

## **Role of International Advocacy Groups to Nigeria's INEC Capacity Building**

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### **Abstract**

*International advocacy groups such as DFID, CIDA, EU, UNDP, USAID and IFES are considered external actors of national development process. Reports on international advocacy groups exist but are limited to academic orientation. This paper focus on the role of these international advocacy groups on Nigeria's INEC capacity building through a qualitative method of data collection and analysis. Findings conclude that the contributions of these organizations have differed both in their approaches and so is the kind of assistance they rendered to Nigeria's electoral process since inception of the new democratic transition in 1999. They organised programmes on capacity building for INEC staff, and civic education programmes for the electorates, they enhanced political participation by women, youths and other marginalized groups; improved democratic quality of political commitment; strengthened channels of civic engagement; and promoted credible, transparent and sustainable elections. They also provide funding/ grant sponsorship of pre-election and post-election workshops for accredited observers and training for security officials. This is indeed significant to the prospect's democratic*

development, and individual well-being of the citizenry which these international advocacy groups and norms advocate.

**Keywords:** *International; Advocacy Groups; Capacity building; Democracy; Nigeria.*

## **Introduction**

Global advocacy groups, political norms and values are external actors of the national development process. They have the tendency to definitely influence a country's transition in the process of establishing democratic governance and human development by various means. These can be through entry points like legislative reform and procedures, electoral transformation and procedures, accountability and transparency, human rights, judicial and legal reform, decentralization, local governance and participation, civil society organizations and the media. It is, however, significant to understand that the efficiency of these entry points is directly connected to how independent these organisations and procedures are. Administrations that are simply rubber stamps or electoral management bodies that are neither independent nor transparent will not deliver the same leverage for persuading democratic values that truthfully and reliable independent organisations will. Given that democratic governance stresses on ensuring all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights to the general public by empowering electorates and communities to set development priorities and contribute to decisions that affect their lives.<sup>1</sup> Thus,

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<sup>1</sup> Reynolds, A., Reilly, B., & Ellis, A. (2008). *Electoral system design: The new international IDEA handbook*. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. Rukambe, J. K. (2010). Promoting Free and Fair Elections in Africa: The Role of UNDP and Other International Partners. *UNDP Regional Service Centre for Eastern and Southern Africa, Johannesburg: South Africa.*; Simmons, B. A., & Martin, L. L. (2002). International organizations and institutions. *Handbook of international relations*, 192-211; Keohane, R. O., & Nye, J. S. (1974). Tran's governmental relations and international organizations. *World politics*, 27(1), 39-62.; Cheema, G. S., & Maguire, L. (2001). Governance for human development: the role of external partners. *Public Administration and Development*, 21(3), 201-209. López-Pintor, R. (2000). Electoral management bodies as institutions of governance.

there is a positive link between democratic governance, international advocacy groups, norms political, and human development. Democratic governance is a form of administration that is infused with the principles of equity, participation, rule of law, transparency, and accountability. Democratic development is at the very core of growth and development of the populace, and their political processes, choices, and improved involvement in decision making influence their lives positively.

Therefore, as supporters of good governance and human development procedures, international advocacy groups, with their political values and norms, play positive roles to advance causes of governance for human development according to internationally recognised priorities. Precisely, international advocacy groups with political values and norms stimulate policy change and institutional development through financial and human resources, and expertise. This is through provision of knowledge and skills, and bringing actors collectively, supporting advocacy with non-state actors, and so on. They also play a vibrant role in assisting countries to develop suitable policies and institutions, often around sensitive issues confidentially bound up with national and local conditions. In addition, they provide developing countries significant governance services such as assisting policy dialogue on critical issues; help in resource mobilization, coordination, and management; and share best practices and knowledge networks. By these, international advocacy groups and norms support nations in the sensitive processes of political and economic transformation by adopting the right entry points of assistance. These entry points are the avenues through which stakeholders participate in the process, reach consensus and exercise their rights and responsibilities. It is also through these entry points that a partnership approach can reap the

maximum benefit of influencing policy change and institutional development that directly and meaningfully impact on democratic development.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the good purposes, international advocacy groups and norms may have a disadvantageous impact occasionally if they go about the process in the wrong way. It is, therefore, vital to know that each international advocacy group brings with it a type of 'baggage' that is influenced by how it views governance, people's political behaviour and human development. For instance, a given international advocacy group may view governance for democratic development only in political or economic terms, while another may view it in terms of broadening the choices and rights of the most underprivileged groups in the country. Therefore, an organization's definitions and their respective programmes will influence the nature and methodology of assistance it renders. Irrespective of the particulars, however, one central characteristic of international advocacy groups is adopting a partnership approach. This classifies countries and their stakeholders as equal partners in the process by supporting participatory mechanisms, such as consultation, and dialogues and choice in decision making, resulting in wider participation of civil societies and people's empowerment.

