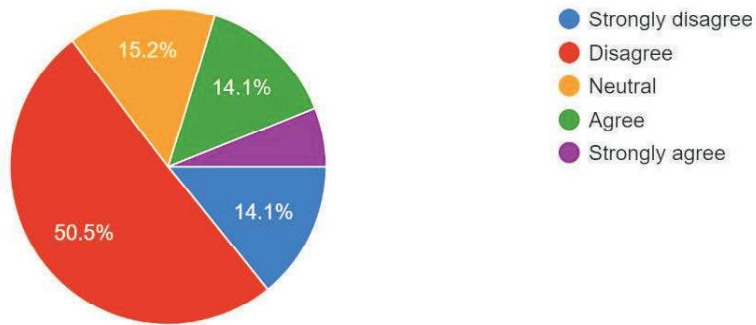
Overall how would you rate the access to information and freedom of expression of civil society

99 responses



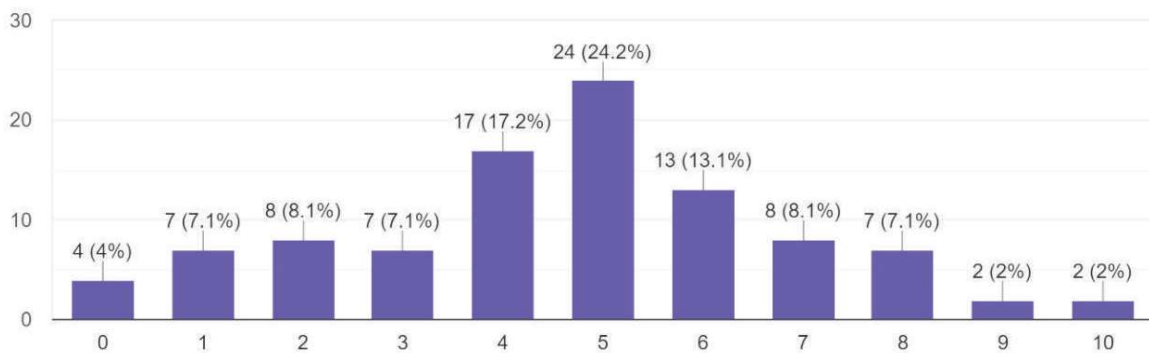
In Nigeria all groups can gather and organise freely?

99 responses



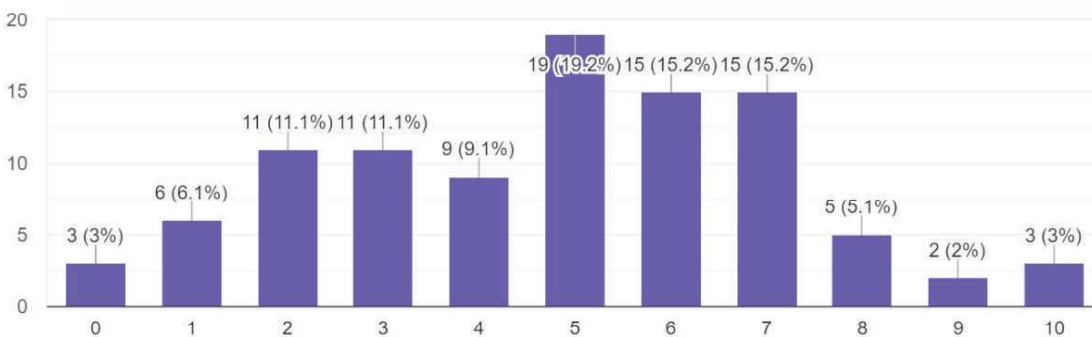
How do you rate the access to information and freedom of expression of civil society on a scale between 0 (closed) and 10 (open)

99 responses



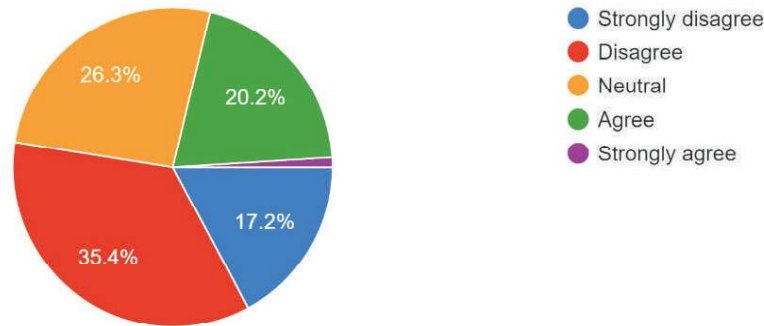
Overall how would you rate the freedom of assembly (to meet, share views, protest) on a scale between 0 (closed) and 10 (open)

