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Introduction

The MacArthur Foundation's Big Bet On Nigeria program supports Nigerian-led efforts to reduce corruption by strengthening accountability, transparency, and participation in Nigeria. This learning brief presents results from an analysis of how On Nigeria 2.0 grantees support anticorruption agencies (ACAs) and accountability bodies (ABs) engage with civil society organizations (CSOs) and Nigerian citizens and support citizens to use accountability mechanisms.[1]

The brief explains that On Nigeria grantees have fostered collaboration with and between ACA/ABs, CSOs, and citizens, as well as strengthened the capacity of ACA/ABs to investigate

> **Learning Questions**
>
> 1.2 How do grantee strategies build connections and synergies between civil society, citizens, and accountability mechanisms such as ACAs and accountability bodies, through the whistleblower policy and other channels? What makes these strategies effective?
>
> 1.3 How do grantee strategies activate citizens to engage accountability mechanisms? What variation is there in the efficacy of these strategies across ethnic, sociocultural, and regional groups?

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[1] ACAs are Nigerian government bodies with the express purpose of investigating, prosecuting, or punishing cases of corruption, or initiating anticorruption policy reforms or programs. There are 26 ACAs in Nigeria, including the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offenses Commission (ICPC), the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU). ABs are Nigerian government bodies with the power to issue sanctions to other government or judicial actors, including the powers to censure/reprimand, suspend, or remove (or recommend the removal of) the actor from office. ABs include the National Judicial Council (NJC) and Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB). "Accountability mechanism" is an umbrella term referring to institutional processes and/or organizations that encourage compliance with norms, standards, and regulations, including through investigations, dispute resolution, and even redress and sanctioning. In many cases, the public can use these mechanisms – which may include grievance as well as redress mechanisms – to report corrupt acts or access information. For more on

and prosecute corruption. These efforts do not, however, engage all populations in Nigeria equitably.

Sample and Methods

This learning brief contributes to answering Learning Question 1.2 and 1.3 (see box). EnCompass distributed a quantitative survey to the 31 On Nigeria 2.0 Criminal Justice (CJ), Joinbodi (JB), and Behavior Change (BC) grantees who work with and/or support ACAs and accountability mechanisms.[2] Twenty-five grantees (81 percent of the total) completed the survey, which explored how grantees strengthen ACA/AB capacity, collaboration between ACA/ABs, citizens, and other organizations, and the use of accountability mechanisms in Nigeria. EnCompass conducted follow up key informant interviews (KIIs) with nine grantees and two non-grantee ACA/ABs. Additionally, EnCompass reviewed 41 grantee annual and final reports. EnCompass coded, analyzed, and synthesized the collected data to generate the overarching findings and conclusions presented in this brief.

Findings

Findings are presented in three groups, which cut across both Learning Questions 1.2 and 1.3.

Grantees' Work to Engage ACAs and Accountability Bodies

Finding 1: Some ACA/ABs – though by no means all – have strong leaders and staff that are skilled at investigations, committed to tacking corruption, and willing to work with others, all of which facilitates effective partnerships.

> " *Within the EFCC and ICPC there is a good leadership presently. Strong people who are well motivated, who are well focused and ready to go and very professional. They have this determination…– Criminal Justice Grantee*

Grantees and non-grantee ACA/AB staff respondents noted that several ACA/ABs (both grantee and non-grantee) – especially the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) – have strong leaders. According to grantees, these leaders were particularly dedicated to getting funding and publicizing their institution's work. Grantees felt that this dedication inspired staff to work diligently to address corruption. Grantees had particularly high praise for staff investigators

> " *NGOs are like partners; they are constantly our partners. Most programs we have we involve them and invite them and when they have programs, they invite us to come and present some topics there and talk to their people. – Non-grantee ACA*

"accountability mechanisms," please see the Accountability Research Center's working paper *Accountability Keywords* (January 2022).

[2] The survey was sent to 11 CJ grantees, 17 JB grantees, and 3 BC grantees, who were included because they support engagement with ACA/ABs. Ten CJ grantees, 13 JB grantees, and two BC grantees responded. Two grantee respondents were ACAs/ABs.

at some ACA/ABs (especially ICPC), who they felt were thorough and discreet, and able to conduct efficient investigations.

