

September Edition

**GRAB THE CHANCE**

Quarterly Newsletter

## About Alliances for Africa

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AfA is an international African led non-governmental human right, peace and sustainable development organization. AfA works with partners in, around and beyond the continent of Africa. AfA was created to enhance and reconstruct the interface human right and development, with a vision to contributing innovatively to the task of tackling causes of endemic poverty and exclusion in Africa. AfA works with partners in, around and beyond the continent of Africa to advocate for the protection of human rights; promote women's participation in leadership and governance; build institutional capacity, advocate for gender justice, equality and non-discrimination, as well as promoting peace, security and conflict resolution interventions.

### Vision

AfA works to interface local, national, sub-regional and international initiatives on human rights, peace, and sustainable development, acting as a facilitator for the generation, and dissemination of information within the field pertinent to Africa.

### Mission

AfA's mission is to enhance and strengthen on a sustainable basis, local, national, sub-regional and international institutions in Africa, by being active in the monitoring, advancing, promoting and protection of human rights, peace, and sustainable development initiatives.





## Editorial Note

Cultural Barrier among other factors continues to perpetuate the low representation of women in leadership at national, state and local levels in Nigeria. Working experience with women and traditional rulers at the community level in the southeast shows that four (4) out of the five (5) southeastern states have a cultural or traditional inhibition to women's political participation. Imo state women in politics for example, identified male preference as a tradition that prevents their effective engagement in leadership and decision-making spaces in the state.

Abia women in politics had lamented about indigenization, a tradition which forbids women married from Abia state to other communities from participating in politics in their maiden state. However, married or not, a woman should be voted for, and elected into leadership roles. Traditional taboos and male preference are traditions in Anambra state that stand against women's leadership in the state.

Anambra women in politics had experienced situations where it was declared a taboo for them enter certain sacred places. Sadly, these forbidden places are where important issues about the communities are decided. Could it be that the assumption behind this tradition is that women are not capable and will to be part of the body that make such important decisions? Do these important issues that "men" alone decide about not affect women also? Why are women not part of the process of decision making that affects them, their children and their families?

Alliances for Africa, with support of Ebonyi women in politics had identified the "Ili-lolo" tradition found in Ikwo community in Ebonyi state.

The practice is a cultural inhibition to women's political participation.

Ili-lolo is a tradition that forbids female participation, specifically disallowing women and girls from talking or contributing in meetings, family or public. Holders of culture in Ikwo community in Ebonyi state set this tradition.

This tradition, strictly strongly discourages women participation in politics and governance. Men such as traditional rulers, male politicians, family heads and male youths are the champions and drivers of this practice.

## Editorial Note

They are active in upholding and protecting cultures and traditions whilst keeping women in check in terms of adherence to the tradition and culture. Alliance for Africa (AfA) will not sit back to enjoy the ride on women's right to political participation. As an organization, advocating for non-discrimination and women's participation in decision making/leadership AfA will champion the advocacy to break this cultural inhibition. We do know that the National Gender Policy stipulates 35% representation of women in every decision-making space across Nigeria. Women should not be discriminated against leadership and decision making, where they are more than 50% of Nigeria's population. Every decision making affects women directly or indirectly therefore, women should contribute to decisions that affects them. This is a reminder to our traditional rulers, political party leaders, family heads and male youth leaders that our democracy calls for equal participation of men and women. We ask that you take necessary action to ensure adequate representation in of women in every corridor of decision-making and leadership.

### Editorial Team

Chinwendu Anozie  
Communications Officer  
Editor in Chief

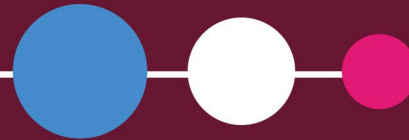
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Communications Intern



## ADDRESSING UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN THROUGH SOCIAL INNOVATION MESSAGES

Women   Men



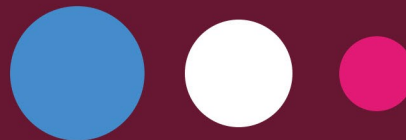
A Focused Group Discussion was launched by Alliances for Africa on June 25, 2018 to July 4, 2018. Stake holders at the community level such as traditional rulers, female politicians, religious leaders, community youth leaders, market women, people living with disability, came together to identify the root causes and challenges of women under representation in decision-making process and develop strategic social innovation messages to address this challenges. The extensive focused group discussion was an opportunity to collect views and perceptions on the issues surrounding women's under representation in elective positions in Nigeria through the pre and post assessment questionnaire distributed to participants.