99 responses



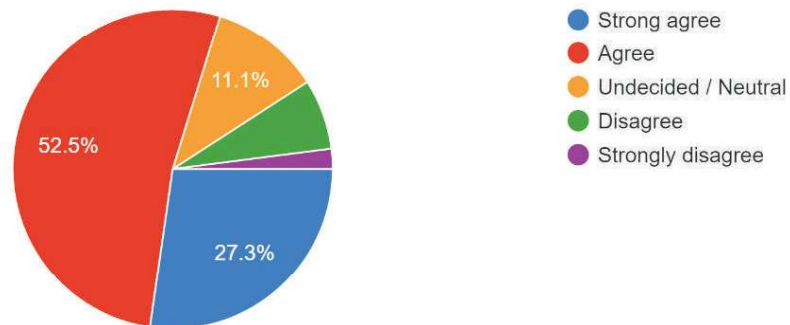
Civil society organisations are involved in decision-making or approached for meaningful consultation on policies by the government?

99 responses



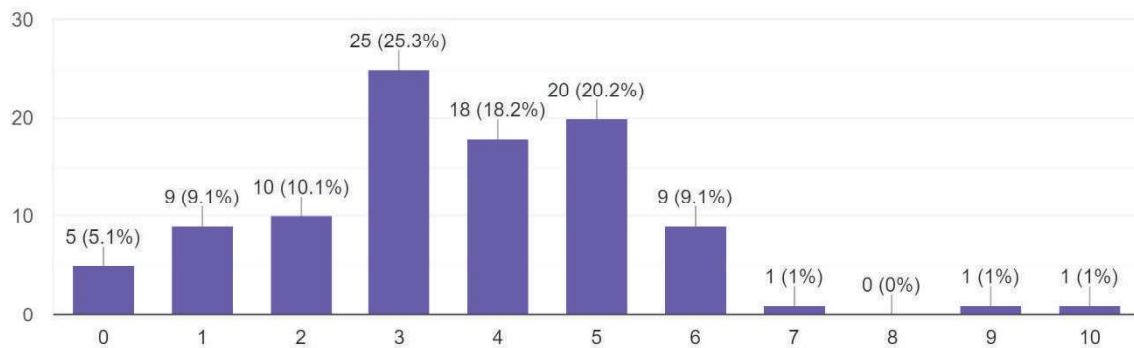
Spaces for dialogue are often antagonistic, consultations that are episodic, tokenistic, at the discretion of governments and involve limited numbers of CSOs

99 responses



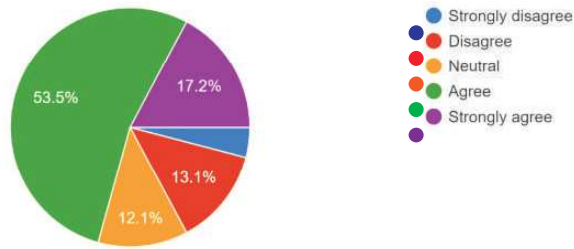
Overall how would you rate the openness of the government to engage meaningfully with civil society on policy issues and reform

99 responses



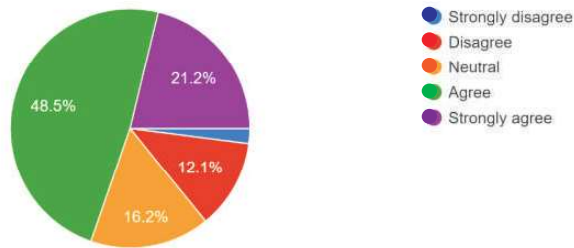
Civil society constantly faces restrictions when it comes to accessing justice and fair legal process?

