

They Should Be Talking To Us

"They Should Be Talking To Us" is a synopsis of Lessons Learnt on ActionAid Nigeria's HIV/AIDS Budget Tracking and Analysis (HABTA) project implemented in partnership with three state partners- WINET, CHAN and RU-ENPORT with funding support from MacArthur Foundation



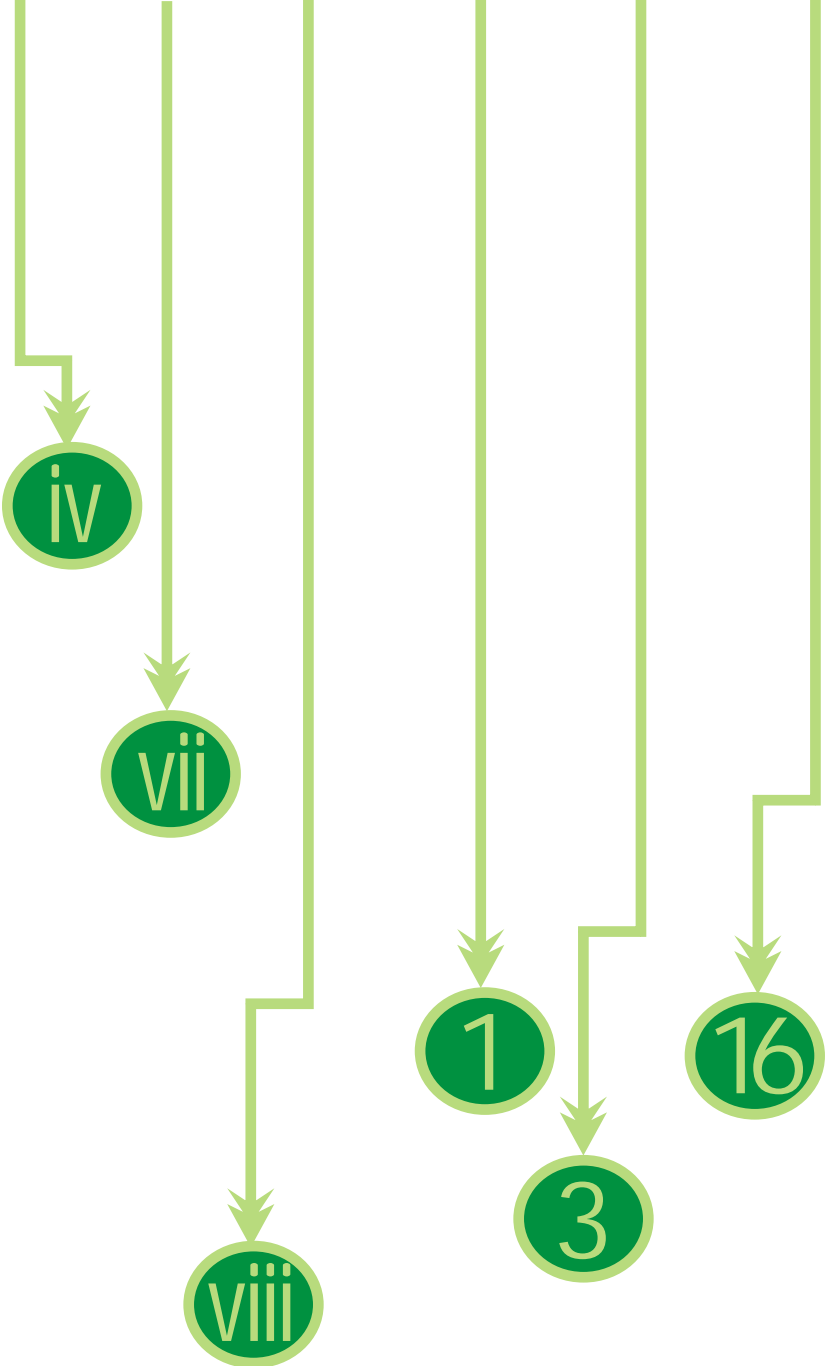
They Should Be Talking To Us

“They Should Be Talking To Us” is a synopsis of Lessons Learnt on ActionAid Nigeria's HIV/AIDS Budget Tracking and Analysis (HABTA) project implemented in partnership with three state partners– WINET, CHAN and RU-ENPORT with funding support from MacArthur Foundation

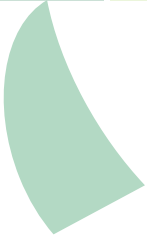


act:onaid
nigeria

Foreword Acknowledgment Preface Background Project Outcomes Lessons Learnt



CACA	-Community Action Committees on AIDS
CBO	-Community Based Organisation
CESSGO	-Coalition of Enugu State Support Groups Organisation
CSO	-Civil Society Organisation
CiSHAN	-Civil Society on HIV/AIDS in Nigeria
CHAN	-Christian Health Association of Nigeria
DIDS	-Department of International Donor Support
ELBAG	-Economic Literacy and Budget Accountability for Governance
ENSACA	-Enugu State Action Committee on AIDS
EED	-Evangelischen Entwicklungsdienst
FBO	-Faith Based Organisation
HABTA	-HIV/AIDS Budget Tracking and Analysis
HBC	-Home Based Care
LACA	-Local Action Committee on AIDS
LGC	-Local Government Council
LGA	-Local Government Area
MDGs	-Millennium Development Goals
MDA	-Ministry, Department and Agency
NYNETHA	-National Youth Network on HIV/AIDS in Nigeria
NEC	-National Executive Council
NGO	-Non-Governmental Organisation
OVC	-Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PLANET	-Plateau AIDS Network
PFA	-Public Finance Analyst
PLACA	-Plateau State Action Committee on AIDS
PLP	-People Living Positive
RU-ENPORT	-Rural Environmental Protectors
SACA	-State Agency for the Control of AIDS
WINET	-Women Information Network