Different countries have diverse priorities and face different governance and democratic development issues. That is why the adoption of a flexible method that takes these factors into account remains crucial.<sup>3</sup> Generally, international advocacy groups have an essential role to play

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<sup>2</sup> Otto, D. (1996). Nongovernmental organizations in the United Nations system: The emerging role of international civil society. *Hum. Rts. Q.*, 18, 107; Charnovitz, Steve. "Two centuries of participation: NGOs and international governance." *Mich. J. Int'l L.* 18 (1996): 183. Smith, J., Pagnucco, R., & Lopez, G. A. (1998). Globalizing human rights: The work of transnational human rights NGOs in the 1990s. *Hum. Rts. Q.*, 20, 379. Clark, A. M. (1995). Non-governmental organizations and their influence on international society. *Journal of international affairs*, 507-525.

<sup>3</sup> Cheema, G. S., & Maguire, L. (2001). Governance for human development: the role of external partners. *Public Administration and Development*, 21(3), 201-209. López-Pintor, R. (2000). Electoral management bodies as institutions of governance.

in assisting countries' transition to and consolidate democratic governance, for instance, requirement of free, fair, credible, and frequent elections. These international organisations also ensure that a regime is representative and that the poor have a role in choosing the leaders who will ultimately take charge of the democratic and human development programmes. This kind of roles is fundamentally more democratic development friendly as it emphasises equity, active participation, rule of law, accountability and transparency.<sup>4</sup> It is against this background that this paper examine the role that international advocacy groups such as DFID, CIDA, EU, UNDP and IFES, played in strengthening of Nigeria's INEC through capacity building in Bauchi state Nigeria. It is within this context that the paper was developed into five sections as presented in the analyses of respondents' views. The first section introduces the article and discusses the background and, its significance to democracy and development. The second presents clarification on methodology. The third section presents the role of DFID, CIDA, EU, UNDP and IFES. The fourth section discusses the role of sustainable Development Goals SDG's. The fifth section presents the role of USAID on election management in Nigeria. The sixth section, which is the last, concludes the paper.

## **Methodology**

Qualitative method permits a researcher to comprehend and describe and analyse voter's opinion through discourse analysis with practical evidences and facts. Various aspects of social life, experiences, and attitudes of persons, using words or discussions with varying methodological

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<sup>4</sup> "Ibid" Cheema, G. S., & Maguire, L. (2001). Governance for human development: the role of external partners. *Public Administration and Development*, 21(3), 201-209. Ghaus-Pasha, A. (2004, May). Role of civil society organizations in governance. In *6th global forum on reinventing government towards participatory and transparent governance* (pp. 24-27).

practices,<sup>5</sup> This article adopts a qualitative method in its analysis of the respondent's views and data collected from Nigeria's INEC on the roles of international advocacy groups towards its capacity building in Nigeria's democratic development process.

## **Findings**

### **DFID, CIDA, EU, UNDP and IFES and Nigeria's INEC Capacity Building**

The first subtheme that frequently mentioned under the international advocacy groups directly or indirectly by the respondents #AC1; #AC4; #AC5; #CSR1; #CSR3; #CSR4; #JO1; #JO2; #BP4 and #PA3 is the role of the various international organisations in strengthening of INEC in the art of electoral management in Nigeria. International organizations, such as the CIDA, DFID, EU and UNDP, are well known partners of INEC in Nigeria. Many of the respondents acknowledge the roles of these organizations in assisting INEC to improve election management in Nigeria.<sup>6</sup> For example, respondent #CSR1 specified the role of CIDA, DFID, EU, and UNDP in helping INEC both financially and through capacity building on civic voters' education at different levels.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, these and other international partners have contributed immensely in creating more civic education and voter enlightenment among the people in different parts of Bauchi State through town hall meetings and other media. Other programmes through radio/TV, online broadcasting, Short Message Services (SMS), Multi-Media Services (MMS), Facebook, blogs, website, etc. were

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<sup>5</sup> McCusker and Gunaydin, (2015); Gough and Lyons, (2016)

<sup>6</sup> Interview with respondents #AC1 on 3 April 2016; #AC4 on March 2017; #AC5 on 15 March 2017; #CSR1 on 4 June 2016; #CSR3 on 5 April 2017; #CSR4 on 28 May 2017; #JO1 on 2 May 2016; #JO2 on 7 May 2016; #BP4 on 17 April 2017; and #PA3 on 8 June 2017 respectively, in Bauchi Nigeria. See also

<sup>7</sup> Interview with participant #CSR1 on 10 June 2016 in Bauchi Nigeria

used to sensitize the public on elections matters. International partners like the Democratic Governance for Development (DGD) have reinforced civil society role in creating awareness among the people of Bauchi State through training and mentoring to further develop consolidate democracy with a resilient voice for public responsibility.