In addition to these internal strengths, several ACA/ABs demonstrated a commitment to working with other organizations, both within and outside the government, allowing them to play complementary roles in the accountability ecosystem. For example, despite perceptions that ACA/ABs operate in silos, staff from ACA/ABs report that they collaborate on investigations when one ACA/AB has specific expertise or a mandate to work in a particular area, such as tax fraud. Some ACA/ABs also partner with grantees. 70 percent of CJ grantees (n=7/10) reported that, in their experience, some ACA/ABs provided access to information about their work, while 54 percent of JB grantees (n=7/13) reported that the ACA/ABs they target facilitated access to individuals and institutions.

Finding 2: Grantees facilitate and complement ACA/ABs' role in the accountability ecosystem by addressing challenges that ACA/ABs face and engaging in work that ACA/ABs are not as well equipped to do.

Grantees have developed programming to address a range of challenges ACA/ABs face.

> " *We have consistently assisted with the law enforcement agencies to deal with their investigation, … we have nearly also completed the investigation and many times what is just left for them is to verify some of those information that are provided. – Joinbodi Grantee*

Resource shortages: ACA/AB respondents and their grantee partners noted that ACA/ABs often lack funding, materials, and information technology. These shortfalls limit the ability of ACA/ABs to conduct spot checks of procurement materials and other documentation of government spending. On Nigeria grantees are working to address these resource gaps in three ways. First, grantees from both CJ (40 percent, n=4/10) and JB (23 percent, n=3/13) cohorts report advocating for increased funding for ACA/ABs, with one grantee stating that their work was instrumental to the passage of the Proceeds of Crime Bill.[3] Second, one grantee tries to reduce ACA/ABs' costs by conducting preliminary investigations themselves. Third, several grantees facilitate information sharing between ACA/ABs and other law enforcement agencies (including non-Nigerian agencies investigating international financial crimes).

Capacity deficits: ACA/ABs need regular training to stay abreast of new investigative and prosecutorial techniques and tools for addressing corruption. Some ACA/ABs described specific training needs around proceeds management. Others said they train other agencies and expressed a desire for training in capacity building skills. ACA/ABs also consider dissemination strategies and platforms a growth area. Grantees seek to address these deficits in several ways. Two grantees create tools, including guidance and web platforms, to facilitate investigations. Other grantees train ACA/AB partners on topics as varied as investigative techniques, investigative, prosecutorial,

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[3] This bill gives ACA/ABs the power to use monies regained from investigations to fund further work.

and sanctioning regulations, and dissemination and citizen engagement strategies.[4] Non-grantee ACA/ABs confirmed receiving technical support from grantees and other CSOs, specifically mentioning investigative and prosecutorial trainings, workshops with different citizen groups, and partnerships on Open Government Partnership (OGP) events with community officials and citizens.

Entrenched culture of corruption: ACA/ABs and grantees reported that some government officials and agencies are less than committed to tackling corruption, and in some cases may have actively hampered anticorruption work. The broad tolerance of corruption further diminishes anticorruption efforts. Both grantee and non-grantee respondents noted that the low salaries of public sector workers facilitate corruption and that citizens do not prioritize fighting corruption, particularly in insecure parts of the country. Interviewed grantees also highlighted that well publicized cases where whistleblowers faced consequences (despite recently passed legal protections) had a chilling effect. To respond to these

> " *One issue unfortunately is that the law, which should be used as an armory against corruption, is used as a shield for the corrupt persons, I mean the defendants themselves. Some of them will go under the shield of enforcement, human rights enforcement as a delay tactic ... you find situations that at a point in time you have to stop on interlocutory appeals. You know how appeals are, it takes years to be heard and judgement is given before you even continue the case. – Non-grantee ACA/AB*

challenges, interviewed grantees reported engaging in constant advocacy, such as encouraging the Attorney General to support passage of the Proceeds of Crime bill, nudging officials to strengthen ACA/AB governing laws, and working directly to support implementation of whistleblower protections.

Finding 3: Grantees seek to hold ACA/ABs accountable by filing complaints, monitoring investigations and prosecutions, and reporting results to the public.

