

Pain & Possibilities

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Annual Report 2020



SOCIALACTION
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT INTEGRATED CENTRE



PAIN AND POSSIBILITIES

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



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APPRECIATION

We thank our donors, partners, collaborating organisations, communities, volunteers, and supporters who contributed to our successes in 2020.

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CLEEN Foundation

Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, Canada

Department of Sociology and Human Geography, University of Oslo, Norway

African Centre for Media & Information Literacy (AFRICMIL)

THE ORGANISATION

Social Development Integrated Centre (Social Action) is a Nigerian organisation that works to promote resource democracy, social justice and human rights with a focus on the sectors of petroleum, the environment and climate change, trade and debt, and public budgets. We engage in research and monitoring, popular education and advocacy in solidarity with communities, activists, and scholars in Nigeria and other countries in the Gulf of Guinea region of Africa.

Social Action operates from offices in Port Harcourt, Bori (Rivers State), Warri (Delta State), Maiduguri (Borno State) and Abuja (Federal Capital Territory).



Resource Justice



Public Finance Accountability



Economic Justice



Climate Justice



Development Research



Popular Education & Civic Rights

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

Building networks of solidarity and action among citizens groups

We work to create networks and platforms for solidarity and collaboration among citizens groups to promote human rights and sustainability in energy and mining, climate change, public revenues, and trade.

Supporting community participation in development

We support marginalised communities to organise and take direct actions to protect their rights to resources and livelihoods, seek participation in development processes and defend democracy. Working through our Community Advocacy Centres, networks and outreaches, we encourage participation in advancing solutions to environmental and social problems.

Investing in popular education to create alternative visions for social change

Working with communities and other citizens' groups via our popular education platforms, we forge peoples' alternatives to dominant but inadequate neoliberal development models while widening the spaces for civil society solidarity. We focus on analysing specific policies and practices and how they interconnect and affect citizens' rights and livelihoods.

Monitoring for impact on policies and practices

We monitor and document the environmental and social practices of government, private investors, international financial institutions and communities for use by local and global citizens groups involved in advocating for change

Supporting movements for social change

We participate in and support communities and social movements involved in resistance to the negative impacts of resource extraction, trade policy and climate change through the provision of information, media outlets and capacity building through community exchanges. In so doing, we are working to build a national citizens movement that is active in the global movement for social change

FROM OUR CHAIR



Social Action is proud to have risen to the challenges 2020, an unusual year characterised by challenges for most Nigerians who also showed, in their resistance, the possibilities for change. While the COVID-19 pandemic further exposed institutional inadequacies and a deficit of political will at all tiers of government, the restrictions and limits to opportunities revealed the resilience of the Nigerian people. In the second half of the year, a growing resentment to state and official's impunity and public sector corruption resulted in the largest mass mobilisation in Nigeria's contemporary history.

Following a steady beginning to project implementation in the first quarter of 2020, Social Action was forced to slow down activities towards the end of the first quarter at a time of public anxiety over COVID-19. With the understanding of our partners, we modified our project activities to initiate interventions in response to COVID-19 as we sought to make our activities more relevant to the immediate needs of project beneficiaries without departing substantially from project goals and objectives. In particular, Social Action mobilised other civil society groups and the media in Rivers, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Delta, Edo and Borno to monitor developments (including the distribution of government assistance to residents), advocate for better government and citizens responses, and defend human rights and livelihoods of people during the period lockdown and social distancing measures imposed to curtail the spread of COVID-19.

The situation in the country returned to more of a normal as the government began to relax restrictions towards the middle of the year since there was no crisis of hospitalisations and deaths. However, the youths of Nigeria did not want to return to the normal of police impunity and human rights abuses. By October 2020, Nigeria witnessed the largest mass protests in its history as youths organised rallies, marched on the streets, and observed all-night vigils to express the people's outrage against human rights abuses by the police and members of other security agencies, and against state corruption and mass impoverishment. Social Action and its allied Civil Rights Councils (CRCs) supported the mobilisations and participated actively in the #EndSARS movement.

In a difficult year, the #EndSARS movement offered a glimpse of what is possible when our youths rise and demand social change. Social Action will continue to support young activities and other constituencies as we seek to build solidarity for change in Nigeria.

Dr. Lemual Owugah

Chair, Governing Board

COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Key outcomes in 2020

Civil society/government collaboration

Social Action-led efforts achieved a civil society and state governments partnership in monitoring and ensuring the equitable distribution of palliative materials to vulnerable populations in Bayelsa, Abia, Bayelsa, Cross River, Edo and Rivers States.