In summary, Imo, Abia, Anambra and Enugu states identified gender discriminations as the main challenges contributing to women's under representation in decision making, however in Ebonyi state, 61% of the respondent identified lack of financial resources as the main challenge. over 93% of respondents across the five states agreed that women's participation in leadership is very low.

# Grab The Chance

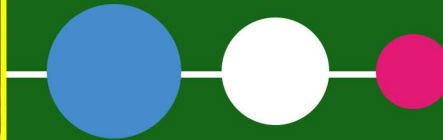
Over 50% of the respondents across the five states expressed very high-to-high interest in using social media for advocacy, outreach, campaigning, while over 24% had average to low interest and less than 20% had no interest at all. 71% of the respondents from Anambra expressed extremely likelihood to use Whatsapp groups for sharing information and discussions followed by Enugu state with 63%.

Some of the identified challenges to women's participation in politics in the southeast include: gender based violence, lack of academically equipped and politically informed women leaders, poor understanding of politics, monetized politics, stigmatization, political party discrimination, political violence, sexual harassment and godfatherism.





## STRENGTHENING THE ECOWAS COURT OF JUSTICE & ENHANCING ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN THE WEST AFRICAN REGION



As an organization advocating for gender justice and non-discrimination, Alliances For Africa (AFA) remains at the forefront in promoting access to justice for women and girls in West Africa. A consultative meeting took place in April 2018 at Abuja, Nigeria on strengthening the ECOWAS court. The meeting encouraged adequate staffing of the ECOWAS especially with lawyers qualified to handle human right cases, this will facilitate justice for all especially women and girls, however the ECOWAS court had done so well with fair hearing, free speech, right to life, personal liberty and political association. It was agreed that the following points will be worth considering towards strengthening the ECOWAS court and enhancing access to justice in the West African region:

- The decision to reduce the number of judges of the Court from 7 to 5, is purely a political one that has no legal force.



## STRENGTHENING THE ECOWAS COURT OF JUSTICE & ENHANCING ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN THE WEST AFRICAN REGION

- ☒ There exist low level of co-operation between member states and the Court given that only 4 states out of the 15 member states (and recently, the Niger Republic) have established bodies to follow up on enforcement of the decisions of the Court as stipulated in the 2005 Supplementary Protocol of the ECOWAS
- ☒ Civil Society Organizations (CSOS) can advocate for appellate chambers of the Court to be established as the court does not have appellate powers and cannot interfere with the national jurisdiction of member states.
- ☒ There has been no study to assess the need to confer criminal jurisdiction on the Court save for the proposal received from member states.
- ☒ NGOs can approach the Court to seek redress on behalf of victims of human right violations in the member states.
- ☒ States should appoint bodies/committees that will follow up on decisions of the Court to enforce implementation.
- ☒ That the rule of evidence on certification is applied by the Court and that Article 24 of the Protocol states that the decisions of the Court will be implemented through the Civil Procedure Rules of the member states.





## STRENGTHENING THE ECOWAS COURT OF JUSTICE & ENHANCING ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN THE WEST AFRICAN REGION

- ☒ That there is a need to be brief and concise in making written applications and that notice of adjournment should be given to litigants early enough to save time and resources.
- ☒ That the rules of the Court provide for electronic lodging of complaints and submission of applications by litigants provided that the hard copies are transmitted within 10 days and that there is a need to update the rules of the Court on filings to accommodate effective electronic filings.
- ☒ That supports rendered by CSOs to facilitate access to justice in the Court for instance in translation of proceedings and judgments should be welcomed.
- ☒ That the capacity of lawyers needs to be built to ensure that they can approach the court and seek redress for victims of rights violations.



## ADDRESSING THE RISING ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS TENSION IN NIGERIA

The ongoing campaign (#SheGoverns) launched by Alliances for Africa, on the 2018 International Women's Day had joined voices with other Nigerian youths in demanding a Nigeria where any Nigerian youth can lead every Nigerian, demanding zero tolerance for divisive ethnic or religious set in the country, advocating a united ideology that we are all Nigerians first before our ethnic identities.

The campaign #SheGoverns advocates for leadership spaces for younger women in Nigeria it is an online mentoring platform by Alliances for Africa (AfA) designed to educate and build the interest of young women towards political participation and leadership. Members of this platform participated in the retreat to promote national cohesion and build platforms to manage diversities



Chidi Odinkalu

Chidi Odinkalu stressed that it is important to identify a set of common values around which citizens will cohere and drive messages around national cohesion.