Budget, being of the foremost policy instrument of the government, provides one of the greatest potentials for meeting the needs and aspiration of the people only if it is done right. With Nigeria's return to civilian rule after protracted military dictatorship, civil society realised the potential of a participatory policymaking environment as the key to institutionalising quality service delivery, transparency and accountability in governance. To this end, a lot of initiatives that target structural constraints that shape the policy environment were put in place with varying levels of success and opportunities for sustained growth towards good governance and development.

At the national level and in some states, access to budgetary information and participation in the budgetary process have increased in the past five (5)

years due to intensified civil society engagement and insistence on acceptability to ensure an enabling environment for accountability and transparency between government and the citizens.

Ironically at the local government councils, wide gaps exist in citizen participation, policy formulation and implementation, thereby leaving citizens to resort to fate, when they should be demanding accountability from the public office holders as rights. Governance at the local level in Nigeria has been characterised by weak structures and systems that incapacitate accountable and effective service delivery as well as lack of capacity to effectively deliver on the developmental goals and mandate to the citizens.

More so is the effectiveness of many initiatives which is impaired by civil society's lack of technical expertise in financial management and

budget analysis. In addition, inconsistency in the budgetary operations of local councils has frustrated efforts to assess effectiveness accurately.

For local government to function effectively, it must realise its major role in socio-economic environment whilst promoting democracy and participation at that level. It must think of programmes in terms of inputs (resources needed to run the programme, e.g., money, facilities, customers, clients, programme staff, etc.), process (how the programme is carried out, e.g., customers are served, clients are consulted, children are cared for, power supply is generated etc.), outputs (the units of service, e.g., number of customers serviced, number of clients consulted, children cared for, number of power supply generated) and outcomes (impacts on the customers or on clients receiving services, e.g., constant power supply, increased mental health, safe and secure development).

The Local government system has to support the nation building aims. When it

does not, an apparent and valid threat to the foundation of nation building presents itself because local government/community development and nation building are closely related concepts; each is primarily concerned with development of the local areas through community effort. However, over the years the two concepts have been institutionally separated.

It is in this context that the HIV/AIDS Budget Tracking and Analysis (HABTA) project provides the impetus for building state and non-state actors' capacities for a people-driven policy environment, especially as it relates to the budgeting process, build a critical mass of Nigerians with the requisite knowledge and consciousness to influence the process at all levels and mobilise critical stakeholders to play their part in the policy process.

This publication contains information on The HABTA project methodologies, approaches and unique blend of issues and stakeholders as well as impact in the target states and communities. It documents stories of change

and will serve as a pool of knowledge and learning for indigenous participation in the process of accountability and transparency in the conceptualisation, planning and execution of government business.

Hussaini Abdu, PhD

Country Director, ActionAid
Nigeria



This work has benefitted from the contributions and ideas of colleagues within and outside ActionAid Nigeria. Appreciations especially to 'Bimbola Adewumi, the Project Consultant HIV/AIDS Budget Tracking and Analysis Project, who authored this document.

Significant contributions also came from our partners at the state; WINET, RU-ENPORT, CHAN and the

Community Facilitators that have benefitted under the HABTA project's capacity building activities.

Finally, to the MacArthur Foundation, we say thank you for the invigorating partnership under the HIV/AIDS Budget Tracking and Analysis (HABTA) Project. The opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the MacArthur Foundation.



The HIV/AIDS Budget

Tracking and Analysis (HABTA) Project is a budget tracking, analysis and capacity building initiative being implemented at National level and in three states. The MacArthur Foundation supported this project. The HABTA project was designed to increase the participation of civil society in the assessment, monitoring and evaluation of resource mobilisation and utilisation on the impact on HIV/AIDS mitigation efforts in Nigeria.

At the national level, ActionAid had implemented some of its own programmes and also provided technical support to state partners for effective participation in national and state-level budget processes. It has facilitated trainings for both state and non-state actors on Budget Analysis and Advocacy as well as Economic Literacy and Budget Accountability for Governance (ELBAG).

In the course of the last two

years (2008 to 2010), the project facilitated increased awareness and understanding of budget tracking on HIV/AIDS with the aim of entrenching transparency and accountability in the mobilisation and utilisation of HIV/AIDS resources. Though marginal increase in budgetary allocation was noted in this sector which makes efficiency of expenditure uncertain, however, with the project, some element of cultural and behavioural change was experienced on accountability interface between government officials and CSOs which hitherto was absent.

Noticeable increase in the tempo of advocacy programmes aimed at promoting budget transparency with respect to HIV/AIDS resources has been achieved. These include advocacy visits to local government chairpersons, State Houses of Assembly where the commitments of

specific House Committees were secured in promoting and supporting the project activities as well as assurance for a participatory budgeting process which would involve the CSOs and members of the communities. Capacity building for civil society organisations and government officials were also carried out on budget tracking and rights-based approach.