Distribution of palliative materials to the needy

Highlights of Social Action's COVID-19 pandemic response

Coordinating Civil Society Response in the Niger Delta and Borno

Social Action mobilised civil society partners and other allies such as the media and other social actors in Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom States and Borno to collaborate and advocate for improved measures to protect the health, livelihoods and human rights of citizens and residents during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Field Monitors observing the response of citizens to the Covid-19 guidelines and the effect on the society

Civil Society/Media Situation Rooms

Social Action created Civil Society/Media Situation Rooms in each of the states in collaboration with allies to support the government and institutions' public enlightenment and to provide decision-makers with a real-time view on responses to policies. The Situation Rooms consisted of leading

NGOs/coalitions, media houses, independent journalists, civic opinion leaders and experts. While observing social distancing recommendations, the Situation Rooms issued daily briefings and organised weekly press conferences.



Covid-19 Civil Society/Media Situation Room deliberating on findings of field monitorings

Network of Community Monitors

Action recruited members of communities in the Niger Delta states into Networks of Community Monitors to monitor human rights practices, management of government palliatives, and the environmental situation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The group maintained social media platforms, including WhatsApp group chat for information sharing and dissemination. Reports of the Monitors informed the daily briefings and weekly press conferences of the Situation Rooms.



Monitoring human right of citizens while enforcing the compliance of the Covid-19 guidelines by agents

Health and Safety Interventions

Social Action took action to protect its staff, volunteers, allies, and beneficiary communities' health and safety by ensuring social distancing protocols and avoiding gatherings unrelated to COVID-19 intervention and procurement of hand sanitisers, face masks, and gloves for people involved in project implementation and community beneficiaries. Social Action reduced COVID-19 related vulnerability among IDPs in Borno by providing personal protective gear to 600 IDP households. It also contributed to the reduced spread of COVID-19 among the IDPs through awareness, sensitisation and education in 10 IDP camps while also reducing hunger by providing food supplies to some 1200 beneficiaries.



Women in the IDP Camps in the North receiving food materials from donors

RESOURCE JUSTICE

We work with others to achieve an improved natural resource regime in which communities' rights, livelihoods, and environment are protected and encourage broader benefits for the Nigerian population.

Key outcomes in 2020

Enhanced communities capacity for pollution monitoring

- 81 community members in Rivers and Delta States received training on pollution monitoring, reporting and advocacy.

Citizens intervention for accountability and environmental sustainability in Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) 2020

- In collaboration with community leaders, activists and experts, we conducted a study of the PIB to highlight concerns about human rights, livelihoods, environmental sustainability, transparency and accountability, and the best economic interest of host communities, host states and Nigerians generally.

Highlights of projects and activities in 2020

Capacity building workshop for paralegals, community activists on the Joint Investigation Visits (JIVs)

Social Action trained 81 community members during two workshops in Rivers State and Delta State on monitoring and participating in JIVs organised by the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) and ensuring community input goes into official reports of oil spills.



Roundtables on Gas Flaring and the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) 2020

Social Action organised two roundtable meetings in Port Harcourt focusing on gas flaring and the new Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) 2020 introduced by the Nigerian government to the National Assembly. The roundtable meeting served as an opportunity for expert consultants contracted by Social Action to discuss aspects of the bill with representatives of communities in the sites of petroleum extraction and civil society representatives.

Monitoring Implementation of the Recommendations of the UNEP Report on Ogoniland

Social Action continued to monitor government and other stakeholders' actions concerning the proposed clean-up of polluted sites in Ogoniland as recommended by the UNEP. Social Action monitoring informed collaborative advocacy with host communities and press statements to highlight concerns and inadequacies on the clean-up process in 2020.



A prohibition sign by the bank of Naaben River, warning against the use of the river

Roundtables in the Niger Delta with a focus on gas flaring and artisanal refineries

Social Action organised a Roundtable Conference in Port Harcourt for petroleum sector workers' unions and NGOs to share analysis and identify how to collaborate better to address environmental protection in petroleum production sites. The roundtable addressed the issues of increasing the casualisation of oil sector work. Participants included the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association (PENGASSAN), National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Employees (PENGASSAN) and NGOs.

Social Action also convened a meeting of community youth and operators of artisanal refineries in Port Harcourt. The conference provided a platform for sharing information about developments with artisanal refineries regarding pollution and energy access and provided Social Action with data for advocacy.

Documentation of data and evidence in Umuechem and Rumuekpe

Social Action continued to work with Umuechem, Rumuekpe and Ogoni communities in Rivers State to document evidence of human rights abuses by security officials and oil companies to advance international and local litigation in defence of community rights and livelihoods.

PUBLIC FINANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

We work for a more accountable government at the federal, state and local government levels to ensure that communities and citizens benefit more from public revenues realised from oil, mining and gas.