## ADDRESSING THE RISING ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS TENSION IN NIGERIA

He noted that critical issues emerged from earlier discussions, the most important being safety and security. He stated the importance of creating an opportunity for elected government representatives in 2019 to feel a sense of responsibility to bring the nation together. He also emphasised the issue of livelihood and environment - how can citizens communicate their intentions?

Mr. Odinkalu identified six themes that will enhance national cohesion:

- Promoting tolerance · Encouraging inclusion · Enhancing co-existence
- De-escalating tension · Promoting productivity · Fostering responsible leadership

He stated that to effectively find solutions to our lack of cohesion in Nigeria, we must:

- Address the issue of negative narratives and stereotypes.
- Foster good investment in education.
- Share synergies in communications.
- Recruit supporters and make them understand that we have different identities - gender, ethnic, status, language - all of which must coexist.
- Recruit interlocutors from government, private and public institutions, media, voluntary sector, communities, interfaith and the family.

He urged members of civil society organizations to learn from politicians, not their content, but their process - be inclusive, hardworking, have foresight and plan into the future.



## HUMAN RIGHT SITUATION IN NIGERIA



Chetachi Louis

The report on human right situation in Nigeria commenced on April 29, 2018 at the 62nd ordinary session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Right. The report is a summary of efforts of the Federal Government of Nigeria through legislative, judicial, policy and administrative measures within the period under review to improve on her obligations to promote and protect human and people's rights. Nigeria ratified the African Charter on human and peoples' rights on 22nd June, 1983 and domesticated same as Cap A9 LFN 2004. The delegation was led by Mrs Stella Anukam, Director International and Comparative Law, Federal Ministry of Justice, Mr Obinna Onyima, secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs other delegates from Ministry of Defence and Labour and Productivity. It was quite a lengthy report that highlighted actions taken by government to mitigate human right violations across all sectors of the country. However, the chairperson and commissioners noted some of these Hhuman right situation in Nigeria;

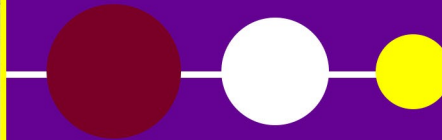
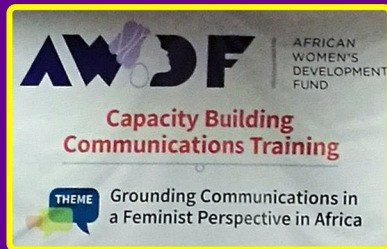


## HUMAN RIGHT SITUATION IN NIGERIA

- ☒ Death penalty mechanism; Nigeria cannot be promoting right to life and still hand down death penalty as a sentence.
- ☒ Defenders of human right; face untold hardship in the country particularly those defending the right of LGBTs, persons with disability, old persons, women and children.
- ☒ Freedom of Expression; incessant attacks on journalist
- ☒ Security situation particularly in the North East; what is the government doing to curb the menace of killer Fulani herdsmen, boko haram and resettling the internally displaced persons so affected.
- ☒ Right of women and children; what is delaying the GEO Bill at the legislative arm of government?
- ☒ Overcrowding at Prison Facilities.



## GROUNDING COMMUNICATIONS IN A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES

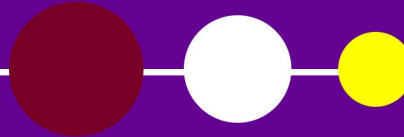


Alliances the Africa participated at the in-person capacity training by African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) The communication pilot training for grantee organizations took place in Accra, Ghana on July 18 to 20, 2018. The objective of the capacity workshop was to support the development of organizational capacity and advocacy skills of grantee organizations. The workshop sought to ground communication from the feminist perspective and to amplify women's voices in communication contents of women's right organizations. This has to do with telling our stories in a way that amplify women's voices. Our stories, experiences and messages should represent women and as often women should tell their stories in their own voices. The communications training empowered women's right organizations to control how they represent themselves and the women and girls they support. The training encouraged storytelling and adopted the principle of non-violations of women's human right for the sake of communicating.



## GROUNDING COMMUNICATIONS IN A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES

The communications pilot workshop provided participants with the right skills and tools to advocate effectively and to be strategic about how and when they communicate. Its content is grounded in a feminist perspective and takes into account future trends in the feminist movement building.



The workshop provided the following tips on dealing with stories on violence against women.

- ☒ We must be careful of our language when reporting on violence against women. We must not imply the survivor is to blame or portray perpetrators as real men.
- ☒ We must conduct all contact with survivors of violence with respect for their experience, dignity and safety.