In addition, the project has also provided a platform for state and non-state actors to discuss and analyse the Nigerian budgets at the national and state level through the annual budget summits. These analyses are thereafter used as advocacy tools to engage government at Federal, state and local government levels.

After two years of implementing the project, the HIV/AIDS Budget Tracking and Analysis project officially came to a close in July 2010. Though the HABTA project has closed, ActionAid is committed to supporting state and non state actors in promoting transparency and accountability in the governance process. This

publication contains information on the approach and strategies, results, key achievements and lessons learnt on the HABTA project by ActionAid and its state-level partners which could help improve programming of budget work at all levels.

Tasallah Chibok

Team Leader, Right to Health

In 2004, the MacArthur Foundation funded the 'Increasing Participation of Civil Society in the Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation of Resource Mobilisation and Utilisation on the Impact on HIV/AIDS Mitigation Efforts in Nigeria' project which was implemented by ActionAid International Nigeria in partnership with Civil Society Network on HIV/AIDS (CISNAN) and six civil society organisations in three states in North West Nigeria. The project was implemented in the five (5) states of Enugu, Cross River, Plateau, Lagos and Gombe based on the HIV prevalence rate at the time of commencement of the project under the first phase, which ended in year 2008. In each of the five states, one local government area was selected through a participatory process where the project was implemented.

The goal of the project was to "increase the participation

of civil society in the assessment, monitoring and evaluation of resource allocation and utilisation and its impact on HIV and AIDS mitigation efforts in Nigeria". This was aimed to contribute to strengthening the National Response on HIV and AIDS pandemic in Nigeria by empowering civil society organisations and the public to monitor resource allocation and utilisation and the impact of activities and programmes.

The second phase of the project between year 2008 and 2010 was tagged "HIV and AIDS Budget Tracking and Advocacy" (HABTA). This phase was implemented by RU-ENPORT, CHAN and WINET in three states of Cross River, Plateau and Enugu, respectively. The aim was to reduce the prevalence of HIV and AIDS by strengthening the capacity for policy analysis, budget tracking and advocacy through participation of citizens/CSOs in budget mechanisms for HIV and AIDS.

It was also expected to achieve these specific objectives:

The HABTA project is situated in the Right to Health theme of ActionAid Nigeria. The past 6 years of phase 1 and 2 of the project has seen the project advancing into the future, although there had also been attending challenges with staffing, programming and funding.

Strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations and networks in policy analysis, budget tracking and advocacy for more effective HIV/AIDS budget interventions in the focal states and communities

Increase the capacity of members of the project communities to play active role as watchdogs monitoring the policy response to HIV/AIDS interventions, advocating for increase in budgetary allocations and efficient expenditure

Build technical capacity of government agencies, local government officials and the media on participatory budget mechanisms for HIV/AIDS

Develop ActionAid Nigeria in-house expertise on maternal health and applied budget work and ensure other relevant CSOs have benefits through debriefing and experience sharing

The HABTA project closed at the end of July 2010 after two years of implementation in the second phase. Take a look at some of our achievements:



(C) MS ActionAid Denmark

"It was an amazing thing, for one moment in four years, to all feel the same way. And to feel that it was good."
Kenyan writer binyavanga wainana

Community action breaks 3-year mould of HIV/AIDS funds

The Community Facilitators who led the process were gleaming with excitement, hope and confidence. CHAN became a hero and the smile on the face of the LACA Coordinator of Bassa LGA while discussing with him showed that he was pleased and proud of the efforts of CHAN and the Community Facilitators. He promised to sustain support and commitment to future HIV/AIDS advocacy issues from the communities in Bassa Local Government.

It is common knowledge that over the years, budgeting processes in Nigeria are top-down in approach as officers of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) sit in their offices and prepare budgets for the nation often based on perceived instead of actual needs of the people as it should be. The situation in Plateau State typifies this as internal calls for proposal from the MDAs is used for the preparation of budgets both at the state and LGA levels.

Furthermore, a study of the budgets of the state over the years revealed that it is not gender sensitive, neither is it disaggregated on gender lines,. Similarly, needs of special persons, especially the physically and economically challenged, are not taken into consideration during budgeting.

Adequate funding stream to the health sector, specifically HIV and AIDS allocations budgets to the MDAs has been a big challenge as, oftentimes, funds allocated for such activities are seldom released. This was the case with Bassa LGA in Plateau State with a backlog of three years (year 2006 to 2009) unreleased HIV/AIDS funds.

Being the first time CHAN would undertake a critical analysis of HIV and AIDS budget allocations and releases to MDAs in Plateau State, stakeholders at the meeting could clearly see the cumulative allocation to HIV and AIDS. Groups of Persons

Living With HIV in attendance at the meeting expressed willingness to be part of remedial steps to ensure that this backlog was released. Participants also agreed to follow up with the MDAs on the proposal of the National Economic Council that MDAs should allocate at least 1% of sector budget for HIV/AIDS programming.

Steps that were taken included the selection of community members who served as Community Action Committees on AIDS (CACA) members to lead community level advocacy; training for CACA members; budget analysis advocacy visits to selected MDAs with HIV/AIDS budget allocations and the Plateau State House of Assembly. Ministries, Departments and Agencies visited included: Plateau State Action Committee on AIDS (PLACA), Bassa LGA Local Action Committee on AIDS (LACA), Ministries of Health, Education, Information and Culture, Agriculture and Natural Resources and Women Affairs.