DGD also collaborated with INEC to conduct civic and voters' education as well as strengthening the election observation and monitoring of INEC staff. The Independent National Electoral Commission has on the different occasions acknowledged the financial and technical aids it received from the EU, DGD, UNDP, CIDA and DFID in order to improve election management in Nigeria. This is commendable and has boosted people's political awareness thereby influencing their political culture and behaviours.<sup>8</sup> INEC further acknowledged that a total sum of USD40, 000,000 was budgeted by CIDA, DFID, EU and UNDP for strengthening INEC and civic voters' education in Nigeria.

The money was allocated to four major areas: refining the democratic value of political engagement; improving participation, particularly among women, youth and other vulnerable groups; supporting systems of civic engagement and promoting reliable and viable electoral procedures. In accomplishing these under Civil Society Capacity Development, a zone network and individual civil society engagement in democratic reforms and monitoring were reinforced. The capacity of civil societies to take part in election observation enhances civic education. It also strengthens the ability and voice of the media to proficiently monitor and report election matters.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Independent National Electoral Commission INEC (2015) General Elections Reports supported by the European Union EU through the UNDP Democratic Governance for Development DGD II Project ISBN- 13978-978-50716-4-1.

<sup>9</sup> "Ibid" p. 20

Respondent #AC1 reveals the relevance of the role of INEC and UNDP through publication of newsletters, social media posts, and traditional media campaigns on elections and democracy, and that these encourage participatory democracy by creating community awareness. This role is further seen in their facilitation of the enactment of Freedom of Information Bill (FOI).<sup>10</sup>The Freedom of Information Bill is one of the most insightful laws passed in Nigeria since independence; it will play enormous role in expanding democracy by meaningfully changing the link between the government and the ruled by changing the prevailing situation of undertakings in governance. This is because community groups were not permitted to investigate how public officials, whether elected or appointed, managed the state's wealth on behalf of the people before this law was enacted.<sup>11</sup>

These international organizations in collaboration with INEC facilitated many meetings of local election monitoring groups, political parties, and civil society organizations in Bauchi State in order to create synergy with local stakeholders for the successful conduct of its elections. In this respect, Civil Society Organization (CSOs) provided civic education to the people in different parts of Bauchi State. More programmes such as strategic planning, policy and operational capacities of both Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and State Independent Electoral Commission (SIECs) were developed with the view of encouraging sound and viable electoral processes.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with respondents #AC1 on 3 April 2016; #AC2 on 5 April 2016; and #AC6 on 25 March 2017

<sup>11</sup> Freedom of Information Act, 2011, Law of the Federation of Nigeria available at <https://www.cbn.gov.ng/FOI/Freedom%20Of%20Information%20Act.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> See, Independent National Electoral Commission INEC (2015) General Elections Reports supported by the European Union EU through the UNDP Democratic Governance for Development DGD II Project ISBN- 13978-978-50716-4-1.

Respondent's #AC1, #AC2 and #AC6 acknowledge that programmes through civil societies and other engagements helped in enhancing the public's understanding of democratic values and the people's response to the changing trends in political participation in general. This was done through provision and review, design and implementation of voter and civic education in partnership with National Orientation Agency (NOA), CSO and the media. This was possible because international organisations such as the DFID, UNDP, CIDA EU and DGD supported the local CSOs, NGOs, and associations with some small and medium grants structure to conduct voter education and public information on developing democratic standards and ethics. This has seriously improved both the local CSOs, NGOs and other local community based associations in conjunction with INEC and other stakeholders on civic and voter education such as provision and distribution of materials in the print, electronic and social media platforms, targeting youths and women in particular.<sup>13</sup>The finding of Gyan and Glenworth validate this assertion when it acknowledges the role of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Democratic Governance for Development (DGD) in financing more than fifteen local CSOs and NGOs as well as community based associations organizations in Nigeria for the purpose of conducting both civic and voter education in 2010-2011.