## GROUNDING COMMUNICATIONS IN A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES

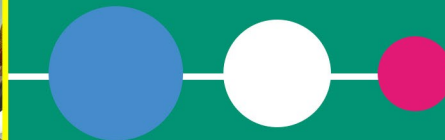
- ☒ We should highlight the gendered nature and root cause of violence against women in all reporting.
- ☒ We should be mindful of the lack of convincing evidence for a 'cycle of violence' and avoid making simplistic connections between men's violence against women and their childhood experiences of violence.
- ☒ Our report on rape and sexual violence should include data, and evidence about the current pattern of victimization and should be free of myths and stereotypes
- ☒ The images we use in reporting violence should not distort the story, contribute to the problem or objectify women.
- ☒ We will not imply that alcohol use is the cause of violence. We must name the real cause.
- ☒ We should treat violence against women as serious concern and use an appropriate tone when reporting.





## STRENGTHENING WOMEN LEADERS CAPACITY TO ADOPT CONSTITUENCY PROJECTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Alliances for Africa organized a workshop for women appointed/elected in political offices to review their constituent programs/projects, and adopt such for implementation and monitoring for effective leadership. Executive Director of Alliances for Africa Ms Iheoma Obibi challenged the women aspirants on what they are bringing and leaving on the table while in political office and after leaving the office.



It is not enough to know and feel qualified to LEAD but what projects would be introduced and sustained by the woman leaders in public office/governance. The women in politics learned about public office and governance, with emphasis on accountability.

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) consultant Ms. Nnennaya took the women on; Understanding M&E-Concept and Application. The Objectives of this session was to understand the importance and concept of monitoring and evaluation for people in governance, and to establish monitoring and evaluation framework for individual female politicians. M&E framework often generates (written) reports that contribute to transparency and accountability.



## STRENGTHENING WOMEN LEADERS CAPACITY TO ADOPT CONSTITUENCY PROJECTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

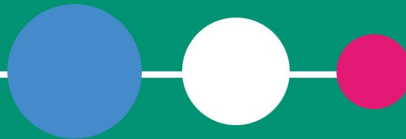
It reveals mistakes and offers paths for learning and improvements. It provides a way to assess the crucial link between implementers and beneficiaries on the ground and decision-makers as well. It also provides a more robust basis for raising funds and influencing policy

Mentorship As a Tool for Sustaining Women's Leadership was discussed by Ms Iheoma Obibi. Ms. Obibi defined a Mentor as one with a wealth of experience, wisdom, guidance and encouragement and demonstrates superior leadership. She told the women in politics that mentorship is about identifying a mentee and gently guide such one into a leadership role amidst all challenges. She advised that this process must be clear from the onset to avoid misunderstanding from either party especially the mentee.

The session provided an opportunity for the women to check through their political career to see if they had actually mentored anyone. They would define the mentorship process and correct any abnormality for best practices.



Ms Iheoma Obibi





## STRENGTHENING WOMEN LEADERS CAPACITY TO ADOPT CONSTITUENCY PROJECTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Finally Ms Nnennaya took the women through an assignment of coming up with project definitions for their constituencies and how they can achieve their project plans through proper monitoring framework.

- ☒ Each woman in governance should identify needs that can easily become projects that they can implement
- ☒ Do a baseline to determine the level before intervention (Look for one with M/E skills)
- ☒ Leverage on existing programs/ budget/structures/ to implement their proposed project.
- ☒ Do a report on outcomes after intervention

At the end of the workshop, the feedback from the women shows that they changed their perception about leadership.



## IMO STATE PVC REGISTRATION SITUATION REPORT

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) 2018 third quarter meeting held in Imo state on Tuesday July 31st 2018 reported on the Permanent Voters Card (PVC) registration and collection in Imo state.

The INEC team had expressed displeasure over the fact that women are not forthcoming in registering and collecting their PVCs saying that the ratio of persons who had collected their PVC in Imo state was 52% of men to 48% of women. The INEC team further gave the progress of collection of PVC in Imo state to be:

April: 1, 878

May: 2, 422

June: 2, 465

July: 405 as at 13th July, 2018 when the data was collated.

More so, INEC said that contrary to the rumor that the collection of PVC exercise will wrap up soon, the exercise will continue until a week to the general elections in 2019.

INEC urged CSOs to lend their efforts in sensitizing the people especially women on the need to register for PVCs and most importantly, collect these PVCs as registration for PVC without collection of same makes the act futile.

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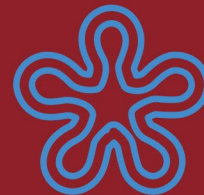
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