While the activities were going on, results recorded included the release of thirty million naira from government to the

Plateau State Action Committee on AIDS (PLACA). Also released was the three years' counterpart fund backlog to the Bassa LACA and the year 2009 HIV/AIDS allocation.

This outcome created excitement, hope and confidence in Community Facilitators who led the process. The smile on the face of the LACA Coordinator of Bassa LGA while discussing with him showed that he was pleased and proud of the efforts of CHAN and the Community Facilitators on the fund release. He promised to sustain support and commitment to future HIV/AIDS advocacy issues from the communities in Bassa Local Government.

Members of the Corner Stone Support Group, an HIV/AIDS support group in Bassa Local Government Area, grinned widely as they received starter packs equipments including knitting and sewing machines as well as support funds to start skill acquisition centre. This was part of the activities that kicked off after the HIV/AIDS fund was released to Bassa LACA.

Advocacy untangled clutter of donor funds for HIV/AIDS

This is the case with donor funds in Nigeria, with little or no documentation on the use and purpose of such funds, accountability reduces and differentiating between phantom and real aid becomes extremely cumbersome.

Donor aid form a large part of the HIV/AIDS response in Nigeria which makes it important to monitor funding flows between donors and government agencies as well as implementing NGOs. Monitoring donor funds is particularly difficult because the donor funding systems are complex; there is no readily available and up-to-date information; it takes years before financial records are consolidated and made available by the donor community. In addition, donors also channel resources directly to service providers NGOs, CBOs, FBOs and research institutes. Information on these direct flows is not comprehensively or necessarily collected by

government.

In Cross River State, the National Planning Commission and Department of International Donor Support (DIDS) are responsible to document and coordinate donor funds in the state, source, leverage and channel Donor Aids and Federal Government Funds to relevant MDAs and monitor public sector, donor funded programmes and capital projects. However, it is difficult to compare donor efforts against government initiatives since donors usually provide information on financial commitments to HIV and AIDS programmes, rather than on actual allocations or disbursements. On the other hand, civil society organisations specialised in budget tracking and analysis experience challenge tracking and documenting actual expenditure of government and donor funds to HIV/AIDS to decipher between phantom and real aid.

☑ These challenges were

discussed extensively at the RU-ENPORT 1-day legislative roundtable for state and non-state actors. Issues that emanated from the roundtable were:

- ✔ Inadequate funding at state and local government levels for HIV & AIDS response;
- ✔ The challenges of HIV/AIDS intervention coordinating entities at the state and local government level, i.e. the State Agency for the Control of AIDS (SACA) and Local Action Committee on AIDS (LACA) in Cross River State, to secure release of budgeted funds for their work. This was attributed to the delay in approving funds by the SACA Board and Chairpersons at the local levels. At state and local government levels, funds allocated for HIV & AIDS response have been posited as inadequate.

At the end of the roundtable, participants recommended amongst other things the need for a synergy between SACA and the office of International Donor Support in order to properly coordinate and document donor support for the different components of the HIV and AIDS response.

This recommendation was taken forward by RU-ENPORT and other likeminded CSOs in partnership with the State Ministry of Health. Advocacy visits for synergy in HIV/AIDS work in the state were made to the National Planning Commission and Department of International Donor Support (DIDS) in Cross River state.

The result of this advocacy was a commitment to develop a database of HIV/AIDS donor funds into the state. This commitment was substantiated in the Cross River State's 2010 budget where an allocation for the development of database of donor funds was made by the Department of International Donor Support (DIDS).

Once this documentation is developed, the state will be able to differentiate between phantom and real aid. It will also reduce duplication amongst state and non-state institutions and create HIV/AIDS programme equity in the state.

A community's participation using traditional and modern techniques

Kome ya ke cikin aikin d'an tsako, shaho ya dade da saninshi: "Whatever concerns the habits of little chicks, [you can be quite sure that] the hawk started learning it long ago."

In Enugu state, the story of 'budget behind closed doors' is no different as communities and civil

instance, in one of the Ministries visited during the budget tracking exercise, the officer-in-charge of the HIV and AIDS desk did not want to be quoted on the information given to the budget monitors team.

At project inception, convincing the two target communities of Amokwe and Ameke-Ngwo to commit to

The farmer who has never ventured beyond his field says his own methods are the best.

The traditional 'Town Crier' in Amekwe community, Enugu State

society organisations continually strive to create and expand the space for citizens' participation in the budget process. The unwillingness to publicly disseminate budget and related information by key stakeholders especially the Ministries, Departments and Agencies cannot be overemphasised. For

the project was challenging as they expected financial rewards from WINET. Extensive discussions with the community created an enabling environment and project ownership by community members. The community accepted that the project was their own, jointly selected Community Facilitators and proceeded in



Meeting with Community Facilitators in Amekwe community during HABTA evaluation visit.

carrying out the project.

The Women Information Network thereafter trained the Community Facilitators on budget tracking, analysis and advocacy while Community Facilitators were given space by the traditional leader to step down the training to community members at the town hall meeting. With this training, the people are now aware that they are supposed to be part of the budget process and that the budget is a public document which they can request for and make inputs into through their traditional head.

Once budget calls are made at the local government level, Community Facilitators meets with the Igwe to discuss community inputs in the budget. Thereafter, the Igwe sends out the 'Town Crier' to announce that anybody with contribution to the budget should bring their submission to the Igwe in his palace. These submissions are collated with support from community facilitators and sent to the local government chairman.