Grantees further support the accountability ecosystem by working to hold ACA/ABs themselves accountable. For example, 54 percent of JB grantees (n=7/13) reported filing complaints with ACA/ABs to launch investigations. Both JB and CJ grantees monitor ACA/ABs for regulatory compliance, with CJ grantees generally focusing on regulations related to investigation (50 percent, n=5/10) and prosecution (40 percent, n=4/10) and JB grantees focusing on regulations related to prosecution and consistency in sanctioning (31 percent, n=4/13). Grantees also report independently verifying ACA/ABs' own case monitoring and reporting. Grantees leverage the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to support monitoring in two ways: 1) two grantees obtained and shared government data with the public, and 2) two grantees created and publicized indices to support citizen monitoring of government institutions' transparency and integrity.

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[4] Fifty percent of CJ grantees (n=5/10) provide training on investigative techniques; 70 percent (n=7/10) do training on investigative regulations; as well as on 70 percent (n=7/10) provide training on prosecutorial techniques (; 80 percent (n=8/10) provide training on prosecutorial regulations, 60 percent (n=6/10) provide training on sanctioning regulations; 50 percent (n=5/10) provide training on how to share work with citizens (Five of the 15 JB and CJ grantees that described their greatest success in work with ACA/ABs report that they have helped their partners engage citizens and civil society). Two JB grantees conduct trainings on these topics with their ACA/AB partners, and another JB grantee supports gender mainstreaming in ACA/ABs' operations.

Finding 4: CJ and JB grantees leverage public events, technology, and media to share information, engage (and support engagement between) ACA/ABs, civil society, and citizens, and promote positive accountability.

Exhibit 1 shows the platforms grantees use most to facilitate citizen participation and engagement of other stakeholders in the accountability ecosystem.

Public events: Fourteen grantees held summits and townhall meetings to launch community-based anticorruption initiatives, and plan to hold additional engagement meetings on the roles and responsibilities of ACA/ABs and how civil society can strengthen ACA/AB work. Local government officials joined grantee-held meetings (as did CSOs, academia, and businesses) and grantees sometimes followed these with press conferences to pressure government participants to publicly report on commitments made. In some cases, these meetings allowed community members to demand action on delayed projects.

Technology: Nine of the 13 grantees that responded to the survey question on their greatest success reported developing hotlines, apps, and tools that CSOs and citizens can use to directly engage ACA/ABs and other government agencies. Grantee reports describe several such platforms: whistleblowing and corruption reporting apps, a corruption reporting hotline, web portals to facilitate public input to law enforcement agencies and anticorruption campaigns, and web platforms to support use of accountability mechanisms.

Media (and social media): Fifteen of 25 survey respondents mentioned using media and social media to build awareness of corruption. Further, many grantee reports noted that they use TV, radio, and/or social media, producing factual content (including documentaries, primers on laws and policies, and stories of whistleblowers) and fictional narratives (including jingles). Grantees also report hosting "radio townhalls" and phone-in events. Some observed that social media campaigns can be amplified to get the attention of government duty bearers in particular sectors such as health and education,[5] with one grantee specifically referring to a youth training program that leverages social media to report unfinished projects and advocate for good governance.

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[5] It is unclear to what extent grantees measure whether/how media engagement leads to mass action, though one grantee felt that increasing awareness of corruption in the public increases people's interest in their work.

Exhibit 1. Proportion of grantees mentioning different types of platforms[6]

(Hotlines, apps, and tools [n=9/13], Media and social media [n=15/25], and Engagement meetings and advocacy [n=14/20])
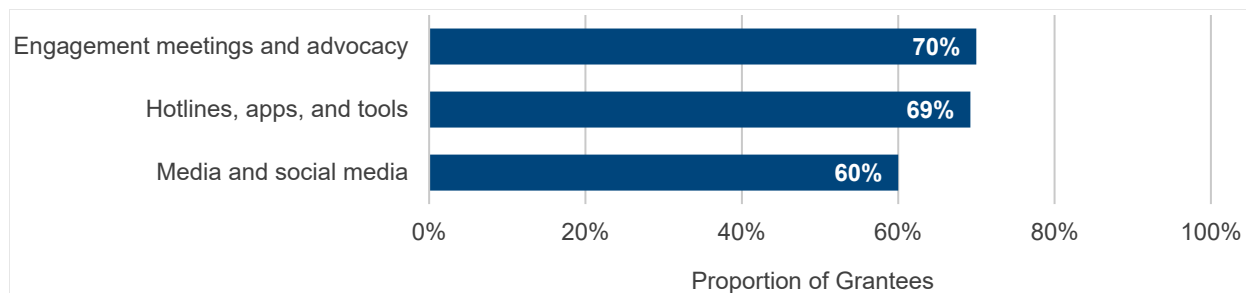
These platforms have several uses, according to grantees. For example, one ACA grantee and one CSO CJ grantee noted that shared platforms for collaboration facilitate ***CSO-ACA/AB engagement***, building mutual buy-in and promoting accountability. Several CSO-ACA/AB partnerships have emerged due to work on such platforms (see box on the following page for an example). Four JB grantees described using platforms to connect citizens and ACAs (three), create awareness among citizens (one), and file complaints to launch investigations (one), thereby facilitating ***ACA/ABs – Citizen engagement***. In annual reports, nine grantees also noted that they engage citizens to