Additionally, the Department for International Development (DFID) Strategic Fund reinforced two Lagos-based organizations known as “enough is enough” to offer civic and voter education

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<sup>13</sup> For more detail see also, Independent National Electoral Commission INEC (2015) General Elections Reports supported by the European Union EU through the UNDP Democratic Governance for Development DGD II Project ISBN- 13978-978-50716-4-1.

through social media, SMS, Twitter and Facebook, while Wangonet uses CD presentation to create awareness among Nigerians, especially youth and women, about election rigging.<sup>14</sup>

Other international organisations that have played vital roles in strengthening INEC and electoral management in Nigeria are the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IIDEA) in collaboration with the African Union (AU), International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), MacArthur, and Ford Foundations. Many of the respondents state that several international advocacy groups provided aid to INEC and other local CSOs, NGOs and community based associations with the purpose of strengthening electoral management system and democracy in Nigeria through creating political awareness and credible electoral processes, especially in Bauchi State.<sup>15</sup>

For instance, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IIDEA) supported the formation and operationalization of an Electoral Risk Management Unit of INEC. Others assistance include donation of furniture and equipment as well as several capacity-building measures through workshops, as well as providing technical and advisory services prior and after election period. In addition to all these is financial assistance to the tune of N41, 98,000,000 equivalent to Euro 20,990,000.<sup>16</sup> INEC situation was managed with the assistance provided by IIDEA and this was done to assist INEC in its risk analyses and deterring electoral malpractices.

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<sup>14</sup> Afari-Gyan, Kwadwo. And Glentworth, Garth. (2011). DDIN Annual Review 2010-2011 and suggestions on priorities and programs. Abuja: Department for International Development. Nigeria's, E. I. (2014). Approaches to Civic and Voter Education

<sup>15</sup> Interviews with respondents #CSR4 on 28 May 2017; #CSR3 on 5 April 2017; #JO1 on 2 May 2016; #JO4 on 19 April 2017; #BP3 on 6 March 2017; #BP4 on 17 April 2017; #PA4 on 27 June 2017; #CS1 on 9 October 2016; #CS2 on 9 2016; and #AC3 on 11 April 2016 respectively in Bauchi Nigeria.

<sup>16</sup> Independent National Electoral Commission INEC (2015) General Elections Reports supported by the European Union EU through the UNDP Democratic Governance for Development DGD II Project ISBN- 13978-978-50716-4-1

This has electorates to have more confidence in INEC, thereby making come out in large numbers to partake more actively in elections and other political processes.

This confirms in the report of INEC that IIDEA in collaboration with the African Union (AU) has strengthened it with the goal of avoiding electoral violence, and that IIDEA deployed its Electoral Risk Management (ERM) tool for the 2015 general elections in Nigeria. INEC itself view this contribution as very vital to the success of the 2015 general elections. Thus, throughout the execution period, IIDEA risk management unit helped in collecting and analysing the data on electoral risk elements with a vision to developing reports and references on measures to avoid and alleviate any likely negative apprehensions. This great contribution to the improvement and success of the general elections was financed by IIDEA in partnership with the Dutch Foreign Ministry, the AU, and the Norwegian Foreign Ministry.<sup>17</sup>

Respondents #CSR4, #CSR3, #JO1, #JO4, #BP3, #BP4, #PA4, #CS1, #CS2 and #AC3 acknowledge the fact that the federal government, within the context of the Nigeria's economy, has given INEC enough financial support in support of its duty to provide civic and voter education to the general public. The respondents, however, further acknowledge the role of some international organizations and other local CSOs, NGOs and community-based associations in assisting INEC in carrying out civic and voter education in Bauchi State. For instance, the financial contributions of the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) to civic and voter education projects and the technical and financial assistance rendered by International Republican Institute

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<sup>17</sup> International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2015) International IDEA Annual Results Report Trydells Tryckeri, Sweden ISBN: 978-91-7671-003-6 Pp. 115

(IRI) to INEC are all acknowledged by the some of the respondents. These indeed enhanced political awareness in Nigeria and contributed greatly to the success of many of the general voting processes in Nigeria.