Key outcomes in 2020

Improved local CSO Capacity to monitor government humanitarian interventions in northeast Nigeria

40 members of local civil society organisations benefited from training on monitoring and tracking the impact of humanitarian aids. The training exposed participants to various advocacy and transparency strategies such as budget analysis, humanitarian budget tracking and interventions monitoring.

Improved litigation capacity of Social Action Anti-Corruption Network (AcoNet)

Social Action and AcoNet initiated public interest litigation to challenge political impunity and corruption in Rivers and Edo States.

Strategic Collaborations

Social Action and the Anti-Corruption Network (AcoNet) collaborated with federal agencies, including the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), to fight against impunity and corruption by politically exposed persons.

Highlights of projects and activities in 2020

Civil society platform on accountability in the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)

Social Action led other civil society groups to intervene in the crisis of governance in the NDDC. Following a conference in Abuja, civil society groups in Nigeria called for a significant overhaul of the NDDC.



Social Acton and partner civil society organisations making a presentation on the NDDC at the National Assembly

Public engagement & enlightenment

Social Action and network partners produced radio programmes to achieve widespread sensitisation of the citizens and promote public sector accountability during the COVID-19 pandemic and throughout the year.

Invoking the Freedom of Information (Fol) Act in Delta, Edo and Rivers States

Social Action, in collaboration with the Edo Civil Society Organizations, brought an Fol request before the High Court in Benin City to compel the Edo State Oil Producing Area Development Commission (EDOSOPADEC) to provide it with specific information and fiscal documents regarding its activities and projects.

Social Action and the Rivers State Anti-Corruption Network (AcoNet) network approached the High Court in Port Harcourt to compel the Rivers State Government to provide expenditure information on specific infrastructure projects in the state.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY

We improve access to justice by supporting citizens action through organisational development, promoting awareness about rights, training, legal support and public litigation.

Key outcomes in 2020

Strengthened Civil Rights Councils (CRCs)

The CRCs in the different units in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Enugu, Imo, Rivers, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) are strengthened through training, membership mobilisation and participation in actions to defend human rights and promote alternatives to social systems that encourage repression and economic exclusion.

9 Victims of police brutality and human rights abuse represented at the Judicial Panel of Inquiry on Police Brutality in Akwa Ibom, Delta, Rivers and the FCT

Through the support of Social Action, the CRC was able to engage lawyers to represent selected members and citizens of Nigeria living in Rivers State at the Judicial Panel of Inquiry on Police Brutality, sitting in Port Harcourt.



Military/Civilian Relationship

Social Action, in collaboration with the CLEEN Foundation, supported the Nigerian military in Rivers State through education and encouraged the military to create a unit to promote civil relations that would hear complaints of abuse of power by soldiers.

Reinforced IDPs capacity to defend the basic human rights of IDPs and host communities in Borno State

Social Action provided training for 30 Human Rights Ambassadors from residents of IDP camps in Borno State. The training program provided the IDPs with tools and strategies for tracking, monitoring, and reporting rights violations in their camps and communities.

Highlights of projects and activities in 2020

Media engagements

- Social Action supported press conferences by the units of the CRC with the active participation of other civil society actors to address the rising cases of human rights abuses in the states, especially by the police and to popularise the activities of the various Judicial Panels of Inquiry investigating police abuses in states of the Niger Delta and to encourage public participation.
- Social Action and the Rivers State CRC sponsored radio programmes to promote awareness of human rights and to call for a government inquiry into the brutal murder of Chima Ikwunado, an auto-mechanic who was allegedly tortured and murdered by men of the Nigerian Police.

Public petitions

Social Action and the Rivers State CRC petitioned the Attorney General of Rivers State, the National Human Rights Commission and the Rivers State Police Commissioner to set up a tribunal to investigate the death of Chima Ikwunado and other cases of citizen disappearance with special police units in the state.



Ifeanyi Onyekwere, Victor Ogbonna and Ifeanyi Osuji, victims of police brutality

Human rights litigation

In solidarity with human rights lawyer Malcolm Esq and other civil society actors, the Delta State CRC sued the federal and state governments over their negligence to provide security for village farmers in Delta State that were under attack by herdsmen, which led to killings.

Documenting human rights violations by the military

Social Action and NetSSRIN network partners documented human rights violations by soldiers in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Cross Rivers and Rivers State and presented the report to the military high command in Port Harcourt.

Social Action investigated reports of killings of civilians by the military in Oyigbo, Rivers State, following the #EndSARS mass protests of October 2020.

Mobilising to promote access to energy

In collaboration with other civic organisations, the Rivers State CRC embarked on nationwide protests over the hike in electricity tariff and fuel prices by the federal government.