Community members are expectant that there needs will be met.

Also acknowledged at the

community is the need to do more budget tracking and advocacy in HIV and AIDS, Health and other sectors of the economy. This will help to promote good

governance as the elected officials will know that the citizens even at the local level have been empowered to ask questions about their budget.

The Formal and Modern 'Budget Input' meetings

In Plateau State, CHAN, through the HABTA project, built the capacities of community members, CSOs and government MDAs to increase participation in budgeting processes that will culminate into an increase in allocations to HIV and AIDS on one hand, and ensure judicious utilisation of HIV/AIDS sector funds.

At one of the joint Community Action Committee on AIDS (CACA) meeting of Mista Ali and Jengre communities, members from the two communities were divided into two groups (representing their communities) and required to identify the challenges facing their communities in order of priority and present in plenary. The following challenges

It always seems impossible until it is done..

Nelson Mandela

To enhance community participation in HIV/AIDS budgeting process, the Community Action Committee on AIDS (CACA) were set up in the two communities where the project was implemented: Mista Ali and Jengre Communities in Bassa Local Government Area. Every quarter, the two communities meet to brainstorm on issues affecting them with regards to HIV/AIDS interventions and budgeting processes.

amongst others were identified in the two communities:

- ☑ The absence and need for a VCT centre with equipments and qualified personnel in Mistali and inadequate qualified counsellors in the Jengre Community Health Centre;
- ☑ Need to establish a network of people living positive (PLPs) and OVCs and henceforth strive towards

satisfying their needs;

- ✓ Training for community members and other support personnel on home based care (HBC)

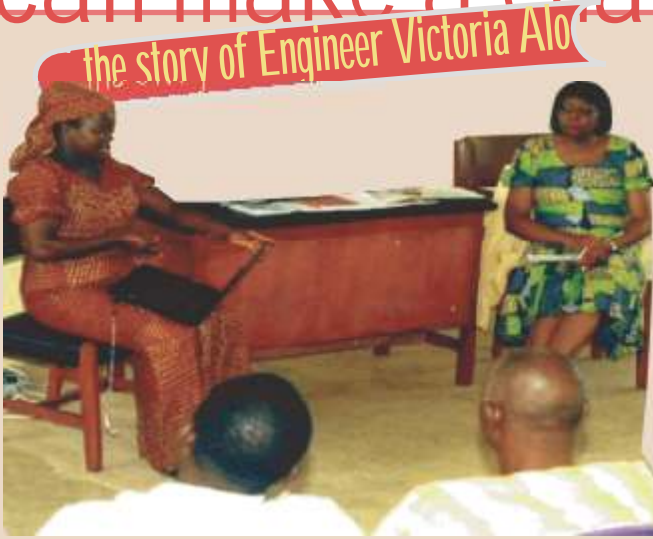
Following this meeting, CHAN facilitated consultative advocacy visits to CSO networks-- the civil society on HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (CiSHAN), Plateau AIDS Network (PLANET) and National Youth Network on HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (NYNETHA)-- to gain their support and commitment on next steps.

Thereafter, a one-day

budget input meeting was held with the State Ministry of Finance and relevant government institutions responsible for the provision of identified community needs, including the Local Action Committee on AIDS (LACA) of Bassa LGA.

These recommendations, one of which is the provision of HCT services to Mista Ali community in Bassa LGA of Plateau State, were captured in the 2010 LACA HIV budget.

I can make a change



Eng. Mrs. Victoria Alo with her laptop during her presentation on 'The meaning and Importance of the Budget' at the Community training.

Engineer (Mrs.) Victoria Alor is one of the Community Facilitators for the HIV and AIDS Budget Tracking and Advocacy project from Ameke-Ngwo, in Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State. Victoria was active in all the activities for the project in her community. She was trained with other facilitators but she stood out because of her interest in ensuring that the project achieved its objectives. Having been trained, she facilitated during the one-day sensitisation workshop for communities and formation of Community Action Committee on AIDS (CACA) in project communities, held at Udi local government headquarters when she made a presentation on, 'The meaning and Importance of the budget.'

During a two-day workshop on Capacity Building on Budget Tracking and Gender Budgeting, Mrs Alor narrated her experience from inception of the project. She said before the project started, she did not know anything about budget. According to her, when the President read the annual federal budget on radio she would not pay attention, she would tune to another station or prefer to watch film. But since WINET and ActionAid came to their community in 2005-2006, and 2008-2009 and sensitised them on budget issues, she discovered budgets are for the governed and not for the government and that there is need for the community to be part of the budget process to make the input of their needs.

Other achievements

Other achievements from the HABTA project include:

Formation of Coalition of Enugu State HIV and AIDS Budget Monitors

The Women Information Network formed a loose coalition known as Enugu State HIV and AIDS Budget Monitors whose members were drawn from NGOs, members of Civil Society on HIV and AIDS (CiSHAN), Coalition of Enugu State Support Groups Organisation (CESSGO)

and the media. Members of the coalition were trained on budget tracking and advocacy, gender budgeting, rights based approach to budgeting, understanding HIV and AIDS financing at a two-day capacity building workshop on budget tracking and gender budgeting.

Following the training, members of the team have tracked HIV and AIDS budget allocations to ministries in Enugu State and Udi Local Government budget.