### **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Awareness Creation**

The idea of sustainable development has in recent years gained popularity, following democracy as any given state and ideology after the Second World War will desire to profile itself as a democratic entity. There is a related inclination nowadays with respect to 'sustainable development'. The central notion of sustainability is much older than the 1987 report of the Brundtland Commission. The prospect of a non-sustainable state is on uniformity with that of a non-democratic state with countless variety of clarifications and analyses. Competing considerations of sustainable development are confidently as numerous as competing understandings of 'democracy'.<sup>18</sup> The Brundtland Commission describes sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the capability of future generations to meet their own needs. It incorporates two central notions: the notion of 'needs', specifically, the vital needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and the notion of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisations on the environment's capacity to meet current and future needs<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> It could easily be argued that we now need an effort for the conceptual clarification of 'sustainable development' which corresponds with the UNESCO project on 'democracy 'from the 1950's'; Gallie, W.B. (1962), 'Essentially Contested Concepts', in Max Black (ed.), *The Importance of Language*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall; Connolly, W.E. (1983), *The Terms of Political Discourse*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

<sup>19</sup> OCF (1987), *Our Common Future: World Commission on Environment and Development*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Therefore, sustainable development as a significant political notion can be well-defined as a normative notion used to prescribe and assess changes in living circumstances. These kind of changes are to be guided by four principles: aim to satisfy basic human needs and reasonable standards of welfare for all humanity; aim to accomplish more equitable standards of living both within and among universal populaces; ability to pursue with great caution their actual or potential disruption of biodiversity and the regenerative capacity of nature, both locally and globally; and aim to attain reasonable standards of living, without undermining the possibility for future generations to attain similar or better standards of equity.<sup>20</sup> The politics of sustainable development offers a new and possibly efficient method to pursue worldwide democratic development. It also establishes new standards for domestic politics through international Non-governmental Organisations and advocacy groups with targeted international political values and norms for sustainable democratic development such as the recent seventeen sustainable goals for development SDGs agenda.<sup>21</sup> In relation to this, the second most frequently mentioned subtheme by the respondent's # JO1, #CS3 and #AC6 in the course of their explanation of the role of the international advocacy groups, norms, and values directly or indirectly is the roles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in creating awareness among the people of Bauchi State. These respondents acknowledge the role of these international organizations in their efforts to sensitize the people of Bauchi State.<sup>22</sup> For instance, in their inaugural events SDGs unveiled their

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<sup>20</sup> It will be noticed that the definition offered here incorporates 'reasonable standards of welfare for all living beings'. Such a formulation expands the connotation of SD to include the 'interests' and 'needs' of non-human beings. Though the Brundtland report is generally portrayed as having an anthropocentric bias, there are at least some passages which open for a more biometric ethic. The report points out, for example, that there are 'moral, ethical, cultural, aesthetic, and purely scientific reasons for conserving wild beings' (p. 13), and, more pointedly, that '... the case for the conservation of nature should not rest only with development goals. It is part of our moral obligation to other living beings and future generations' (p.57). For a more thorough assessment of the report with respect to biocentrism used here, sustainable development prescribes a pragmatic concern for non-human species with respect to the preservation of biodiversity, without further stipulation as to intra-species rights and/or duties

<sup>21</sup> Lafferty, W. M. (1996). The politics of sustainable development: global norms for national implementation. *Environmental politics*, 5(2), 185-208.; Robert, K. W., Parris, T. M., & Leiserowitz, A. A. (2005). What is sustainable development? Goals, indicators, values, and practice. *Environment: science and policy for sustainable development*, 47(3), 8-21.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with respondents # JO1 on 2 May 2016; #CS3 on 2 April 2017 and #AC6 25 March 2017 respectively, in Bauchi Nigeria.

concept which consists of seventeen global goals, such as zero tolerance for poverty; zero hunger; good health and wellbeing; quality education; gender equality; clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation and infrastructure; reduced inequalities; sustainable cities and communities; reasonable consumption and production; climate action; life below water; life on land; peace, justice and strong institutions; and, finally, partnership for the goals.<sup>23</sup>

As part of its sensitization project, the SDGs office in Bauchi has undertaken advocacy visits to all the six emirate councils (Bauchi, Ningi, Katagun, Misau, Dass, and Jama'are) of Bauchi State. This visitation was done in order to strengthen the cordial working relationship between the SDGs and traditional rulers in mobilizing their subjects towards accomplishing the goals of sustainable development in a way that no citizen will be left out. Some respondents reveal that it was through such campaign that the SDGs contributed to the reawakening of the general public to understand their rights and roles in a democratic process.<sup>24</sup> That is to say that the SDG awareness campaign serves as an avenue for more political awareness among the people of Bauchi State to the extent that now people like never before have understood what the government is expected to do for the people as part of its responsibility in reducing poverty, hunger and improving the living standard of the general public, especially in the rural areas where the SDG programmes were normally done.

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<sup>23</sup> Bauchi State Division of the Sustainable Development Goals SDGs (2016) Report produced by the information and communication Department of SDGs Bauchi Nigeria Pp. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with respondent's #JO3 on 13 April 2017; #JO4 on 19 April 2017; #PA2 on 22 August 2016; #BP1 on 12 May 2016; and #AC4 on 3 March 2017.