99 responses

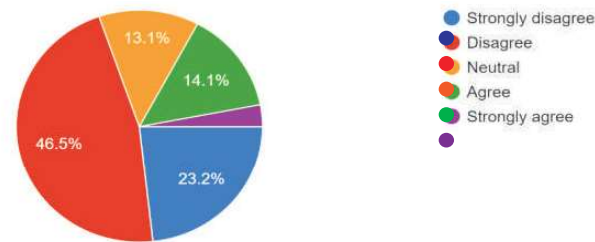


Specific groups of civic activists or their families (e.g. women, indigenous people, LGBTI, journalists, human rights defenders) are often disc...system or have less access to justice than others?

99 responses

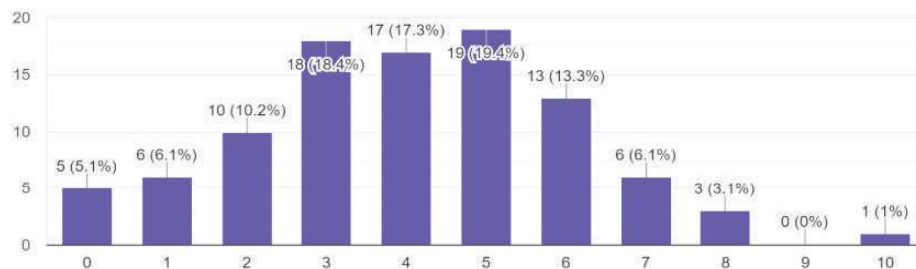


Government and legislative mechanisms are in place to protect activists and human rights



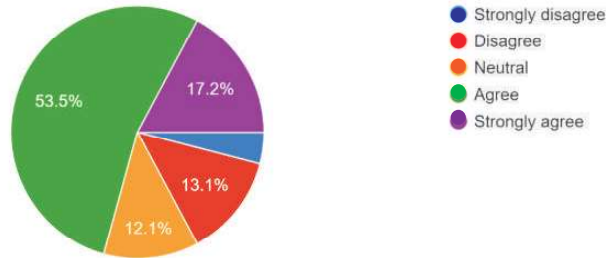
Overall how would you rate the access of civil society to legal services and justice in case of violations of rights, on a scale between 0 (closed) and 10 (open)

98 responses



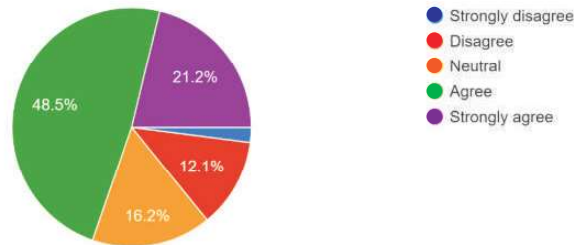
Civil society constantly faces restrictions when it comes to accessing justice and fair legal process?

99 responses



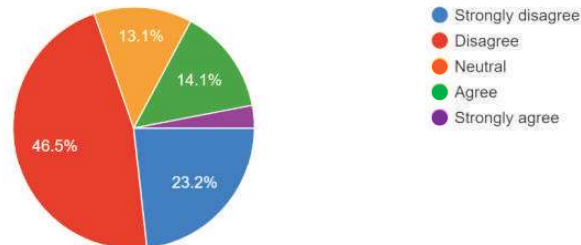
Specific groups of civic activists or their families (e.g. women, indigenous people, LGBTI, journalists, human rights defenders) are often disc...system or have less access to justice than others?

99 responses



Government and legislative mechanisms are in place to protect activists and human rights defenders seeking justice after experiencing threats to personal well-being adequate?

99 responses



Overall how would you rate the access of civil society to legal services and justice in case of violations of rights, on a scale between 0 (closed) and 10 (open)

98 responses



OXFAM

Oxfam is an international confederation of 17 organizations networked together in 92 countries, as part of a global movement for change, to build a future free from the injustice of poverty:

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Oxfam Canada (www.oxfam.ca)
Oxfam France (www.oxfamfrance.org)
Oxfam Germany (www.oxfam.de)
Oxfam GB (www.oxfam.org.uk)
Oxfam Hong Kong (www.oxfam.org.hk)
Oxfam India (www.oxfamindia.org)
Oxfam Italy (www.oxfamitalia.org)
Oxfam Japan (www.oxfam.jp)
Intermón Oxfam (www.intermonoxfam.org)
Oxfam Ireland (www.oxfamireland.org)
Oxfam Italy (www.oxfamitalia.org)
Oxfam Japan (www.oxfam.jp)
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