> **Examples of a CSO-ACA/AB collaboration**
> One CJ grantee developed Casper HXN, a platform supporting ACA/ABs with information on corruption, asset recovery, court records, and other critical information. Grantees and other CSOs use the data shared via CASPER HXN and similar platforms to support ACA/AB investigations as well as to monitor projects and corruption cases.

develop action plans and set metrics for operationalizing anti-corruption policies and commitments. By increasing citizen access to ACA/ABs, grantees say they are increasing community-level corruption reporting as well as getting ACA/ABs to commit to work on corruption issues reported by citizens. Grantees also explained that communication platforms can facilitate ***CSO-CSO engagement.*** In interviews, three grantees described using such platforms to build partnerships, share information, and tackle shared goals. Specific examples of these collaborative efforts include a consortium of CSOs working together to draft model whistleblower legislation, facilitation of a community of practice for CSOs and universities to exchange ideas, and national summits for information sharing.

Grantees' Work to Activate Accountability Mechanisms

Finding 5: Grantees use and/or support use of accountability mechanisms by: building citizen capacity, facilitating collaboration and monitoring, and carrying out advocacy to ensure implementation and enforcement of existing legislation. This work has contributed to several successes.

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[6] The data in Exhibit 1 comes from survey responses, and captures the number of grantees that reported using each of the defined platforms. The response rate varied across different questions, thus the different N for each platform type.

Exhibit 2 shows the range of accountability mechanisms that grantees use, directly or indirectly.

Exhibit 2: Number of grantees reporting direct/indirect use of accountability mechanisms
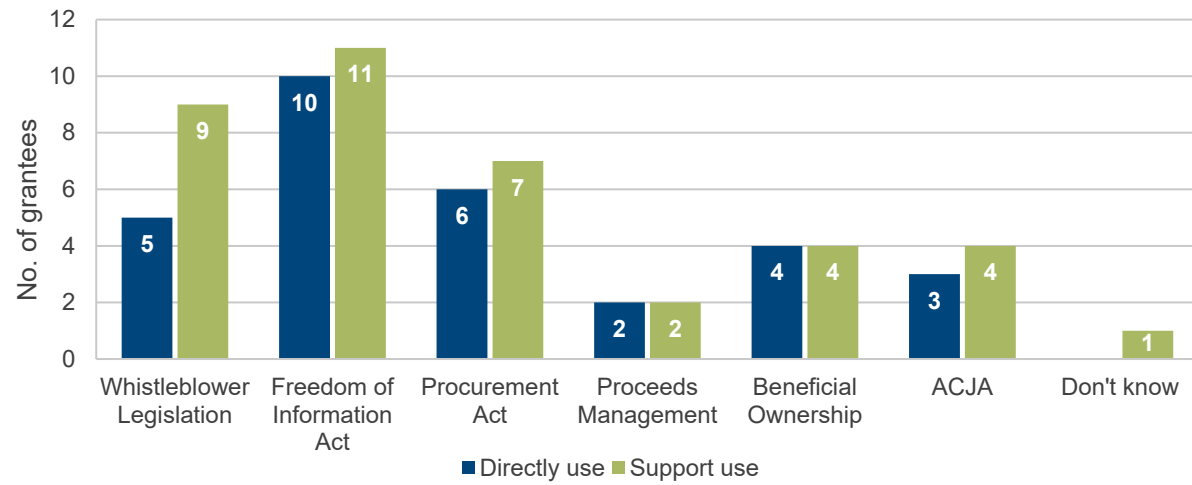
Capacity building: In the survey, all but one (n=10/11) grantee working on accountability mechanisms reported conducting trainings to help others use those mechanisms. Trainings focused on building the public's understanding of accountability mechanisms, disseminating news, and conducting advocacy were also common. The platforms that grantees developed (see Finding 4) serve to facilitate citizen use of accountability mechanisms and, thereby, interaction with ACA/ABs.