I can make a change

Victoria said following series of trainings and advocacy visits as well as monitoring and tracking visits to Ministries, Departments and Agencies under the HABTA project, she discovered that she and her people have right of access to anti-retroviral drugs and good health. Victoria said she and her community members can now analyse their local government budget to see allocations to

HIV and AIDS with a view to monitoring its implementation. Victoria now asks her elected officials questions about the local government budget and how it is being implemented.

In the community of Amekwe, Victoria is seen as a budget champion and is often called upon by peers to help analyse community and household budget.

Personal testimony of a member of the coalition reveals that he learnt a lot from the project, especially the ability to write proposals for his organisation on budget tracking and advocacy.

(b)CHAN received funding from Christian AID to replicate HABTA in Gombe and Kogi states.

(c)Advocacy strategies in the HABTA project currently used to implement CHAN EED project.

Facilitated the development of Community Action Committee on AIDS (CACA) in project states

In the three target states of Enugu, Plateau and Cross River, Community Action Committee on AIDS (CACA) were established. The CACA which consists of trained community members undertakes and leads budget advocacies carried out at local government and community level.

Built critical mass of budget literate citizens in the target communities

Trained community facilitators in Enugu State independently carried out two budget literacy and HIV/AIDS training to community members during town hall meetings. Community facilitators in the three states empowered from the project speak confidently and openly with government officials at the local government demanding for accountability of HIV/AIDS resources.

Became a reference for funding and replication by donors

(a)Experience on the HABTA project made RU-ENPORT receive a 3-month fund from the Commonwealth Foundation for the purpose of increasing women's participation in budget process in Cross River State

Over the years, several lessons were learnt implementing the HABTA project both at the national and state level and this we will always use to guide our proposals and programming in future.

Highlights of lessons learnt are clustered by project states' below:



(C) MS ActionAid Denmark

Plateau State

There is the need for a law to be passed that will require Ministries, Departments and Agencies conform to the National Executive Council (NEC) proposal to allocate 1% of total budget for HIV and AIDS intervention;

Inadequate funding of HIV and AIDS Units of MDAs;

In some circumstances, inaccurate budget figures and discrepancies of figures in state budgets and budget documents made available to CSOs and other stakeholders;

When effective target advocacy is conducted, decision makers are willing to listen and also act on community needs and advocacy issues.

Cross River State

Effective collaboration and partnership enhances successful project implementation and sustainability;

There is low participation of the civil society in the budget process of some line Ministries as a result of

traditional civil service approach of preparing budget in enclosure and secretly;

- ☑ SACA has weak technical capacity to utilise budgetary allocation;
- ☑ Challenges faced by civil society organisations in advocacy include lack of accurate information, inability to access information, low levels of capacity & relevant skills and lack of funding to back advocacy;
- ☑ Communities lack the capacity for engagement in policy and budget analysis as well as advocacy;
- ☑ Partners and stakeholders are very eager to obtain every necessary training that will prepare them for effective contributions in the HIV and AIDS intervention strategies.

Enugu State

- ☑ Scale up health/HIV and AIDS budget tracking and advocacy and extend such to other sectors in the economy. This will help to promote good governance as the elected officials will

know that the citizens even at the local level have been empowered to ask questions about their budget;

- ✔ Working and getting information from the government is a gradual process, requiring patience and consistency and CSO must continue to engage with the process. Elected and appointed officials think they are doing the community a favour by allowing them to visit them in their offices.

Women Information Network (WINET), Enugu State

Women Information Network (WINET) is a media focused, independent non-governmental and non-profit organisation, established in January 2000. It is registered with Corporate Affairs Commission ,Nigeria: RC 14892. WINET is gender sensitive and works towards the dissemination of information to promote gender equality, women's rights, human and political rights. The organisation is for training of women, peace building, media advocacy and dissemination of information on all issues relating to the advancement of women's rights in the society. It ensures that Nigerian women and youths have access to information that will enable them to make informed decisions.

WINET is a 2004 grantee of the Global Fund for Women with a mission to uplift Nigerians ,especially women and youths ,by providing them with information to enable them to live a fruitful life in the society. Their vision is an informed society where people will know their rights, duties and obligations.

The aims and objectives of WINET are:

- ✔ To inform, educate and create awareness on women's issues including human rights;
- ✔ Disseminate information on HIV/AIDS prevention, reproductive health/rights of Women and youths, safe motherhood and democracy and good governance;
- ✔ Engage in media campaigns and other such activities considered necessary for the advancement of women;
- ✔ Organise conferences, seminars, workshop and meetings on topical issues of concern to women and youths;
- ✔ Promote women's political rights agenda and lobbying for legislative reforms to eliminate institutional discrimination and violence against women;



Participants at the Budget Monitoring visit to Commissioner of Finance, Enugu State; 27th July 2010.