The Nigeria Pro-Democracy Conference

Social Action initiated and collaboration with the African Centre for Media & Information Literacy (AFRICMIL) and the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) to organise the 2020 Nigeria Pro-Democracy Conference with the theme “From momenet to movemenet: rethinking the power beyond 2023 that brought together pro-democracy activists, human rights groups, scholars, labour unions to examine the democratic practices in Nigeria since 1999 in the light of the repression of the #EndSARS protest and, and to discuss options for sustaining the popular democratic movement in the country. The 2020 edition was organised online via Zoom due to the Covid-19 guidlines and restriction on gatherings.

Workshops and conferences

CRC units organised 16 workshops and roundtables for human rights training and mobilised citizens around alternatives to the neoliberal development paradigms.

CLIMATE JUSTICE AND EMERGENCIES

We encourage the integration of community rights in the development and implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation schemes in Nigeria. We work to draw global attention to the immediacy of climate change as a security threat and the need for action at the local, national, and regional levels.

Key outcomes in 2020

Responses to flooding

During the last quarter of 2020, there were unusually severe flooding in parts of Nigeria. Social Action mobilised the media to report on the developments and to show the impacts in Bayelsa, Rivers and Borno States while also creating awareness about the need for adaptation measures as floods become more frequent due to climate change.



A flooded community in Rivers State

In collaboration with the Borno CSO Situation Room, Social Action drew the attention of the government and the international community to the plight of victims of flooding in Shuwari 5 IDP camp and other IDP camps.

Vulnerable women/girls and men/boys have increased ability to meet basic needs and have recovered livelihoods in Borno State

We achieved enhanced economic recovery and sustainable livelihoods of displaced persons using cash transfers for micro-enterprise, innovative agricultural programs, and other value-added activities targeting mainly women and youths. Through the micro-enterprise and innovative agricultural training, 120 households (comprised of 600 indirect beneficiaries) were able to start micro-businesses in cottage productions of soaps, detergents, sanitisers and nose marks, as well as micro gardening.

Improving access to sustainable energy and livelihoods of displaced households in Borno State

- 130 displaced households in Borno State were provided with energy-efficient cookstoves and solar lighting to This resulted in
- Reduced associated risks of fetching firewood from the forest for 70 women.
- 10 householders benefited from the improved livelihood created by the training on production of efficient cooking stoves.

Peer Learning on impacts of REDD+ in Ondo and Cross Rivers States

Social Action created a platform for civil society and forest-dependent communities in Cross Rivers and Ondo States to share ideas and experiences on protecting livelihoods in the development of Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) schemes.

Highlights of projects and activities in 2020

Training on micro-agriculture for women affected by conflicts in Jere, Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC) and Konduga LGAs of Borno State

Against the backdrop of severe drought occasioned by climate change, coupled with the destruction of homes and farmlands induced by the Boko Haram insurgency in parts of Borno State, Social Action and GREENCODE launched an initiative for the development of sustainable livelihoods of displaced populations through agriculture.

Sensitisation campaign on gender-based violence in Borno State

Social Action launched a sensitisation campaign at the Dalori 1 IDP camp to create massive awareness amongst teenage girls about the dangers of sexual exploitation and the need to stay vigilant against sexual predators.

Building partnership for human rights monitoring in IDP camps Borno State

Social Action obtained the support of Amnesty International to provide training for selected individuals from IDP camps in Borno State on monitoring human rights violations. Resource person from Amnesty International Nigeria produced curriculum, questionnaires and reporting templates specific to the needs of northeastern Nigeria.

Training and deployment of Human Right Ambassadors in Borno IDP camps

Social Action and GREENCODE identified 30 human rights ambassadors that were trained for monitoring the state of human rights of women and girls in IDP camps in Borno State.



CSOs Localization Workshop in Borno State

Social Action organised a first localisation workshop in Maiduguri for representatives of select local NGOs and residents of IDP camps, focusing on building capacity to mainstream sustainable energy access into humanitarian interventions. The workshop offered participants the platform to examine how to deliver improved protection, dignity, and environmental benefits through access to more ecological and efficient energy to displaced people, especially women and children.

Head Office

33, Oromineke Layout,
Off Emekuku Street
D-Line, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
Tel:+234 (0)84 360903

National Advocacy Centre

20 Yalinga Street (House1)
Wuse2, Abuja, FCT

Paralegal/Community Resource Centre

Warri

No 10, Major Dan Azubuike Road,
Off Niger Cat, by Refinery Road.
Ekpan, Effurun, Warri, Delta State

Bori(Ogoniland)

6 Kaani Road (Top Flour)
Bori, Rivers State

Diobu

No 77 Urualla Street,
Mile 1 Diobu, Port Harcourt, Rivers State

Brass

JBA Villa, Twon Brass,
Bayelsa



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