Moreover, in pursuing their awareness campaign, the SDG groups used both electronic and print media to sponsor programmes such as thirty-minute Hausa programme at both Globe FM and Bauchi Radio Cooperation (BRC) for its advocacy role. Many other series of regular interviews, news briefings and commentaries with both local and international correspondents, awareness hand bills, pamphlets, banners and jingles were equally produced, shared and aired on both TV and radio stations to create more awareness for the people of Bauchi State.<sup>25</sup> The SDG groups also collaborated with volunteer groups like the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Students Unions, etc., to sensitize the public. The Bauchi State SDGs division office has continued to be involved in advancing as well as improving the lives and livelihoods of the citizenry. This role by the SDG has provided new ways to restrain the challenges of underdevelopment in Bauchi by identifying priorities areas that need quick intervention in both economic and social spheres of life. This is done to reduce unemployment and inequalities and targeted at enhancing the masses and empowering women in Bauchi State. The newly appointed Director General of the Bauchi State division reinstated the commitments of the SDG to actualizing the vision of providing more dividends of democracy to the people.<sup>26</sup>

Some of the projects and programmes sponsored by the SDGs are the completion of village health workers' scheme. This involves the engagement of youths, mostly women, for a period of two years to serve as community health volunteers. The beneficiaries engaged themselves keenly in assisting health workers to initiate and manage health promotion and awareness activities. They

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<sup>25</sup> Interview with respondent #JO1 on 2 May 2016 in Bauchi Nigeria; see also Bauchi State Division of the Sustainable Development Goals SDGs (2016) Report produced by the information and communication Department of SDGs Bauchi Nigeria Pp. 5.

<sup>26</sup> Bauchi State Division of the Sustainable Development Goals SDGs (2016) Report produced by the information and communication Department of SDGs Bauchi Nigeria Pp. 2.

also mobilized individual households and communities to utilize health care facilities provided in their communities in eight Local Government Areas of Bauchi State. Ten persons were engaged as village health workers from each local government with a monthly stipend of eighteen thousand naira from 2014 to 2016. Some of the local governments that benefited from this programme were Zaki, Dambam, Gamawa, Misau, Warji, Jama'are, Dass, and Tafawa Balewa.<sup>27</sup>

Another project executed by SDGs in Bauchi was the implementation of the 2015 Conditional Grant Scheme (CGS). This was initiated to utilize money realized from the Debt Relief Gains of the Paris Club of Creditors, which Nigeria successfully negotiated. This CGS was designed to provide a window of opportunities through which state and local government could access funds yearly from the federal government's share of the Debt Relief Gains. This arrangement created partnership agreement between national and state governments towards supporting the goals of the SDG. Most of these programmes were done by the SDG to achieve some specific goals in Bauchi and Nigeria, generally. Most of the respondents have stated the implementation of these programmes created more awareness among the people of Bauchi State by bringing those people who were neglected by the government into the realm of governance.<sup>28</sup> In line with its mandate of creating awareness and capacity building, the SDG organized workshops for its management and other stakeholders, affiliates of the Bauchi State legislative house, staff of the ministry of local government affairs and Due Process office, and others from Jos, Plateau State. The aim of this

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<sup>27</sup> Bauchi State Division of the Sustainable Development Goals SDGs (2016) Report produced by the information and communication Department of SDGs Bauchi Nigeria Pp. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with respondent's#JO1 on 2 May 2016; #JO2 on 7 May 2016, #JO3 on 13 April 2017, #CSR4 on 28 May 2017, #CSR1 on 4 June 2016; #CS3 on 2 April 2017; #AC1 on 3 April 2016; and #AC6 on 25 March 2017 respectively in Bauchi Nigeria.

workshop was to acquaint the relevant stakeholders of their responsibility in creating awareness among the people of Bauchi State.