Facilitating collaboration and monitoring: CJ grantees reported working with ACAs and others (including government, civil society, and community members) to develop frameworks for monitoring OGP commitments and the National Ethics and Integrity Policy (NEIP). Indices like the Transparency and Integrity Index also facilitate public tracking of government accountability. Grantees argued that improvements in reporting and monitoring led to an increase in civil society engagement. For example, one grantee successfully used FOIA to help community monitoring teams track constituency projects in Kaduna state, while others use this accountability mechanism to feed data into scorecards assessing the performance of government agencies.

Advocacy: In their reports, CJ and JB grantees note that they host roundtables and workshops with government and CSO participants aimed at pressing government actors to develop and enforce legislation. For example, one grantee explained that they have not only encouraged various government units to adopt whistleblower policies (through workshops on the impact of corruption and how whistleblower mechanisms could help officials do their work more effectively), they also – at the invitation of partners within government – provided feedback on draft whistleblower legislation. This grantee also conducted a survey across seven states on whistleblowing barriers and is now using the results of the survey to advocate for further engagement from government units, CSOs, and anticorruption agencies.

These workshops also saw commitments from CSOs to sensitize communities at the grassroots level to make people aware of accountability laws and policies, including the ACJA and OGP commitments. Grantees are planning more advocacy events to encourage strengthening of legislation on ACA/ABs' political independence.

Success Factors and Challenges

Finding 6: Grantees describe capacity building and collaboration with other CSOs and citizens as essential to their successes to date.

Grantees note that their capacity building efforts allow CSOs and citizen groups to translate anticorruption zeal into action. For example, one CJ grantee explained that trainings are successful because trained CSOs are highly motivated to use what they learned. A JB grantee described developing simplified versions of laws, including FOIA and the Procurement Law, and sharing those versions with citizens, who then disseminated what they learned to others. Both JB and CJ grantees attribute their successes in directly supporting ACAs (seven of 12 respondents) and civil society engagement (seven of 13) to their partnerships with other CSOs and ACAs, and in one case, the MacArthur Foundation. Interviewed grantees outline three factors for successful collaborative relationships: 1) a shared vision, 2) complementary strengths and experience, and 3) information sharing. While multiple grantees discussed the importance of understanding a potential partner's vision, goals, and general focus, one grantee described a specific mapping process that their organization uses to outline potential partners' activities and identify collaboration opportunities. A few grantees mentioned leveraging the strengths of the other organizations, including technical skills, subject matter expertise, and experience working with women and people with disabilities, to improve their own programming.

Finding 7: Grantees use several strategies to engage a wide range of Nigerian society in their work. However, including historically marginalized populations such as women, people with disabilities, and youth remains challenging.