- ✔ Networks with government, non-governmental organisations and civil society groups to promote women's rights, information and experience sharing

Activities implemented in Enugu state under the HABTA project are:

- ✔ A baseline survey to generate information on knowledge of HIV and AIDS budget tracking, advocacy and policy analysis in the two project communities. Stakeholders involved include NGOs, the media, the House of Assembly, members of the civil society on HIV/AIDS Nigeria (CiSHAN) and the local government officials in Enugu State;
- ✔ Advocacy visits to Stakeholders including the legislature, commissioners and policy makers, ENSACA and Chairman of Udi Local Government in the state to canvass increased funding for HIV/AIDS;
- ✔ Enugu State 2009 Budget Summit;
- ✔ One day Budget tracking training for Enugu State Action Committee on AIDS (ENSACA) staff;
- ✔ One-day Legislative Advocacy Round Table to brief

legislators on the project;

- ✔ Two-day training on budget tracking and gender budgeting for the Amokwe and Ameke- Ngwo communities, Udi Local Government Local Action Committee on AIDS and budget officers, CiSHAN members and other NGOs;
- ✔ One-day sensitisation workshop for Udi Local Government staff and formation of Community Action Committee on AIDS in Amokwe and Ameke- Ngwo;
- ✔ Formation of Coalition of Enugu State HIV and AIDS Budget Monitors;
- ✔ Community Action Committee on AIDS meetings by Ameke- Ngwo and Amokwe communities;
- ✔ Meeting of HIV and AIDS Enugu State Budget Monitors on how to track and monitor Enugu State 2008 and 2009 budget allocations to HIV and AIDS, to see if the funds were released and how it was implemented;
- ✔ Budget monitoring and tracking visits to Ministries, Departments and Agencies to discuss with the ministries on the 2008 and 2009 HIV and AIDS budgetary allocations, the amount released, the activities carried out and the challenges encountered in the processing of fund or implementation of activity;
- ✔ One-day Press Conference and Media Workshop to disseminate information from monitoring and tracking of HIV and AIDS allocations in the Enugu State 2008 and 2009 budgets;
- ✔ Budget monitoring and tracking visits to Ministries, Departments, Agencies and ENSACA to discuss with the Ministries on the 2010 HIV and AIDS budgetary allocations, the amount released, the activities carried out and the challenges encountered in the processing of fund or implementation of activity;
- ✔ Community Action Committee on AIDS meeting by Ameke- Ngwo and Amokwe communities;
- ✔ Advocacy visit to Udi local government to brief and enlighten

the Chairman on the project, the prevalence of HIV and AIDS in Udi LGA and advocate for increased budgetary provision at the LG level;

- ✔ One-day Press Conference and Media Workshop to disseminate information from monitoring and tracking of Enugu State 2010 HIV and AIDS allocations by Ministries, Departments and Agencies and also show finding from tracking HIV and AIDS allocations to Health and HIV and AIDS in Udi Local Government Area 2010 budget.

Challenges

Challenges encountered on the project are numerous; however the project was affected more by bureaucratic bottle necks within government. In most of the activities carried out it was observed that some government officials are not ready to work with NGOs. They feel that the NGOs are probing them and were therefore not willing to give required information. For instance, in the Enugu State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the HIV and AIDS desk officer did not want to be quoted on the information he gave to the budget monitors team.

Some of the commissioners that we spoke with tried to evade questions about whether they indeed requested for release of their HIV and AIDS budgetary allocations. Many of the commissioners did not meet with us personally; they rather assigned Desk officers to discuss with budget monitors.

It took several months of sending letters to Udi Local Government Chairman before we could get an appointment to see him. When he eventually accepted our request to see him, he assigned the Secretary to the local government to meet us on his behalf. The Secretary was not able to respond to our questions correctly. He evaded the key question on activities carried out on HIV and AIDS and why rehabilitation of four health Centres provided for in Udi local government 2010 budget has not been done.

Rural Environment Protectors (RU-ENPROT)

Rural Environment Protectors (RU-ENPROT) now EKAP ACHI Foundation (EKAF) came into existence in 1997. RU-ENPROT registered with the Cross River State Government in 1998 and has since then carried out interventions in the areas of health/HIV and AIDS, governance and environment. Projects implemented over the past 9 years include, sustainable rural reproductive health (1999–2000), sexuality education and adolescent reproductive rights (2003–2004), Agbraragba Conservation Initiative (1999, 2006), Community-based HCT (2004–2005), HIV and AIDS Budget Tracking and Advocacy (2005, 2009–2010), Partnership with EU-MPP6 (2005–2006), MDGs projects/programmes M&E (2007–2008), Community-Based HIV and AIDS Prevention Education (2010) amongst others.

The MacArthur Foundation/ActionAid International Nigeria supported HIV and AIDS budget tracking project commenced in 2004 to contribute to strengthening the national response on HIV and AIDS pandemic in Nigeria by empowering civil society organisations and the public to monitor resource allocation and utilisation and the impact of activities and programmes. The goal was, “To increase the participation of civil society in the assessment, monitoring and evaluation of resource allocation and utilisation and its impact on HIV and AIDS mitigation efforts in Nigeria”.

The first phase of the project was implemented from 2004 to 2007 in five (5) states, namely; Enugu, Cross River, Plateau, Lagos and Gombe. In Cross River State, Rural Environment Protectors RU-ENPROT (now known as EKAP ACHI Foundation) facilitated the project through the civil society on HIV and AIDS in Nigeria (CISHAN) in Okundi community, Boki Local Government Area and Etayip community, Ikom Local Government Area.

The second phase of the project which was tagged “HIV and

AIDS Budget Tracking and Advocacy” (HABTA) aims at reducing the prevalence of HIV and AIDS by strengthening the capacity for policy analysis, budget tracking and advocacy through participation of citizens/CSOs in budget mechanisms for HIV and AIDS.