While the SDGs do not directly organize people on political ground, their activities have become a campaign reference for both the ruling and opposition parties. While the ruling party is claiming the credit, the opposition parties are busy informing the general public of the failure of the government to provide such basic amenities provided by the SDGs. Other project implemented by the SDGs include drilling and installation of thirty-three units of solar powered boreholes, fifty-seven units of hand pump fitted boreholes, supply of six ambulances, supply and installation of hospital equipment at the nineteen Power Holding Centres. The SDGs, in conjunction with Google Nigeria Limited, organized skill acquisition training on digital application for about 2,340 unemployed youths in Bauchi. The programme was initiated to provide unemployed youths the opportunities to learn the basics of digital skills in order to start their own enterprises as digital marketing experts towards achieving the SDGs.<sup>29</sup>

### **USAID Assistance on Election Management**

Does democratic promotion by the United States have any quantifiable influence on either the democracy or the pace of democratic change in the recipient nations? This is to say do the millions of financial assistances consumed annually for many years' works? The relative importance of domestic variables to the exclusion of global, regional, or bilateral factors went relatively unquestioned in the democratization literature. Theories which explain the origin and existence of democratic regimes usually depend on one of two approaches. Macro explanations underline the

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<sup>29</sup> Bauchi State Division of the Sustainable Development Goals SDGs (2016) Report produced by the information and communication Department of SDGs Bauchi Nigeria Pp. 3-7

role of the long-term structural forces such as the country's level of development, economic performance, class structures, and colonial heritages. Micro explanations, by divergence, underscore human agency, short-term contingent events, and institutional incentives. Scholars in this tradition underscore the role of elite agreements, civil values, and strength of civil societies, and incentives generated by constitutional design. Only recently have scholars of democratization focus on the role of international variables in promoting democratic development.

Democratization does not need to be only a purely internally driven phenomenon and factors such as regional diffusion and pressures from international organizations can also facilitate democratic development. Based on the existing theories of democratization, foreign aids promote democracy in two ways: indirectly by transforming some of the structural conditions that serve as requirements for regime transition or survival; and directly by empowering agents, individuals, political institutions and social organizations that struggle for government transformation in the domestic arena. Traditional forms of development support, although not exactly targeted toward democracy promotion, may promote modernization, inspire better economic performance, and nurture class transformations, all of which may have long-term significances for democratic development.

Targeted democracy assistance, by distinction, works to educate and empower voters; support political parties, labour unions, and women advocacy groups and networks; reinforce human right groups and otherwise build constituencies for reform. It, therefore, attempts to influence good democratic consequences in both short and medium terms. And it is through the local actions of individuals, political organizations and social movements that funding decisions transform into

democratic change.<sup>30</sup> It is with this consideration that the US assistance influenced Nigeria's INEC capacity building in Bauchi State as presented in the analysis of interview below.

The respondent's #AC3, #AC4, #PA3, #PA2, #JO1, #JO4, CSR2 and #CSR4 mention the various kind of assistance which Nigeria has received from the United States Government through the USAID assistance programmes in various aspects of electoral management and processes with the aim of strengthening the elections processes since 1999.<sup>31</sup> Their views have been validated by the former President Jonathan's acknowledgement of role played by the United State in the 2015 general elections.<sup>32</sup> USAID aims at assisting the country being a major partner in the West African sub-region to conduct free, fair and credible elections. Nigeria received USAID assistance especially in the general elections of 2011 and in some gubernatorial elections conducted in 2012, 2013 and 2014.

The USAID assistance for Nigeria's election processes in 2015 was in partnership with the UK Department for International Development (DFID). Nigeria has from 2010 to 2015 received a total sum of USD 68.8 million from USAID in partnership with DFID to enhance Nigeria's electoral management performance and promote civic participation and political party development, track election related violence, fund international and domestic election spectators, and support election security. These global associates have similarly involved all the stakeholders diplomatically and openly to avert perceived violence.

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<sup>30</sup> Finkel, S. E., Pérez-Liñán, A., & Seligson, M. A. (2007). The effects of US foreign assistance on democracy building, 1990–2003. *World Politics*, 59(3), 404-439.

<sup>31</sup> Interviews with respondents #AC3 on 11 April 2016; #AC4 on 3 March 2017; #PA3 on 8 June 2017; #PA2 on 22 August 2016; #JO1 on 2 May 2016; #JO4 on 19 April 2017; CSR2 on 10 June 2016; #CSR4 on 28 May 2017 respectively in Bauchi Nigeria.

<sup>32</sup> See, Jonathan, G.E.A., (2018), *My Transition Hours*: LWCA Publishers

There are other efforts. Diplomatically, the United States has engaged civil societies, political party leadership, Nigerian candidates, prominent individuals and other business leaders to promote free, fair and peaceful conduct of elections in 2015. Such commitment has taken the form of private meetings, phone calls, public events in Washington, New York and in Nigeria. President Jonathan has assured President Obama in September 2013 that he would build on Nigeria's democratic progress to make the elections in 2015 free, fair and peaceful. Prominent Americans such as Vice President Biden; Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Linda Thomas-Greenfield; Mandela Washington Fellowship alumni under President Obama's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI); and Secretary of State, Kerry, have all contributed in one way or the other in influencing the two major Presidential candidates, President Jonathan and Retired General Buhari, to pledge publicly to denounce violence.<sup>33</sup>