Grantees note that they leverage several approaches to engage historically marginalized populations, including women, people with disabilities, and youth[7] in their work related to ACA/ABs and accountability mechanisms. Despite their efforts, outreach to such groups is not always successful.
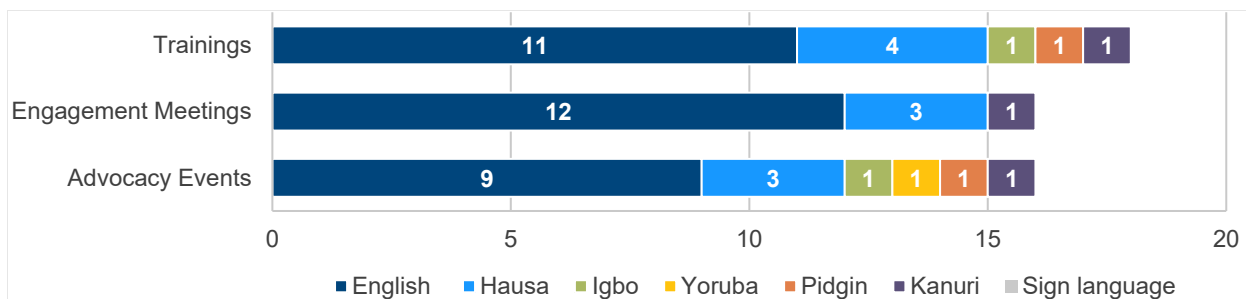
Targeted outreach and participant selection: To recruit program participants**,** grantees report 1) mapping project outreach areas to include underrepresented groups, 2) engaging organizations that represent those groups, 3) posting on social media, 4) creating mailing lists, and 5) requesting nominations from CSO partners. Specifically with respect to engaging youth, grantees describe leveraging social media and partnering with youth organizations, such as the National Youth Service Corps, to mobilize young adults. These efforts have had some success, but do not reach youth who are offline, not already engaged in service, and not in school. Grantees describe women and people with disabilities as priority targets without articulating specific engagement strategies for these groups. This lack of strategic clarity may limit results. To date, women still make up only 34% of participants in training on ACA/AB-citizen engagement.

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[7] Grantees rarely mentioned other groups that are historically marginalized in Nigeria, such as LGBTQIA+ people.

Carrying out work in several geographies. Most grantees offered virtual and in-person advocacy and training events. Grantees held similar numbers of events each in Abuja, Lagos, and various regional capitals, as well as virtually, with slightly fewer events taking place in Lagos. Advocacy events were often held near an ACA/AB office or state legislature building in public venues. The location of these events, when combined with the lack of internet connectivity in rural areas, may limit the extent to which rural communities can participate in grantee programming, though three grantees did mention using radio and TV to share information with rural populations.

Use of local languages. Grantees try to engage citizens who do not speak English in various ways. Four grantees have developed simplified versions of laws and policies, and translated them into Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, and Pidgin English, and disseminated the translations. One grantee reported a change in how citizens used the ACJA after creating these translations, noticing a shift in complaints from substantive law to procedural law. Other JB grantees translate the work of ACA/ABs. Nevertheless, as shown in Exhibit 3, English remains the most frequently used language.[8]

Exhibit 3: Number of grantees that host trainings, advocacy events, and engagement meetings in different languages

	English	Hausa	Igbo	Yoruba	Pidgin	Kanuri	Sign language
Trainings	11	4	1		1	1	
Engagement Meetings	12	3				1	
Advocacy Events	9	3	1	1	1	1	

Conclusions

Conclusion 1: In the aggregate, On Nigeria grantees are implementing a sandwich strategy with respect to ACA/ABs and accountability mechanisms. They leverage capacity building, monitoring, and advocacy activities to mobilize and strengthen "voice" actors and sharpen the "teeth" of accountability actors. To date, grantees' work has contributed to several emerging results. (Aligned with Findings 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)

The CJ, JB, and BC grantees that feature in this learning brief work at both ends of the social accountability sandwich,[9] combining efforts that aim to strengthen citizen voice with others that seek to enhance the capacity of reformers within government to ensure that Nigerian institutions

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[8] Furthermore, no grantee reported using accommodations, such as sign language, braille, and/or sight readers, to support engagement of people with disabilities.

[9] "Sandwich strategies" are social accountability strategies that work along two mutually reinforcing, interactive tracks: first, reformers in government encourage collective action by citizens and civil society actors, as well as other reform partners within government; second, at the same time, non-state actors take action to hold government institutions accountable. For more on sandwich strategies, see here, and/or refer to the On Nigeria Theory of Change.

respond to that voice. Grantee activities include both voice and teeth efforts, fall into three main categories – capacity building, monitoring, and advocacy (see Exhibit 4) – and engage actors and networks throughout the accountability ecosystem in Nigeria.