In Cross River State, RU-ENPORT carried out a number of activities from January 2009 July 2010. As part of networking and advocacy, several meetings were held with project benefiting communities, local government council authorities,



Participants at the 2-day Budget Analysis and Tools Development training for Field Enumerators.

project partners, State House of Assembly, State Planning Commission and department of International Donor Support.

Major capacity building activities carried out on the HABTA project are:

- ✔ Consultative Meeting with Partners;
- ✔ Community Sensitisation Workshop and Advocacy;
- ✔ State HIV and AIDS Budget Summit;
- ✔ Legislative/Policy Roundtable;
- ✔ Training of Project Staff;



Participants at the 2-day Budget Analysis and Tools Development training for Field Enumerators.

- ✔ CACA/Facilitators Meeting;
- ✔ Pre-advocacy Meeting with Partners;
- ✔ Advocacy Meeting with the State House of Assembly;
- ✔ Advocacy Visit to The State Planning Commission & IDS;
- ✔ Training of Partner CSO networks, SACA and the Media;
- ✔ Training of LACA Coordinators, LGC officials and CACA facilitators;
- ✔ Sensitisation Visit to the Chairmen, Boki and Ikom LGCs;
- ✔ Training of Field Enumerators for HIV and AIDS budget Monitoring;
- ✔ Monitoring of HIV and AIDS budget.

Challenges

The following were some of the challenges encountered in Cross River state while implementing the project:

- ✔ Non participation of line MDAs Budget Office, Ministries of Health, Women Affairs, Finance and Youths Development in project activities;
- ✔ It was difficult meeting with some members of the Cross River State House of Assembly and Chairmen of Ikom and Boki local government Councils because of their official engagements;
- ✔ Untimely, release of funds by MacArthur Foundation delayed implementation of project activities;
- ✔ Non implementation of activities scheduled under advocacy and networking due to time out of project negatively affected to some extent, expected project results.

Christian Health Association of Nigeria (CHAN)

Christian Health Association of Nigeria (CHAN) is headquartered in Jos with 4 Zonal Offices. Zone A (Numan, Adamawa State), Zone B (Jos, Plateau State), Zone C (Owerri, Imo State), Zone D (Ibadan, Oyo State).

CHAN's mission is to provide efficient services by building the capacity of members and to collaborate with partners to improve health care for all in Nigeria and a vision to deliver holistic, efficient and responsive healthcare for all people in Nigeria.

CHAN started on the McArthur Foundation supported HIV and AIDS Budget Tracking and Advocacy (HABTA) project with other partners in year 2004, tracking budgets of selected Local Government Areas in the five States.

In Plateau State, two communities of Jengre and Mista Ali were selected in Bassa LGA where the project was implemented. The two-year project which enjoyed a one-year extension, ended in 2007.

An appraisal of the project revealed that laudable achievements were recorded within the period under review. Such included the initiation of the Anti Stigma and Discrimination against People Living with HIV and AIDS Bill, involvement of PFAs and other community members in analysis of Bassa LGA budgets, allocation of funds to HIV and AIDS in the budget of Bassa LGA and general awareness of community members on their rights to be part of budgeting processes. These were not without challenges.

The second phase of the project was aimed at tracking HIV and AIDS budget and advocating for increased allocation among other issues. It targeted improved funding and accountability mechanism for HIV and AIDS response in Plateau State by providing a medium for interaction between Civil Societies,

People Living with HIV and AIDS, Ministries, Departments and Agencies of State and Bassa Local Government, religious and women leaders as well as community members and members of the Plateau State House of Assembly.

Activities implemented under the project include:

- ☑ Baseline survey which was targeted at establishing and buttressing in stronger terms, the present state of issues of concern to the project in Plateau State and Bassa LGA;
- ☑ Review meeting with the staff of Bassa LACA and Public Finance Analysts (PFAs);
- ☑ Series of advocacy visits on identified community, religious, women and youth groups leadership structures as well as selected MDAs of government, the legislator and other stakeholders;
- ☑ Training of selected community and media members on public finance analysis;
- ☑ Budget analysis workshop where the 2009 budget of Plateau and Bassa LGA were analysed, bringing to fore some loopholes and other challenges to HIV and AIDS intervention;
- ☑ Selection of community members who served as Community Action Committees on AIDS (CACA) members;
- ☑ Budget monitoring and tracking visit to PLACA, Bassa LACA, Ministries of Health, Education, Information and Culture, Agriculture and Natural Resources and Women Affairs during which budget allocations to these Agencies were analysed with a focus on the implications of these allocations to HIV and AIDS intervention plans and strategies;
- ☑ Series of budget inputs meetings and visits where inputs were made into the 2010 budget;
- ☑ Legislative roundtable/interaction with CSOs, MDAs, PLAs and community members during which community and special groups' needs were presented to the leadership of the state assembly for inclusion in the 2010 state budget;

? Press conference during which findings from budget tracking and other activities during the project year were presented as well as a showcase of achievements and other issues of concern.

Challenges:

In the process of planning and implementing activities for the phase 2 of HABTA, topmost challenges encountered are:

- ✔ Insufficient funds for most of the activities;
- ✔ Dates for some of the events presented another challenge as, oftentimes, initial dates had to be cancelled due to the fact that it collided with dates for some other events. However, the good working relationship between CHAN and some of the stakeholders were always exploited to get new dates at the earliest convenience of all parties;
- ✔ Low level of participation of high ranking executive arm of government officials in project activities. When they are invited to meetings, they usually don't attend or send representatives who cannot make decision.