Respondents #AC6, #JO2, #JO1 and #LG1 mention that other factors that contributed to the change witnessed in the Nigeria's election process was continuous attention and support of the United State through USAID to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).<sup>34</sup> In this regard, the United States funded projects that improved the quality of elections and the competence of INEC to ensure public confidence in the process and make the results of the elections acceptable to all the stakeholders in and outside the country. The USAID support includes technical assistance to election management institutions, institutionalization of election management systems and Election Operation Support Centres (EOSCs), training of electoral officials and deployment of

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<sup>33</sup> For more information visit <https://ng.usembassy.gov/nigeria-u-s-government-assistance-support-free-fair-peaceful-elections-march-26-2015/>

<sup>34</sup> Interviews with respondents #AC6 on 25 March 2017; #JO2 on 7 May 2016; #JO1 on 2 May 2016; and #LG1 on 9 June 2016 respectively, in Bauchi Nigeria

election materials, and design of ballots papers. The assistance from USAID enabled INEC to implement a general voter education campaign, voter registration, and efforts to ensure that all people of voting age exercise their right to vote. In addition, INEC's capacity to conduct free and fair elections has also been strengthened by the US assistance in areas such as security planning, targeted communication strategy, and election dispute resolution mechanisms. In the same vein, the U.S. support in the area of civic and voter education includes the support of the electoral sensitization initiated and launched by the civil society organizations and endorsed non-partisan celebrities funding for the production and dissemination of non-partisan voter education materials and campaigns.

Additionally, USAID has partnered with INEC, the Nigerian Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), and other relevant stakeholders in its efforts to allow internally displaced persons (IDPs) to vote. The United States was mindful of the role of the broadcasting agencies in inciting the general public for the post-election violence of 2011. In the build-up of the 2015 general elections, therefore, USAID focused attention on funding radio programmes with political party representatives on topics of voter inclusion and accessibility, training of the media on parallel vote tabulation (PVT), and involved all the relevant stakeholders in one programme or the other.<sup>35</sup>

## **Conclusion**

This article reveals that international organizations such as USAID, CIDA, DFID, EU, UNDP/ DGD, IIDEA, African Union, Ford Foundation Grant, MacArthur Foundation, IFES and SDGs

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<sup>35</sup> For more information on the role of USAID assistance on Nigeria's elections visit <https://ng.usembassy.gov/nigeria-u-s-government-assistance-support-free-fair-peaceful-elections-march-26-2015/>

contributed to Nigeria's INEC capacity building. These organizations, however, have different approaches and they as well rendered different types of assistance to Nigeria's electoral process since the inception of democracy in 1999. These organisations have contributed in the strategic ways to electoral processes, particularly by strengthening the electoral management bodies, other political institutions and civil society groups in Bauchi State and Nigeria as a whole. They organised programmes on capacity building for INEC staff, and civic education, and enlightenment and political awareness programmes for the electorates.

By creating awareness for the people, they enhanced political participation by women, youths and other marginalized groups; improved democratic quality of political commitment; strengthened channels of civic engagement; and promoted credible, transparent and sustainable elections. They also provide funding/ grant sponsorship of pre-election and post-election workshops for accredited observers and training for security officials.

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### **Author Contributions**

R. A. G designed, analysed the data and draft the manuscript. U.A, M.N.U, and M.M. contributed in the manuscript draft and data curation. All authors reviewed and edited the manuscript.

### **Competing Interest**

The authors affirm no competing interest.

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- Interview with respondents # JO1 on 2 May 2016; #CS3 on 2 April 2017 and #AC6 25 March 2017 respectively, in Bauchi Nigeria.
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- Interview with respondents #AC1 on 3 April 2016; #AC4 on March 2017; #AC5 on 15 March 2017; #CSR1 on 4 June 2016; #CSR3 on 5 April 2017; #CSR4 on 28 May 2017; #JO1 on 2 May 2016; #JO2 on 7 May 2016; #BP4 on 17 April 2017; and #PA3 on 8 June 2017 respectively, in Bauchi
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- Interviews with respondents #CSR4 on 28 May 2017; #CSR3 on 5 April 2017; #JO1 on 2 May 2016; #JO4 on 19 April 2017; #BP3 on 6 March 2017; #BP4 On 17 April 2017; #PA4 on 27 June 2017; #CS1 on 9 October 2016; #CS2 on 9 2016; and #AC3 on 11 April 2016 respectively in Bauchi Nigeria.
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