Exhibit 4: Grantee activities by category and dimension

Capacity building	Grantees develop and disseminate materials and guidance to help citizens, CSOs, and others improve their awareness of existing accountability mechanisms and ACA/ABs, to support activation of those mechanisms, and drive engagement with ACA/ABs (voice). They also provide training directly to ACA/ABs, to help them fill skills and resource gaps, improve self-monitoring, and exercise their mandates more effectively (teeth).
Monitoring	Grantees create and disseminate tools and platforms that citizens, CSOs, and others can use to undertake monitoring activities, and conduct monitoring themselves (voice). They also use regular meetings with ACA/ABs, other CSOs, and other actors to review progress on key goals, monitor results, and determine action steps based on progress (teeth).
Advocacy	Grantees bring different actors together in events and workshops to make sense of corruption results and mobilize around corruption issues (voice), and engage in advocacy to drive the development and implementation of accountability legislation (teeth).

In the aggregate, these voice and teeth actions appear to have contributed to several emerging results. Some grantees feel that civic awareness among the specific groups they target has improved, as has the extent to which those groups engage directly with ACA/ABs. Other grantees hold that their work has contributed to the passage, implementation, and/or improvement of notable anticorruption legislation, like the Proceeds of Crime and Whistleblower Protection Bills. More generally, many grantees explain that their programming, which often brings together multisectoral stakeholders like CSOs, citizens, ACA/ABs, and even other government actors, has facilitated the development of a spirit and practice of collective enterprise.

Conclusion 2: Grantee actions have enhanced collaboration throughout the accountability ecosystem, potentially activating stakeholders from multiple sectors to engage in longer-term collective action against corruption. (Aligned with Findings 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6)

Beyond the more immediate results captured under Conclusion 1, the evidence reviewed for this brief suggests that grantees' voice and teeth actions may, in the aggregate, be contributing to increases in the breadth, depth, and quality of anticorruption collaboration taking place throughout the accountability ecosystem in Nigeria. Grantee programming not only benefits from collaborative activities, it also appears to have contributed to the emergence of collaborations of various types – among grantees, among ACA/ABs, between grantees and ACA/ABs, between grantees and CSOs, and between ACA/ABs, civil society, and citizens. By providing opportunities for voice and teeth actors to work together in mutually reinforcing ways, these multistakeholder collaborations – especially when combined with the limited improvements in civic awareness and engagement that grantees have observed to date – may provide a platform for ongoing, longer-term, and broad-based collective action against corruption.

Conclusion 3: Despite grantees' successes to date, two gaps in the overarching accountability ecosystem remain especially apparent: first, anticorruption actions do not consistently include historically marginalized groups; and second, the emerging collaborative relationships, platforms,

and mechanisms to which grantees have contributed are not yet fully consolidated. *(Aligned with Findings 6, 7)*

Despite the successes described in this brief, the accountability ecosystem in Nigeria remains nascent. Two gaps appear especially notable: first, historically marginalized groups, including women, people with disabilities, and youth, do not appear to participate in grantee programming at the same rates as others (such as, for example, men). Grantees do make some accommodations for such groups, as well as others, but rarely do they appear to have explicit strategies for engaging historically marginalized populations in their anticorruption work. This means that, despite emerging improvements in the breadth and depth of the accountability ecosystem, many of those most affected by corruption may not be involved in, or supported by, accountability actions.

Second, the longer-term durability of grantees' successes remains in question. Many of the collaborative relationships grantees describe are relatively new, as are the platforms and accountability mechanisms they support. More work – including to broaden the base of accountability actors to better include marginalized groups – is likely needed to consolidate recent gains. Similarly, more evidence will be required to assess whether and how apparent improvements to the accountability ecosystem are sustainable in the longer term.

Learning Considerations

Based on the findings and conclusions in this learning brief, the Program Team and grantees may consider reflecting on and further exploring the following questions:

1. *What specific institutional characteristics enable ACAs to consolidate their anticorruption commitments, even in the face of leadership transitions? How might the Program Team and grantees encourage and support ACAs to further institutionalize those characteristics?*
2. *In what ways might grantees and their partners collaborate to streamline their work on accountability mechanisms, in order to ensure that citizens are able to sustain engagement with key mechanisms in the future, even after the conclusion of On Nigeria?*
3. *What support do On Nigeria grantees need to further prioritize and integrate GESI considerations into their work with ACAs, accountability bodies, and accountability mechanisms? How might the Foundation and other partners provide that support, and help grantees ensure that their programming – including in the long term, beyond 2024 – focuses on the groups that are disproportionately affected by corruption in Nigeria?*